

# Applying Systemic Functional Linguistics to Bahasa Indonesia Clauses

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## Abstract

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) concerns the three metafunction meanings: clause as message, clause as exchange, and clause as representation. This article tries to apply the metafunctions based on SFL to Bahasa Indonesia clauses. The points of this paper are only two kinds of metafunctions could be applied to Bahasa Indonesia clauses: clause as message and clause as representation. The clause as exchange, according to the present writer, could not be applied to Bahasa Indonesia clauses since Bahasa Indonesia has no finite concept. The present writer found the word 'there' in English is equivalent to the word '*ada*' in Bahasa Indonesia. Both of the words have no representational function; they are required because of the need for a subject in English.

**Keywords:** Systemic Functional Linguistics, Metafunction meanings, Bahasa Indonesia

## 1. Introduction

Systemic Functional Linguistics or SFL concerns language as a system of meaning. This argumentation is in line with Halliday in Bloor and Bloor (2004, p. 2). "For SFL, a language is 'a system of meanings'. That is to say that when people use language, their language acts produce or, or more technically, construct meaning."

According to Martin, Matthiessen, and Painter (1997, p. 1) "Functional grammar is a way of looking at grammar in terms of how grammar is used". This approach, SFL, is known as Halliday's theory in his first book *An Introduction to Functional Linguistics* (1985) and revised in their third edition by Halliday and Matthiessen's theory on their well known book *An Introduction to Functional Linguistics* (2004, p.61). They, in line with Martin (1990, pp. 2-51), introduce the metafunctions of meanings. They are experiential (ideational) meaning relates to clause representation, interpersonal meaning relates to clause exchange, and textual meaning relates to clause as message. Clause as representation is represented by transitivity: process, participant, and circumstance while clause as exchange by mood and residue and clause as message by theme and rheme.

The present writer, in this paper, tries to figure out the applying of SFL to in Bahasa Indonesia clauses. Bahasa Indonesia is the official language in Indonesia. Bahasa Indonesia as one of Austronesian languages is spoken by about 230 million populations. There are two types of clauses in Bahasa Indonesia: verbal and non verbal clauses. Predicate in Bahasa Indonesia can be verbal and non verbal. The non verbal predicate in Bahasa Indonesia can be filled by noun, adjective, or prepositional phrase as shown in the following clauses:

- (1) *Ia guru.*  
He/she teacher  
'He/She is a teacher.'

The word *guru* shows in the clause (1) is a noun in the predicate position. The clause has no verbs.

- (2) *Gadis itu cantik.*  
girl that beautiful  
'That girl is beautiful.'

- (3) *Anak-anakku di sini.*  
children my here  
'My children are here.'

Similar to clause (1), clause (2) and (3) also show the non verbal clause. Clause (2) shows that the predicate is filled by *cantik* as an adjective while clause (3) the predicate is filled by *di sini* as a prepositional phrase. Both of the predicates (3) and (4) have no verbs.

In relating to the differences of the predicates elements between English and Bahasa Indonesia, the present writer tries to apply the SFL approach (where Halliday applies this theory to English) on Bahasa Indonesia. The present writer tries to figure out the difference

and similarity between the two languages based on SFL approach which begins by clause as message and followed by clause as exchange and clause as representation.

## 2. Clause as Message in Bahasa Indonesia

Textual meaning corresponds to clause as message. In line with Halliday & Matthiessen (2004), Butt et al. (1999, p. 91) point out “to analyze and discuss textual meaning meanings we need a simple and distinct metalanguage: we call the first element THEME and the rest of the clause RHEME” while Gerot & Wignell (1994, p. 102) argue that “in English where we put information in a clause tells us about where the clause is coming from and where it is going to. In an English clause there are two points of prominence, the beginning and the end”. The term “the beginning” is interpreted as a theme while “the end” is a rheme. Deterding & Poedjosoedarmo (2001, p.106) mention that “textual meaning is expressed by thematic structure (the identity of theme, what we are talking about, and rheme, what we are saying about it and information structure,...”.

