



Article

## A Transitivity Analysis of Discourses in George W. Bush and Scott Morrison's Speeches on 'War on Terror'

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### Abstract

This article is a continuation of the article entitled Comparing Discourses in George W. Bush and Scott Morrison's Speeches on 'war on terror' about the transitivity systems, including types of processes, participant functions, and circumstance elements, are used in these two speech discourses by George W. Bush and Scott Morrison. This research is qualitative research with a descriptive statistical method that presents linguistic analysis findings in speech discourses about the war on terror. This article aims to identify and explain how George W. Bush and Scott Morrison construct the image of terrorism through the language used in their speech discourses. The analysis uses Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and utilizes the framework of transitivity analysis, which identifies the ideational meaning embodied by choice of grammar. This study found that George W. Bush uses material processing to show a negative image of terrorism. In addition to the material process, Scott Morrison also uses a verbal process to convey the image of terrorists. The linguistic features in both speech discourses both depict a negative image of terrorists. The findings also prove that the choice of grammar in the two discourses indirectly uses the speaker's perspective on terrorists, which influences listeners' opinion.

## INTRODUCTION

Terrorists carry out their attacks in various areas. Some of them, such as the terrorist attacks in the United States, resulted in the collapse of the WTC and Pentagon headquarters and thousands of people becoming victims. The terrorist attacks also occur in Melbourne, Australia, resulting in three Australians becoming victims. This proves that terrorism subsists everywhere. Sawirman (2007; 2008) stated that terrorism exists everywhere, and terrorism does not reside in one particular ideology.

World figures often discuss terrorism in their speeches. Some of them are George W. Bush, the 43rd American President who served from 2001-2009, and Scott Morrison, the Australian 30<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister and still serves today. These two important national figures declared this speech after terrorists attacked their territory.

George W. Bush is one of the most popular presidents, as he received the highest recorded approval ratings after the 9/11 attacks, otherwise known as the war on terror. The term "war on terror" was coined by George W. Bush. This is due to the collapse of the glory of the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Pentagon headquarters of the United States Department of Defense and killed thousands of people, including civilians and foreign nationals who were visiting. Thousands of others were injured by terrorist groups on September 11, 2001. The 9/11

terrorist attacks became a turning point in the Bush presidency. In the office, George W, Bush, condemned the perpetrators behind the attack and promised to find out who would be responsible for this incident and bring them to justice.

Furthermore, during Scott Morrison's reign, Melbourne was also attacked on Burke Street, Australia. As a result of this attack, three people became victims, one of whom died. This act of terror on Bourke Street was carried out by a man from Somalia on November 9, 2018. Responding to this case, Scott Morrison, in his speech, said that the person who attacked the Australian was a terrorist, and there are no excuses for him.

Speech discourses are usually prepared to convey a certain message or purpose to the listeners. In the speech, discourse usually contains an invitation to do or do not do something. But it is not easy for the listener to get the meaning conveyed. Therefore, this research focuses on transitivity systems. Transitivity is chosen because it analyzes all grammatical aspects, including the type of process, participant function, and circumstance. Analysis using systemic functional linguistics and employ a framework transitivity analysis, which identifies the ideational meaning embodied by grammatical choices to see how George W. Bush and Scott Morrison construct the image of terrorists in their speeches.

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the transitivity analysis. The transitivity of Covid-19 hoax discourse in Indonesia media has also been done by Yasendalika, Sawirman, and Marnita (2021). Ridwani and Sawirman (2020) also have discussed a transitivity framework to identify and explain the ideational meaning of several letters by identifying the elements of each clause. Recent evidence suggests that the transitivity system is the key point to describe language meta-function (Sawirman and Ridhwani 2020). Fitri, et.al. (2019) analyzed participant's tenor and transitivity of discourse in Indonesian's court trial cyanide case. Recent evidences also prove that transitivity analysis is also effective in detecting fraudulent language in email (Rifki, Sawirman, and Usman, 2021) and small farmers' discourses on oil palm problems (Sawirman, 2021).

