

SIMULATING INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT IN BALAKA RAKSA EDUCATIONAL BOARD GAME: A NARRATIVE AND TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS

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ABSTRAK. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana narasi pada kartu tantangan Balaka Raksa mensimulasikan konflik interpersonal dengan menganalisis (1) organisasi naratif dalam membangun situasi konflik dan (2) konstruksi pengalaman dari interpersonal konflik situation pada narasi melalui pola transitivity. Data penelitian ini berupa narasi dari 45 kartu tantangan dalam permainan papan Balaka Raksa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis data yang dilakukan melalui tahapan kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan berdasarkan Miles et al. (2014). Narasi dianalisis menggunakan kerangka naratif Labov (1972) untuk mengidentifikasi organisasi peristiwa konflik dan sistem transitivity Halliday dan Matthiessen (2014) untuk menganalisis bagaimana pengalaman dikonstruksi melalui pilihan kebahasaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa situasi konflik dalam kartu tantangan diorganisasikan melalui empat tahapan naratif yang berulang, yaitu *orientation*, *complicating action*, dan *evaluation* yang sesuai dengan kerangka naratif alami Labov (1972), sementara *Prompt for Action* diidentifikasi sebagai tahapan tambahan yang juga muncul secara berulang dalam narasi. Pada tingkat pengalaman, situasi konflik terutama dikonstruksi melalui proses material dan mental, yang didukung oleh variasi peran partisipan dan elemen *circumstances* yang merepresentasikan konflik interpersonal dalam tiga konteks sosial, yaitu keluarga, teman sebaya, dan komunitas. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa struktur naratif dan makna pengalaman bekerja secara bersamaan dalam mensimulasikan konflik interpersonal pada media permainan papan edukatif.

Kata kunci: narasi; transitivity; Permainan Papan Edukatif

SIMULATING INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT IN BALAKA RAKSA EDUCATIONAL BOARD GAME: A NARRATIVE AND TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT. This study investigates how the challenge card narratives in Balaka Raksa simulate interpersonal conflict by examining (1) the narrative organization of conflict situations and (2) the experiential construction of those interpersonal conflict situations in narratives through transitivity patterns. The data consist of narratives from 45 challenge cards from the Balaka Raksa board game. This study employed a qualitative approach, with data analysis conducted through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing following Miles et al. (2014). The narratives were analyzed using Labov's (1972) narrative framework to identify the organization of conflict events and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) transitivity system to examine how experiences are constructed through linguistic choices. The findings show that conflict situations in the challenge cards are organized through four recurring narrative stages: *orientation*, *complicating action*, and *evaluation* which correspond to Labov (1972) natural narrative framework, while *Prompt for Action* was identified as an additional recurring stage. At the experiential level, conflict situations are mainly constructed through material and mental processes, supported by variations in participant roles and circumstances that represent interpersonal conflicts across three social settings: family, peer, and community. These findings demonstrate that narrative structure and experiential meaning work together in simulating interpersonal conflict within an educational board game.

Keywords: narrative; ; transitivity; educational board game

INTRODUCTION

Narrative represents experiences by organizing events into a structured sequence that helps readers understand how situations develop and how events are connected (Labov, 1972). Narrative has been incorporated into various forms of educational media, including branching narratives, gamebooks, and educational board games. Previous studies show that branching narratives and gamebooks can support communication and collaborative skills by engaging learners in choices that influence story outcomes (Fenici & Mosca, 2024). Similarly, in educational board games, narrative is used to present learning

content through contextualized scenarios. Since board games engage players through interactive experiences, narrative places learning within situations that players can actively respond to rather than through isolated instruction (Nautiyal et al., 2024; Sousa et al., 2023).