Theme, according to Halliday (1994), in Butt (1999, p. 92) “what the message is concerned with: the point of departure for what the speaker is going to say”. Theme can be identified as unmarked and marked theme. The unmarked theme can be nominal group, nominal group complex, or embedded clause. The marked theme can be adverbial, prepositional phrase, or complement. The followings are the unmarked and marked theme and rheme in Bahasa Indonesia clauses:

THEME	RHEME
(4) <i>Rany</i> (nominal group) Rany	seorang guru. a teacher
‘Rany is a teacher’	

THEME	RHEME
(5) <i>Rany dan Sandy</i> (nominal group complex) Rany and Sandy	<i>pergi ke Jakarta.</i> went to Jakarta
‘Rany and Shandy went to Jakarta’	

THEME	RHEME
(6) <i>Apa yang mereka mau</i> (embedded clause) what that they want	<i>seorang guru</i> a teacher
‘What they want is a teacher’	

The three clauses above describe the types of unmarked theme: nominal group *Rany* in (4), nominal group complex *Rany dan Sandy* in (5), and embedded clause *Apa yang mereka mau* in (6). The followings are the marked theme in Bahasa Indonesia clauses:

THEME	RHEME
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(7) <i>Kemarin</i> (adverbial) yesterday	<i>dia pergi ke Bandung.</i> he/she went to Bandung
‘Yesterday he/ she went to Bandung’	

THEME	RHEME
(8) <i>Di rumah</i> (prepositional phrase) at home	<i>ia menunggu saya.</i> he/she wait for I
‘At home he/ she is waiting for me’	

THEME	RHEME
(9) <i>Buku itu</i> (complement) book that	<i>ia pinjam dari saya.</i> he/she borrow from I
‘That book he/ she borrowed from me’	

The clauses (7) – (9) show the examples of marked theme in Bahasa Indonesia. The three marked themes are adverbial *kemarin* (7), prepositional phrase *di rumah* (8), and complement *buku itu* (9).

Based on the unmarked (4) - (6) and marked (7) – (9) theme above describes that the theory of textual meanings can be applied to Bahasa Indonesia clauses.

### 3. Clause as Exchange in Bahasa Indonesia

Interpersonal meaning corresponds to clause as exchange. Clause as exchange is realized by MOOD and Residue. Mood itself consists of subject and finite verb. The subject is realized by nominal group while the finite is the part of verbal group.

In English, every clause has a finite verb while in Bahasa Indonesia is not. In Bahasa Indonesia, clauses can be verbal and non verbal. It means that not every clause in Bahasa Indonesia has a verb, especially in non verbal clause. Besides having two types of clauses, in Bahasa Indonesia there is no tense concept. When we want to say something that is happening, will happen, or has happened, the verbs that we are taken are similar. To understand the different of time will be shown by the choice of adverb of time as follows:

(10) *Saya membaca buku itu tadi.*  
I read book that just now  
‘I read that book just now.’

(11) *Saya membaca buku itu sekarang.*  
I baca book that now  
‘I am reading that book now.’

(12) *Saya membaca buku itu besok.*

I read book that tomorrow

'I will read that book tomorrow.'

The three clauses above show us that the verb *membaca* 'read' in Bahasa Indonesia has the same form. The difference appears in the adverb of time *tadi* for just now (past tense), *sekarang* for now (present tense) and *besok* for tomorrow (future tense). The problem comes up when the present writer has to identify the finite verb as the second element of mood. According to Halliday in Deterding & Poedjosoedarmo (2001, p. 106) "linguistic forms which convey mood include the relative order of the subject and the first auxiliary as FINITE, so we can say that the order SUBJECT + FINITE indicates a statement while the order FINITE + SUBJECT indicates a question". According to Halliday, in Deterding & Poedjosoedarmo (2001, p. 142) "Halliday uses this term (finite) to refer to the first auxiliary in the verb phrase, the part of the verb that carries tense". Referring to the theory above, in Bahasa Indonesia clauses (10) – (12) show the three clauses have no auxiliary or the part of the verb that carries tense. Based on this reality, the present writer assumes that we cannot apply interpersonal meaning which corresponds to clause as exchange in Bahasa Indonesia clauses.

#### **4. Clause as Representation in Bahasa Indonesia**

Ideational meaning or sometimes called experiential meaning corresponds to clause as representation. Clause as representation is represented by transitivity which relates to process, participant, and circumstance. In traditional point of view, every clause in English must have a verb while in SFL every clause must have a process.

Processes are central to transitivity. Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001, p. 112) argue that "processes are usually expressed linguistically by a verb or verb phrase" while Halliday and Matthiesen (2004, p. 177) argue that "process typically realized by verbal group, participant realized by nominal group, and circumstance realized by adverbial group or prepositional phrase". In other words, the present writer concludes that processes in functional refer to verbs in traditional point of view.