Latterly, several recent studies are also interested in examining the transitivity and meaning of the choice words conveyed by the speakers or writer. Najmia (2014) discussed the embodiment of the distribution pattern of the type of process, the participants involved, and the elements contained in the short story, based on the transitivity theory put forward by M.A.K Halliday. Sophia (2011) focused her research focuses on the relationship of language metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, textual) to determine the characteristics of the text in the transcript. Mohsen and Ahmad (2012) examine the nature of transitivity in Persian conversation. This study compares data collected from natural conversations between native Persian speakers and conversational English using a comparative approach. Also, Ong'onda (2016) found that the analysis reveals linguistic characteristics that contribute to the construction of Al-Shabaab's negative image. The findings also show that newspaper coverage grammatical choices play a role in secretly expressing the author's perspective, which influences the readers' opinion-taking process. What distinguishes this research is that this research will examine the transitivity system in the speeches of state officials discussing the war on terror. Interestingly, this study focuses not only on finding out the two speeches transitivity system, but this research also describes how the two-state officials portrayed the image of terrorists through their speeches.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In his writings in the Padang Ekspres newspaper, Suryadi (2017) said that the existence of modern Minangkabau literature is between existent and non-existent. He further viewed the existence of what is called modern Minangkabau literature that was not (read: not yet)

formulated explicitly and scientifically. No critic or researcher has dared to state when, who and what works are referred to as modern Minangkabau literature or writers. What is the concept that composes modern Minangkabau literature? Where are the limits? And what is the object of modern Minangkabau literature? Just speculation. Although Suryadi acknowledged that modern Minangkabau literary embryos had emerged in the last quarter of the 20th century.

This section initiates with the process types and participant functions found in both George W. Bush and Scott Morrison’s speeches, and the next part will discuss circumstantial elements. Last, it will explain how transitivity helps them construct the image of terrorists in their speech according to the function of each process type, participant function, and circumstantial elements.

Van Dijk (2006) claims that Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is an approach that can be used to consider written texts as creating meaning, not only from the grammatical rules but also in the meanings that arise from the choice of words used. It can describe the action, the person speaking, or the object and person being discussed. Analyzing speech discourses on ‘war on terror’ in terms of transitivity patterns highlights the way terrorism is portrayed in George W. Bush and Scott Morrison. The following analysis is in terms of the process is described in the table below.

**Table 1. Process types, meanings, and participants (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p.331)**

| Process Types   | Category Meaning   | Participant, directly involved                | Participant, obliquely involved        |
|---|--|---|--|
| Material:<br>action<br>event                                  | doing<br>‘doing’   | Actor, Goal                                   | Recipient, Client,<br>Scope, Attribute |
| Behavioral  | behaving   | Behaver                                       | Behavior                               |
| Mental:<br>Perception<br>Cognition<br>Desideration<br>Emotion | sensing ‘seeing’<br>‘thinking’<br>‘desiring’<br>‘liking’ | Senser, Phenomenon                            |  |
| Verbal  | saying   | Sayer, Target                                 | Receiver, Verbiage                     |
| Relational:<br>Attribution<br>Identification                  | being<br>‘attributing’<br>‘identifying’                  | Carrier, Attribute,<br>Identified, Identifier | Token, Value                           |
| Existential   | Existing   | Existent                                      |  |

Based on this theory, there are six processes in transitivity analysis, and each process has its category of meaning and its participants. The processes and the participants can distinguish by whether they represent actions, state of mind, speech, and state of being.