Balaka Raksa is an educational board game designed to support assertive communication among street children. The game consists of a game board and a set of cards, including challenge cards that present everyday interpersonal conflict through short

narratives. These narratives are used to simulate interpersonal conflict situations by placing players as the experimenter. Understanding how these narratives are organized provides a starting point for explaining how they simulate interpersonal conflict. According to Labov (1972), a narrative is organized into six stages: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. Labov's (1972) narrative framework was originally developed to analyze oral narratives, but it has since been applied to various forms of narrative across different media. Morkovina (2023) applied Labov's framework to analyze the narrative structure of gamebooks as a form of hypertext fiction and found several deviations from the linear scheme appeared. These included the merging of multiple components, the repetition of certain stages, and the elimination of some components. Most notably, the evaluation stage was performed by the reader rather than the text itself. According to Chen (2018), such variations are expected because Labov's framework has been applied to different narrative forms beyond oral narratives, in which narrative structure and the realization of narrative components may vary depending on the characteristics and communicative purposes of the narrative. Nevertheless, these variations do not limit the applicability of Labov's framework, which remains useful for examining how narratives are organized across different media and contexts.

While Labov's framework explains how events are organized across narrative stages, Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) transitivity system explains how those events are represented linguistically and how experiential meaning is constructed through different process types, participants, and circumstances. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) identify six process types in the transitivity system: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential. As part of the ideational metafunction, the transitivity system has been widely applied to examine how different forms of discourse represent experience. Osawa (2022) applied the transitivity system to analyze English reading materials for peace education, focusing on how conflict and peace were represented through different process types. The study found that variations in transitivity choices reflected different ideological perspectives toward conflict, demonstrating that transitivity analysis is useful for examining how conflict-related experiences are linguistically constructed in educational materials. Previous studies have applied Labov's narrative framework and Halliday and Matthiessen's transitivity system to examine how narratives are structured and how experiences are constructed through language. Morkovina (2023) applied Labov's (1972) framework

to analyze gamebooks as a form of hypertext fiction and found that interactive narratives may show variations from the linear narrative structure, such as the merging, repetition, or omission of certain narrative stages. This finding demonstrates that Labov's framework can be adapted to examine narratives beyond oral storytelling. Similarly, Osawa (2022) used Halliday's transitivity system to analyze educational reading materials and found that different process types represented conflict-related experiences through distinct linguistic patterns. Furthermore, Ahmad (2023) combined Labov's narrative framework and Halliday's transitivity system to examine how a literary narrative organized events and constructed experiences, showing the value of integrating both approaches in narrative analysis.

In the context of games, previous studies have also explored the role of narrative from different perspectives. Wandana and Gunawan (2025) examined how transitivity patterns in a commercial video game contributed to protagonist characterization, while Devasia et al. (2025) investigated how narrative contexts influenced players' immersion and identification in educational escape-room games. These studies demonstrate the importance of narrative in shaping game experiences; however, they primarily focus on narrative as a storytelling feature or its influence on players rather than on how narrative language constructs conflict experiences. Therefore, limited attention has been given to how narratives in educational board games are organized and how they construct experiential meaning to simulate interpersonal conflict.

This study investigates how the challenge card narratives in *Balaka Raksa* simulate interpersonal conflict by examining (1) the narrative organization of conflict situations and (2) the experiential construction of those situations through transitivity patterns. By combining Labov's narrative framework and Halliday and Matthiessen's transitivity system, this study provides insight into how conflict experiences are structured and represented through language in an educational board game. The findings contribute to humanities studies, particularly in language and literary studies, by expanding the understanding of narrative analysis beyond conventional texts into interactive educational media. Furthermore, this study contributes to cultural studies by highlighting how educational games can represent everyday interpersonal experiences and shape the way social situations are presented through language

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to examine how interpersonal conflict is

simulated in the challenge cards of the Balaka Raksa educational board game, as outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018). The data consisted of narratives from 45 challenge cards of Balaka Raksa Board Game. The data were collected using documentation as the data collection technique. The data were collected using documentation as the data collection technique following the principles of document analysis proposed by Bowen (2009). Each challenge card narratives was compiled into a corpus and segmented into individual clauses to facilitate narrative and transitivity analysis. The clauses were then coded based on the card number and clause sequence (e.g., 11C5, 22C3b) to ensure systematic identification throughout the analysis.