Processes are divided into six processes (Deterding & Poedjosoedarmo (2001, p. 112-113), Halliday & Matthiesen (2004, p. 171), Bloor & Bloor (2004, p. 110-126)). They are, firstly, material process as process of doing and causing, secondly, mental process as process of perceiving, thinking and feeling, thirdly, relational process as process of being and becoming, fourthly, verbal process as process of saying, fifthly, existential process as process of existing, and the last, behavioral process as process of physiological psychological behavior.

Participants are known as agent, affected, effected, recipient, beneficiary, range, experience (senser), phenomenon, agentive experiencer, recipient experiencer, carrier, attribute, sayer, verbiage, target, existent, behavior, and range. Circumstances, in line with Gerot & Wignell (1994, p. 52) "answer such questions as when, where, why, how, how many, and as what. They realize meanings about time, place, and manner".

Clauses in Bahasa Indonesia can be both verbal and non verbal. In this case, the present

writer assumes that the transitivity can be applied to Bahasa Indonesia verbal clauses only. The followings are the examples of Bahasa Indonesia verbal clauses based on Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo classification (2001, p. 118).

#### 4.1 Material Process

As a material process, process of doing, the present writer found several types of participants, such as, agent, affected, effected, recipient, beneficiary, and force as described on the following examples.

(13) <i>Ibu</i> mother	<i>saya</i> my	<i>pergi</i> went	<i>ke kantor dua jam yang lalu</i> to office two hour ago
Agent		Process: Material	Circumstance
‘My mother went to office two hours ago’			

The example above shows that *pergi* in Bahasa Indonesia can be categorized into material process, as a process of doing, has only one participant *Ibu saya* as the agent and *ke kantor dua jam yang lalu* as the circumstance (place and time).

(14) <i>Ayahku</i> father my	<i>membeli</i> buy	<i>mobil baru</i> car new	<i>kemarin.</i> yesterday
Agent	Process: Material	Affected	Circumstance
‘My father bought a new car yesterday’			

(15) <i>Any</i> Any	<i>memberi</i> give	<i>adiknya</i> sister her	<i>tas baru.</i> bag new
Agent	Process: Material	Recipient	Affected
‘Any gave her sister a new bag’			

The examples (14) and (15) show both of the clauses have the same process; material process. The material process in (14) has two participants: *Ayah* as the agent, *mobil baru* as affected, and *kemarin* as circumstance (time) while the clause in (15) has three participants: *Any* as the agent, *adiknya* as recipient, and *tas baru* as affected. *Adiknya* as the recipient in the example (15) is someone who receives *tas baru* as the affected.

(16) <i>Dia</i> She	<i>memasakkan</i> cook	<i>adiknya</i> brother her	<i>sayur bayam.</i> soup spinach
Agent	Process: Material	Beneficiary	Effected
'She cooked her brother <i>sayur bayam</i> (spinach soup)'			

Based on the four examples above, they show that the processes which are represented by the verbs *pergi*, *membeli*, *memberi*, and *memasakkan* are the material process, because the four verbs show process of doing. The four verbs mentioned have the same process, but they have different participants (example (13) has only one participant preceded which follows the verb. here is a distinction between participants affected and effected. Affected, according to Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001, pp. 113-114) argue that recipient as the receiver or in traditional in the ditransitive pattern as direct object while beneficiary as someone/ something who gets benefit, traditionally, as an indirect object.

The following example shows that the material process *menumbangkan* can be preceded by a force and followed by affected as the participants.

(17) <i>Hujan badai</i> rain storm	<i>menumbangkan</i> fall	<i>pohon itu</i> tree that
Force	Process: Material	Affected
'The storm fell down that tree'		

#### 4.2 Mental Process

Mental process is as the process of perceiving, thinking, and feeling. The main participant in this process is experience or sometimes called sensor. Based on Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001, p. 115) argumentation, "the thing which the experiencer feels, thinks, or perceives, usually the direct object within the clause, is called a phenomenon". Besides experiencer or sensor, the other participants are agentive experiencer, recipient, experiencer, and phenomenon as follows:

(18) <i>Nenek saya</i> grandmother my	<i>menyukai</i> liked	<i>film itu</i> film the
Experiencer	Process: Mental	Phenomenon