### **a. Material Process**

The material process is the process of doing something either in the form of physical or actual actions taken by a person or group of people to other people. Several participants in this process include actor, goal, recipient, client, and scope. Participants who often appear are usually actor and goal because the actor is someone who does occupation or action directly, while the goal is a participant who is influenced by occupation or activity. The following are some of the material processes found in the two speech discourses, which are presented in the table form below.

|               |   |                          |   |                       |
|---------------|---|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| <i>Today</i>  | <i>our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom</i> | <i>came under attack</i> | <i>in a series of deliberate and deadly</i> | <i>terrorist acts</i> |
| Circumstance  | Participant   | Process                  | Participant                                 | Participant           |
| Location-time | Recipient   | Material                 | Goal  | Actor                 |

Datum SD1/001

|                           |             |                  |              |                |                                  |
|---------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Thousands of lives</i> | <i>were</i> | <i>suddenly</i>  | <i>ended</i> | <i>by evil</i> | <i>despicable acts of terror</i> |
| Participant               |             | Circ. Extent-fre |              | Participant    | Participant                      |
| Recipient                 | Material    |                  |              | Actor          | Goal                             |

Datum SD1/005

|                  |                   |            |              |  |
|------------------|-------------------|------------|--------------|--|
| <i>as will</i>   | <i>all others</i> | <i>who</i> | <i>share</i> | <i>his twisted hatred of our nation.</i> |
| Circumstance     | Participant       |            | Process      | Participant                              |
| Circ: Role-guise | Actor             |            | Material     | Goal                                     |

Datum SD2/005

|            |                       |                    |  |
|------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--|
| <i>and</i> | <i>(evil thieves)</i> | <i>(will) prey</i> | <i>on their community on their vulnerable people on their children</i> |
|            | Participant           | Process            | Participant  |
|            | Actor                 | Material           | Goal   |

Datum SD2/074

The words were used as a material process on the speech discourse by George W. Bush and Scott Morrison can able to describe how terrorist images in their speeches. Bush used words such as *came under attack*, *were ended*. These words have a strong emotional connotation: the words *came under attack* and *were ended*, equivalent to against, kill, and destroy, which addressed America and their society. Several clauses above show that the recipient is negatively affected by the words used as the process material. Besides, the words used as the pronouns in the participant, such as *evil*, refers to the terrorists. He also uses the circumstantial element of location to indicate when the incident took place.

Furthermore, the words *share his twisted hatred* and *will prey* are used by Scott as the material process that has a negative context to construct the image of the terrorist. Meanwhile, the word used as the pronoun in the participant, such as *evil thieves*, refers to terrorists. The circumstantial element used, such as *as will* as the circumstantial element of guise-role.

## b. Mental Process

Mental processes have four categories, including perception, cognition, desideration, and emotion. The perception is done by seeing, the cognition is obtained by thinking process, guessing, and many more. The desideration is expressed by desire, while the emotion is

indicated by feeling. In the mental process, there are two participants where the sener is the first participant, and the phenomenon is the second participant. The following are some of the mental processes found in the two speech discourses, which are presented in the table form below.

|                                  |                                  |                   |                               |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>These acts of mass murder</i> | <i>were intended to frighten</i> | <i>our nation</i> | <i>into chaos and retreat</i> |
| Participant                      | Process                          | Participant       | Circumstance                  |
| Senser                           | Mental: emotion                  | Phenomenon        | Role-product                  |

Datum SD1/010

|               |                   |                     |   |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|
| <i>Today,</i> | <i>our nation</i> | <i>saw</i>          | <i>evil, the very worst of human nature</i> |
| Circumstance  | Participant       | Process             | Participant                                 |
| Location-time | Senser            | Mental: perspection | Phenomenon                                  |

Datum SD1/021

|                  |  |                               |                      |
|------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Yesterday</i> | <i>alone violent extremist Islamic HasanKhalif Shire Ali</i> | <i>sought to instill fear</i> | <i>in our nation</i> |
| Circumstance     | Participant  | Process                       | Circumstance         |
| Location-time    | Senser   | Mental: emotion               | Location-place       |

Datum SD2/002

|            |             |                      |                |                   |   |
|------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|---|
| <i>but</i> | <i>even</i> | <i>the terrorist</i> | <i>as well</i> | <i>reminding</i>  | <i>everyone what a decent, fair and human people we are</i> |
|            |             | Participant          | Circumstance   | Process           | Participant   |
|            |             | Senser               | Role- guise    | Mental: cognition | Phenomenon  |