The data were analyzed following the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During data condensation, each narrative was segmented into clauses and organized for analysis. The narratives were first examined using Labov's (1972) narrative framework to identify the organization of conflict events through narrative stages. Subsequently, each clause was analyzed using Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) transitivity system to identify process types, participant roles, and circumstances involved in constructing experiential meaning. The coding results were then organized into analytical tables to identify recurring patterns across the challenge card narratives. Finally, the findings were interpreted in relation to the narrative organization and transitivity patterns that construct interpersonal conflict experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of this study, which are organized based on the two research questions. The first part discusses the narrative organization of conflict situations in the challenge cards narratives through Labov's (1972) narrative framework. The second part examines the experiential construction of the narratives through Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) transitivity system by analyzing process types, participants, and circumstances.

1. Narrative Organization

The findings show that three narrative stages from Labov's (1972) natural narrative framework were identified across all 45 narrative scenario cards.

Table 1. Narrative Construction

Narrative Element	Technical Indicator	Frequency
Orientation	Setting time, place, participant, and activity	45/45
Complicating Action	Conflict trigger, external event, verbal/physical action	45/45
Evaluation	Internal reaction (emotion/cognition), subject's intention, dilemma	44/45
Action Prompt	Hypothetical condition + Prompt for action	45/45

As shown in Table 1, three of these stages; Orientation, Complicating Action, and Evaluation, correspond to Labov (1972) natural narrative framework, while Prompt for Action was identified as an additional recurring stage. These stages organize the progression of events and construct the social situations experienced by the player throughout the gameplay narratives.

a. Orientation

Orientation stages appear as the opening of the narratives. The orientation stage builds the social context and identifies the participant roles. This stage gives players the background information needed to understand the situation. This contextual construction can be seen in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 1 (1C1)

Pada sore hari [In the afternoon]

This clause establishes the temporal setting of the event by indicating when the situation takes place. It provides contextual information that helps players understand the beginning of the narrative.

Excerpt 2 (5C1)

Kamu meminjam bola dari tetanggamu untuk bermain di lapangan [You borrow a ball from your neighbor to play on the field],

This clause introduces the participant roles, activity, and initial situation before the emergence of conflict. According to Labov (1972), the orientation stage functions to answer contextual questions such as who is involved, when the events occur, where the events take place, and what situation is being experienced. Therefore, the orientation stage in the Balaka Raksa cards plays an important role in constructing situational clarity and preparing players to interpret the social conflicts that develop in the following stages of the narrative.

b. Complicating Action

The second stage is complicating action. This stage functions to introduce conflict or social tension within the narratives. This stage functions to disturb the initial condition established in the orientation stage. This construction can be seen in the following excerpt from the narratives.

Excerpt 3 (6C3)

Tak lama kemudian, warga menegur kalian karena dianggap kurang sopan di tempat ibadah [Shortly afterward, people scold you for being disrespectful in a place of worship]

The clause shows the emergence of social tension. According to Labov (1972), the complicating action functions as the core event sequence by introducing actions or events that disturb the previous condition and push the story forward. Therefore, the complicating action stage in the Balaka Raksa cards plays an important role in building social dilemmas that encourage players to recognize conflict situations

c. Evaluation

The third stage is evaluation. This stage adds emotional depth by expressing how the character feels about the situation. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 4 (13C4)

Kamu merasa kaget dan malu, lalu mulai menyadari bahwa tempat itu mungkin kurang aman untuk bermain [You feel shocked and embarrassed, then begin to realize that the place may not be safe for playing.]

The clause shows the protagonist's emotional reaction and growing awareness after facing a conflict situation. Through the evaluative elements, the narratives place the player as an emotional experiencer of the events shown in the cards. According to Labov (1972), the evaluation stage serves to highlight the significance of narrative events and emphasize the point at which the complication reaches its highest tension. Through evaluation, the narrator signals why the story is meaningful and guides the listener toward the emotional and interpersonal significance of the conflict. Therefore, evaluation serves to highlight the seriousness and consequences of the social situation depicted in the narrative. In the Balaka Raksa cards, the evaluation stage plays an important role in constructing emotional engagement and encouraging players to recognize that social conflicts involve emotional and interpersonal consequences.

d. Prompt for Action

In this stages, he narratives proceed to the construction of hypothetical conditions followed by prompts for player response. The stages commonly appear through clauses such as:

Excerpt 5 (11C5)

Kalau kamu ada di situasi itu, apa yang akan kamu katakan? [If you were in that situation, what would you say?]