'My grandmother liked the film'
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(19) <i>Dia</i> She	<i>menonton</i> watched	<i>pertandingan sepak bola itu</i> game foot ball the	<i>dengan teman-temannya.</i> with her friends
Agentive Experiencer	Process: Mental	Phenomenon	Circumstance
'She watched the football game with her friends'			

(20) <i>Kemarin</i> yesterday	<i>ia</i> he	<i>melihat</i> saw	<i>tabrakan antara motor dan mobil</i> accident between motorcycle and car	<i>di jalan itu.</i> at street that
Circumstance	Recipient Experiencer	Process: Mental	Phenomenon	Circumstance
'Yesterday, he saw an accident between a motorcycle and a car at that street'				

From the three examples above, they are trying to describe there are three different first participants: experiencer (*nenek saya*), agentive experiencer (*ia*), and recipient experiencer (*dia*). Although the three examples above have different first participant but they have one phenomenon as the second participant of each. *Nenek saya* as the experiencer (in 18) is someone who feels or perceives the phenomenon *film itu*. Experiencer itself, according to Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001, p. 114-115), can be more active experiencer (as an agentive experiencer) or more passive experiencer (as recipient experiencer). From the examples above, *ia* (in 19) is an agentive experiencer and *dia* (in 20) is a recipient experiencer and they also show us that in Bahasa Indonesia, the *verbs menyukai, menonton* and *melihat* can be categorized into mental processes.

#### 4.3 Verbal Process

Verbal process, in line with Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001, p. 112), Gerot and Wignell (1995, p. 62) is process of saying. In Bahasa Indonesia, the pattern SV itself, refers to clause which contains of intransitive verb while SVO refers to the clause pattern that contains of monotransitive verb. The following are the examples of the verbal process in Bahasa Indonesia:

(21) <i>Ia</i>	<i>berujar.</i>
Sayer	Process: Verbal



‘Ia berujar’
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The example (21) shows that the verb *berujar* is a verbal process. In Systemic Functional Linguistics, this verb is categorized into verbal process, since the verb is process of saying. In formal grammar, the kind of verb can be categorized into intransitive verb, since the verb does not need an object.

(22) <i>Ia</i> She	<i>menceritakan</i> say	<i>hal itu.</i> problem that
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage
‘She said the problem’		

(23) Pak guru Teacher	<i>memuji</i> praise	<i>anak baru itu</i> student new that
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Target
‘The teacher praised the new student’		

The examples (22) and (23) show us the verbs *menceritakan* ‘said’ and *memuji* ‘praised’ as the verbal processes. Both of the verbs do the process of saying, so that the both of main participants are called as sayer and the other participant are different. The verb *menceritakan* needs the verbiage *hal itu* ‘the problem’ as the name for the verbalization itself while the verb *memuji* needs the target *anak baru itu* ‘the new student’ as one acted verbally.

#### 4.4 Relational Process

The relational process as the fourth process in this article, formally, is the type of sentence which contains of subject complement which is preceded by copula or linking verbs. According to Gerot and Wignel (1995, p. 67) “Relational process can be classified according to whether they are being used to identify something or to assign a quality to something. Processes which establish an identity are called identifying processes and processes which assign a quality are called attributive processes.”

In English, in line with Halliday (2004), Bloor and Bloor (2004), Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001) and Gerot and Wignel (1995), they argue that relational process could be divided into attributive and identifying relational processes. The participants in the attributive are carrier and attribute, while in the identifying token and value. According to Halliday in Gerot and Wignel (1995, p. 70) value is referent, function or status, and token is

the sign, name, form, holder, or occupant. To distinguish between attributive and identifying is that the identifying process is reversible while the attributive is not.

The following are the examples of attributive relational process in Bahasa Indonesia:

(24) <i>Daun itu</i> leaf the	<i>menjadi</i> become	<i>kering.</i> dry
carrier	Relational: attributive	attribute
'The leaf became dry'		

The example (24) shows that *kering* 'dry', formally, as subject complement which is preceded by verb *menjadi* 'become' as linking verb. The clause is not reversible, so that the word *kering* 'dry' is an attribute to carrier *daun itu* 'the leaf'.

(25) <i>Foto-foto masa kecil</i> photos childhood	<i>mengisi</i> comprise	<i>album itu.</i> album the
value	Relational: identifying	token
'The childhood photos comprised the album'		

The example (25) shows that is not the attributive but identifying relational process. The clause could be reversible or could be changed into passive voice as in example (26).