Datum SD2/008

|             |                   |                        |   |
|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|---|
| <i>we</i>   | <i>hold dear</i>  | <i>in this country</i> | <i>to the threat of radical extremist Islam</i> |
| Participant | Process           | Circumstance           | Participant                                     |
| Senser      | Mental: cognition | Location-place         | Phenomenon                                      |

Datum SD2/096

The word *frightened* in Bush’s speech discourse, for example, is the mental process to describe terrorists. The words *frightened* shows negativity because it committed by *these acts of mass murder*, which refer to terrorists with intentional intentions. Meanwhile, the participant used by Bush also indicates negativity, such as *these acts of mass murder, evil*. The circumstantial elements used in his process, such as *today* (as the circumstantial element of

time-location. In the meantime, the words *into chaos and retreat* (as the circumstantial element of role product). This shows that the actions taken by the terrorist have an impact physically and mentally.

Meanwhile, in Scott Morrison’s speech discourses, the clauses in the mental process above show that Australia is a victim. This is shown through words used such as *sought to instill fear, reminding, and hold dear*. It indicates a positive image of Australia as a decent, fair, and human people in this country (it can be seen in the clause of SD2/008). At the same time, the words used to describe terrorists in the participant, such as *violent extremist Islamic, and radical extremist Islam*, which result in the negative image of a terrorist. The circumstance used in this process types such as *yesterday*(as the circumstantial element of time-location) and *in this country* (as the circumstantial element of place-location), which means to shows when and where it happened.

**c. Relational Process**

The relational process is the process of being and having where something is said to be something else. There are two categories in this process. The first is relational attributive, and the second is relational identifying. Both of these categories can be grouped according to whether the state is used to give quality to something (attribute) or dominate identity to something (identifying). Each of which has two participants: the carrier, the attribute, and the identified identifier. Several results were found in both data.

|                      |                         |   |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| <i>(the victims)</i> | <i>(were)</i>           | <i>secretaries, businessmen and women, military and federal workers; moms and dads, friends and neighbors</i> |
| Participant          | Process                 | Participant   |
| Identifier           | Relational: identifying | Identified  |

Datum SD1/004

|                              |                         |  |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| <i>(religious extremism)</i> | <i>is</i>               | <i>the radical and dangerous ideology of extremist Islam</i> |
| Participant                  | Process                 | Participant  |
| Identified                   | Relational: identifying | Identifier   |

Datum SD2/067

The data above shows America is represented as a victim of terrorist attacks. This shows America as a positive representation. It can be seen in the clauses of SD1/004. Whereas, the second example indicates how Scott Morrison as a speaker cursed the *religious extremism* refers to the terrorist by title *the radical and dangerous ideology of extremist Islam*. The word *the radical and dangerous ideology of extremist Islam* shows negative connotations.

**d. Behavioral process**

This process is the combination of mental processes and material processes. This process not only expresses the form of action but also relates to psychological processes. The behavioral process has only one participant, who is called behavior.

|             |                      |
|-------------|----------------------|
| <i>They</i> | <i>must be alert</i> |
| Participant | Process              |
| Behaver     | Behavioral           |

Datum SD2/085

Based on the example above, Scott Morrison used *they*, which refers to religious leaders. This shows that the Australian government asks the religious leader to must be alert (as the behavioral process) of terrorists.