This clause directly positions the player as an active responder to the conflict situations. This stage

functions by inviting the player to determine possible responses to the presented conflict situations instead of fully resolving them. Through this structure, the narratives shift the player's role to be an active participant in the decision making process.

The findings also show that the Balaka Raksa cards leave out three stages from Labov's original framework. The absence of the abstract stage, resolution stage, and the coda stage shows a difference between natural oral stories and game-based learning materials. A similar pattern was found by Bockler (2021), who examined narrative and gameplay mechanics in Mass Effect 2 and found that not all of Labov's narrative stages were present in game narratives. The study suggests that the realization of narrative stages may vary depending on the function and purpose of the medium.

2. Experiential Construction

The findings reveal that the narratives are constructed through experiential representation of actions, emotions, conditions, and social interactions. These experiential meanings are realized through transitivity involving material, mental, relational, verbal, and behavioral processes throughout the 45 narrative cards. The distribution of process types identified in the narratives is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Process type across the narrative (n = 499)

Process Type	Community	Peer	Family	Total
Material	63	71	53	187
Mental	50	44	38	132
Verbal	33	34	27	94
Relational	23	14	29	66
Behavioural	2	4	14	20
Total	171	167	161	499

Table 2 presents the distribution of process types identified across the narratives. The findings show that material processes occur most frequently throughout the narratives, followed by mental, relational, verbal, and behavioral processes.

a. Material Process

Material processes appear as the most dominant process type throughout the narratives. These processes are commonly realized through clauses representing physical activities and observable social actions. The frequent use of material processes demonstrates that the gameplay narrative constructs experiential situations action-based representations involving everyday activities and interpersonal interaction.

Excerpt 6 (1C2a)

Kamu berjalan sendirian [You walk alone]

In this clause, *kamu* [you] functions as the Actor, while *berjalan* [walk] realizes the Material Process. No Goal is present because the action is directed only toward the Actor. The clause represents a physical

activity performed by the participant and contributes to the construction of the narrative setting before the conflict emerges.

b. Mental Process

Mental processes appear as the second most dominant process type. These processes are primarily realized through clauses representing emotions, feelings, and psychological experiences encountered by the participant *kamu* [you] throughout the narratives. The frequent occurrence of mental processes indicates that the gameplay narratives not only represent external actions but also construct the participant's internal reactions to conflict situations. Through these processes, players are positioned as experiencers who evaluate and emotionally respond to the events unfolding within the narrative.

Excerpt 7 (3C4a)

Kamu merasa bingung [you feel confused]

In this clause, *kamu* [you] functions as the Sayer, while *merasa* [feel] realizes the Mental Process. The participant *bingung* [confused] functions as the Phenomenon, representing the emotional state experienced by the Sayer. The clause portrays the participant's psychological response to a social situation and indicates the uncertainty that emerges as part of the conflict experience.

Excerpt 8 (41C4a)

Kamu merasa tidak nyaman [you feel uncomfortable]

In this clause, *kamu* [you] functions as the Sayer, while *merasa* [feel] realizes the Mental Process. The participant *tidak nyaman* [uncomfortable] functions as the Phenomenon, representing the feeling experienced by the Sayer. The clause demonstrates how the narrative positions the participant as an experiencer of emotional discomfort.

c. Relational Process

Relational processes are used to describe conditions, states, and qualities of participants or situations within the narratives. These processes show how the gameplay represents conflict situations not only through actions and emotions, but also through descriptions of how something is or becomes. Through relational processes, the narratives provide information about the condition of the situation.

Excerpt 9 (20C4a)

Situasi menjadi tegang [The situation becomes tense]

In this clause, *situasi* [the situation] functions as the Carrier, while *menjadi* [becomes] realizes the Relational Process. The participant *tegang* [tense] functions as the Attribute, assigning a particular quality to the Carrier. The clause characterizes the

situation as increasingly strained and signals the escalation of conflict within the narrative.

d. Verbal Process

Verbal processes are used to represent acts of speaking and communication between participants. These processes show how conflict situations are also constructed through language, where participants express accusations, responses, and statements within social interactions. Through verbal processes, the narratives represent communication as part of the unfolding events in the conflict situations.

Excerpt 10 (12C4c)

Ibu itu terkejut dan berkata, "Hehh! kamu mencuri ya?" [The woman was shocked and said, "Hey! Did you steal it?"]