(26) <i>Album itu</i> The album	<i>diisi</i> is comprised of	<i>foto-foto masa kecil.</i> photos childhood
token	Relational: identifying	value
'The album is comprised of the childhood photos'		

Based on the three examples, it can be concluded that Bahasa Indonesia clauses have both attributive and identifying relational processes.

Actually, in Bahasa Indonesia, the elements of the sentence are different from English. Predicate in Bahasa Indonesia is not only be filled by verbs but also by noun group in *Ia guru* 'He is a teacher' (*guru* as a noun group), adjective group in *Anak itu pintar sekali* 'The boy is very clever' (*pintar sekali* as adjective group), or prepositional phrases in *Mereka di Bandung* 'They are in Bandung' (*di Bandung* as a prepositional phrase).

#### 4.5 Behavioral Process

Behavioral process can be categorized into the process which relates to psychological or physiological behaviour, in English, e.g. breathing, snoring, or smiling. Both the

psychological process and physiological process, in line with Downing and Locke (2006, p. 152), usually one – participant and they are typically involuntary. The followings are the examples of behavioural process in Bahasa Indonesia clauses.

(27) <i>Anak itu</i> child that	<i>batuk.</i> coughed.
behave	behavioural
‘The child coughed’	

The example (27) shows that verb *batuk* ‘coughed’ as physiological behaviour where it is involuntary, but sometimes, it can be deliberate too as the following example:

(28) <i>Anak itu</i> child the	<i>batuk</i> coughed.	<i>dengan sengaja.</i> intentionally
behave	behavioural	circumstance: manner
‘The child coughed intentionally’		

From the example (28), it shows that the participant did cough to get attention from others (his family or friends). In other words, he did cough is not because of his illness, it is tricky.

Besides the physiological behaviour, the present writer also found the verbs in psychological behavior, as the following examples:

(29) <i>Anak itu</i> child the	<i>tersenyum.</i> smile.
behave	behavioural
‘The child smiled’	

The example (29) is the psychological behavior, it is shown that the participant (in this case, *Anak itu* ‘the child’) involuntary. The same as the example of physiological behavior in (28), the psychological behavior can be deliberate too, as the following example:

(30) <i>Anak itu</i> child the	<i>tersenyum</i> smiled.	<i>dengan bahagia.</i> happily
behave	behavioural	circumstance: manner
‘The child smiled happily’		

#### 4.6 Existential Process

In English existential processes, according to Gerot and Wignell (1995, p. 72) which is in line with Downing and Locke (2006, p. 153), are processes of existing or happening. It is marked by the word ‘there’ which has no representational function; it is required because of the need for a subject in English (Gerot and Wignell, 1995, p. 72).

The present writer found the equivalent in Bahasa Indonesia of the word ‘there’. It is ‘*Ada*’. In Bahasa Indonesia, the word ‘*Ada*’ is also not a participant. It has no semantic content; it is required because of the need for a subject in Bahasa Indonesia. The following examples are the existential processes in Bahasa Indonesia.

(31) <i>Ada</i> there	<i>sebuah buku</i> a book	<i>disimpan</i> put	<i>di atas meja itu.</i> on table the
	Existent	Existential	Circumstance: place
‘There is a book on the table’			

(32) <i>Ada</i> there	<i>banyak masalah</i> many problems	<i>tersisa</i> remain
	Existent	Existential
‘There remain many problems’		

Both of the examples above show that clauses have the word *ada* ‘there’ which have no representational function.

#### 5. Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, the present writer concludes that not all the metafunctions (clause s message, clause exchange, and clause representation) could be applied to Bahasa Indonesia. Based on the three, there are only the two kinds of metafunctions could be applied to Bahasa Indonesia clauses: clause as message and clause as representation.

The clause as exchange, according to the present writer, could not be applied to Bahasa Indonesia since Bahasa Indonesia has no finite concept.

The concept of theme and rheme in clause as message could totally be applied in Bahasa Indonesia clauses. In clause as representation, only the verbal clauses could be analyzed based on the transitivity while the non verbal could not.

The present writer found the word ‘there’ in English is equivalent to the word ‘*ada*’ in Bahasa Indonesia. Both of the words have no representational function; they are required because of the need for a subject in English.

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