**e. Verbal Process**

The verbal process is the process of saying something. In this process, there are three participants, and there are sayer, receiver, and verbiage. Sayer is a responsible participant in the verbal process. The recipient is the participant who is the target of the verbal process. Verbiage is a nominal statement of the verbal process. The following tables are some examples of verbal processes contained in the two speech discourses described.

|                |             |            |                         |   |
|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------------------|---|
| <i>Tonight</i> | <i>I</i>    | <i>ask</i> | <i>for your prayers</i> | <i>for all those who grieve, for the children whose worlds have been shattered, for all whose sense of safety and security has been threatened.</i> |
| Circumstance   | Participant | Process    | Participant             | Participant   |
| Location-time  | Sayer       | Verbal     | Receiver                | Verbiage  |

Datum SD1/048

|            |  |             |              |                               |
|------------|--|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>and</i> | <i>on behalf of the American people,</i> | <i>I</i>    | <i>thank</i> | <i>the many world leaders</i> |
|            | Circumstance                             | Participant | Process      | Participant                   |
|            | Cause-behalf                             | Sayer       | Verbal       | Receiver                      |

Datum SD1/045

|             |                               |   |
|-------------|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>I</i>    | <i>'ve got to call it out</i> | <i>radical violent extremist Islam that opposes our very way of life.</i> |
| Participant | Process                       | Participant   |
| Sayer       | Verbal                        | Verbiage  |

Datum SD1/058

|             |                |                  |                    |                            |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>I</i>    | <i>must be</i> | <i>the first</i> | <i>to call out</i> | <i>religious extremism</i> |
| Participant | Verbal         |                  |                    | Participant                |
| Sayer       | Verbal         |                  |                    | Verbiage                   |

Datum SD1/061

Bush used this process to solicit sympathy from other countries. This process also indicates a positive image of America, which many world leaders also support. In addition, the words used as the verbal process on speech discourse by Scott Morrison to describe terrorists in his speech are mostly shown negativity. The verbal process used by Scott Morrison to convey his ideas about terrorists where, as the sayer (participant, directly involved), used the words *radical violent extremist Islam*, and *religious extremism*, which have a very strong emotional, and indicate the negative connotative meaning of terrorist.

#### **f. Existential Process**

This process shows the existence of something, which is usually indicated through a clause structure with a grammatical subject "there is/are". This process is only found in the text of Scott Morrison's speech. This process shows what the Australian side is doing to combat terrorists.

Here is an example of the existential process found in Scott Morrison's speech discourse.

|              |                  |   |                      |
|--------------|------------------|---|----------------------|
| <i>there</i> | <i>have been</i> | <i>14 successful major counter terrorism disruptions operations in response to potential attacks planning</i> | <i>in Australia.</i> |
|              | Process          | Participant   | Circumstance         |
|              | Existential      | Existent  | Location-place       |

Datum SD2/032

### **CONCLUSION**

This study analyses the transitivity process in George. W. Bush and Scott Morrison's speech discourses about the 'war on terror'. The significance of this analysis is that it helps to discover the various types of processes about the 'war on terror' declared by two state officials. The transitivity highpoints the negative image associated with terrorism. In the selected clause of George W. Bush's speech, which consists of several process types, the dominant one is the material process. George W. Bush, as the speaker, uses several pronouns in the participant, such as *evil* which refers to terrorists. Material processes related to terrorists belong to the semantic field of violence and chaos: *came under attack, were ended*. Thus, the analysis shows the material process mostly shows violence and destruction. The data shows that the dominance of material processes signifies a negative representation of terrorists. Meanwhile, Bush uses relational processes to show America as a victim of atrocities committed by terrorists. Directly proportional to George W. Bush, Scott Morrison also mostly uses material processes in describing the image of terrorists in his speeches. Not only on the material process, but Scott also uses verbal processes to describe the image of terrorists in his speech. He chose the words such as *evil thieves, radical violent extremist Islam*, and *religious extremism*, which shows strong emotional connotations and negative images of terrorists. Furthermore, Scott uses mental processes to portray Australia as a victim. In addition, the circumstantial elements used in both speech discourses show more of the place and time, where and when the incident occurred. To sum up, in both speech discourses, the material process is the most dominant process than others. As a result, both George W. Bush and Scott Morrison portray negative images of terrorists, while America and Australia are represented positively and victims of terrorist acts.



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