In this clause, *ibu itu* [the woman] functions as the Sayer, while *berkata* [said] realizes the Verbal Process. The quoted utterance "*Hehh! kamu mencuri ya?*" ["Hey! Did you steal it?"] functions as the Verbiage. The clause represents an act of accusation directed toward the participant *kamu* [you]. Through the verbal process, the narrative simulates conflict experience by presenting a direct verbal confrontation between the participants. The accusation creates interpersonal tension and positions the player as the target of a negative judgment.

e. Behavioral Process

Behavioral processes appear less frequently compared to other process types. The processes are realized through clauses that show observable human behavior. The behavior reflects both physical actions and psychological states. The presence of behavioral processes shows that the narratives also capture the outward reactions of participants in social situations.

Excerpt 11 (41C2a)

Semua tertawa dan bersenang-senang [Everyone laughed and enjoyed themselves]

In this clause, *semua* [everyone] functions as the Behaver, while *tertawa* [laughed] and *bersenang-senang* [enjoyed themselves] realize the Behavioural Process. The clause represents observable behaviour performed by participants in the situation. It shows how the narrative portrays group reactions that emerge from social interactions, where participants express enjoyment and shared responses within the scene.

In addition to the recurring process types identified throughout the narratives, the textual elements in the Balaka Raksa board game are further constructed through participant and circumstantial patterns. The findings demonstrate the consistent positioning of the participant *kamu* [You] as the central experiencer throughout the gameplay narratives, accompanied by different social actors and contextual circumstances across the community,

family, and peer themes. The participant and circumstantial patterns identified across the three themes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. participant and circumstantial patterns

Functional Component		Community (15/45)	Family (15/45)	Peer (15/45)
Participant	Protagonist	<i>Kamu</i> [You]	<i>Kamu</i> [You]	<i>Kamu</i> [You]
	Social Actor	<i>Warga</i> [Community members], <i>Satpol PP</i> [Public Order Officers], <i>pembeli</i> [Customers]	<i>Ibu</i> [mother], <i>ayah</i> [father], <i>adik</i> [younger sibling]	<i>Teman</i> [friend(s)]
Circumstance	Temporal	<i>Pagi hari</i> [morning], <i>malam minggu</i> [Saturday Night]	<i>Pagi</i> [morning], <i>sore hari</i> [afternoon]	<i>Setelah bermain bola</i> [after playing football]
	Spatial	<i>Trotoar</i> [sidewalk], <i>taman kota</i> [city park]	<i>Dapur</i> [kitchen], <i>ruang keluarga</i> [living room]	<i>Lapangan</i> [field], <i>taman</i> [park]

Table 3. shows the participant and circumstantial patterns across the community, family, and peer themes. While *kamu* [you] consistently functions as the Subject participant, the Social Actors and circumstances are selected to reflect the social context represented in each theme. Community-themed narratives are characterized by interactions with members of the wider society in public settings, family-themed narratives involve family members within household environments, and peer-themed.

Furthermore, the transitivity analysis reveals that interpersonal conflict experiences are constructed through different linguistic choices involving process types, participants, and circumstances. Material and mental processes appear as the dominant process types, showing that the narratives represent conflict through both observable actions and internal emotional experiences. The consistent positioning of “*kamu*” as the central participant also places players as experiencers who engage with everyday social situations involving community members, family, and peers.

CONCLUSION

In Conclusion, this study examined how the challenge card narratives in the Balaka Raksa educational board game simulate interpersonal conflict through narrative organization and experiential construction. The findings show that the narratives employ four recurring narrative elements, consisting of Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, and Prompt for Action. While three stages

correspond to Labov’s (1972) narrative framework, the addition of Prompt for Action and the absence of the abstract, resolution, and coda stages indicate that the narrative structure is adapted to the interactive and educational purposes of the game.

This study focuses only on narratives as one of the textual elements in the Balaka Raksa educational board game. Therefore, future studies may expand the analysis by examining other textual elements within the game, such as game instructions and other written components, as well as exploring visual and multimodal elements that contribute to meaning-making in educational board games. Such studies may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how different game components work together to construct experiences and support learning processes.

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