

# The Role of Ergative Clauses in Developing Narrative Genre:

## A Case Study of A Detective Novel Entitled Angels and Demons by Dan Brown

**Bayu Dewa Murti**

Linguistics Postgraduate Programme  
Universitas Sebelas Maret  
Jl. Ir. Sutami Surakarta, Indonesia  
bayudewamurti@gmail.com

**M. R. Nababan**

Faculty of Cultural Science  
Universitas Sebelas Maret  
Jl. Ir. Sutami Surakarta, Indonesia

**Riyadi Santosa**

Faculty of Cultural Science  
Universitas Sebelas Maret  
Jl. Ir. Sutami Surakarta, Indonesia

**Tri Wiratno**

Faculty of Cultural Science  
Universitas Sebelas Maret  
Jl. Ir. Sutami Surakarta, Indonesia

**Abstract**—This research examines how ergative clauses develop phases and stages in narrative genre in detective novel. As we all know that ergative clauses expose or sometimes hide the additional agent what Martin et al called as extra causer. In their nature, the extra causers derive roles in the clause such as initiator, attributor, assigner, and inducer. These roles depend on the types of processes in their experiential meaning in the clauses. On the other hand, detective novel contains mystery where the characters attempt to uncover it by investigating, interrogating and speculating. In this kind of job, the characters will probably exploit ergativity. This study belongs to a qualitative research with embedded case study investigating a detective novel entitled *Angels and Demons*. It applies total sampling to figure out the role ergative clauses in developing phases and stages in the novel. The data are analyzed in domain, taxonomy, componential analyses and finding cultural values. The finding indicates that certain types of ergative clauses help construct the types of phases depending on the types of stages of the genre. Thus, it can be concluded that ergative clauses play roles in building up the mystery in the novel.

**Keywords**—*ergative; phases; stages; genre; narrative*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Ergativity has two different perspectives in linguistics. The first one, it is about inflection that marking transitive verb (Dixon, 2010:426) and for the other one discuss about different perspective of transitivity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2015; Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter, 2010). The ergativity from Dixon is related to the traditional grammar which concern with the absence of the agent without considering the classification, but different with Martin's concept about ergativity which related to systemic functional grammar that describe the additional agent based on the process in their experiential meaning in the clauses.

The study about ergativity has been done by some researchers (Aldridge, 2012; Coon, 2012; Doron & Khan, 2012; Ezeizabarrena, 2012; Legate, 2014; Markman & Grashchenkov, 2012; McGregor, 2010; Polinsky, Gallo, Graff, & Kravtchenko, 2012; Rumsey, 2010) by using the different perspective (R. M. W. Dixon, 2010b, 2010a; Robert Malcolm Ward Dixon, 2012) from ergativity in systemic functional grammar which will be the main focus in this research. In addition, the researcher has not find yet about the previous research about ergativity based on Martin concept. Therefore, this will be the significant gap to this research.

The researcher adapt the Martin's concept of ergativity to help analyze the sequence of activity in the narrative genre, especially in detective novel. This research is aimed to investigate whether the ergativity assist to build the phase in constructing the genre. As Martin et al (2010) stated that it is constructed the sequence of activity that is called as generic structures. The researcher chose detective novel entitled *Angels & Demons* by Dan Brown to be the subject of research. It is claimed that this novel (Brown, 2000) is suitable for gaining the data to this research, and the research only use this novel as far as the variables can be obtained comprehensively.

### II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

#### A. Ergativity

Ergativity or ergative perspective is another point of view to experiential reality in addition to transitivity within the ideational meta function . The point of view of transitivity breaks down reality based on processes and participants as direct agents in a clause. However, an ergativity point of view, there is an extra agent that is the cause of events in the clause.

So often, what is considered an agent in transitivity is actually a medium or an intermediary agent. Therefore, context often determines a participant's agent or medium.

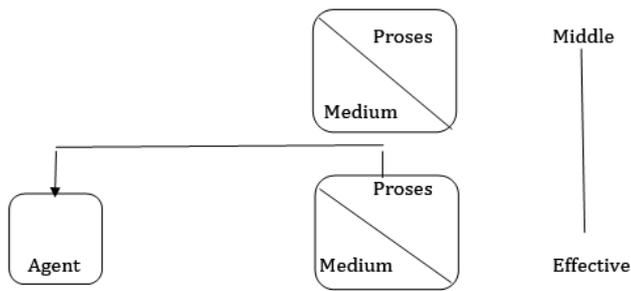


Fig. 1. Ergative perspective. (Adapted from Martin, 2010)

In a transitive figure, the process affects the goal or goal (transitive). While the ergative figure, the process gives effect to the agent (effective). For more details, here is an example of the difference between a clause containing a middle voice (without an agent) and effective voice (with an agent).

TABLE I. MIDDLE AND EFFECTIVE CLAUSE

Process& medium (middle)	Agent who is doing the action / process (effective)
The baby bounced	The father bounced the baby
The pizza cooked	Tim cooked the pizza
The clothes dried	Mac dried the clothes

(Adapted from Martin 2010)

In the left-hand column or middle clause, the five clauses look like they have an agent, but they are not. The constituents that occupy as subjects in the five clauses such as 'the baby', 'the pizza', 'the clothes', are only mediums. Unlike the right-hand column or the effective clause column, the five clauses have the actual agent. In the first clause, it is unlikely that a baby can swing by itself. There is an agent or actor who swung the baby is the father. The same thing happens in the fifth clause, it is impossible for a ship to sink by itself without any cause. And it turns out extra causer or the cause is a storm that drowned the ship. With this ergative perspective the researchers can find out who or what is behind an action or process.

TABLE II. ADDITIONAL AGENTS IN MULTI PROCESSES

Additional Agents	Examples			
You Initiator	Will help Process-	Us Actor	Monitor -material	This Goal
	Other verbs: make, let, get (something) do			
These programs Inducer	Let Process-	Parents Senser	Understand -mental	Their responsibilities Phenomenon
	Other verbs: persuade, convince, assure, satisfy			
His experience Assigner	Makes Process-	Him Token	(be) -identifying	The best judge Value
	Other verbs: elect, name, vote, call, make			
The new school Attributor	Has made Process-	Him Carrier	(be) -attributive	More rebellious Attribute
	Other verbs: keep, leave, drive			

(Adapted from Martin, 2010)

By looking at the various phenomenons above, it is possible to have additional agents or additional agents in ergativity. Additional agents proclaimed by Martin et al (2010) that there are four namely initiators, inducers, assigners and attributors. In the table II shows the additional agents and their example clauses.

**B. Genre**

Genre that was excavated by Martin in addition to factual is the genre of the story. This genre has a purpose to entertain. But not only that a few genres are also used to mock issues or phenomena that occur in society. Although this type of genre is a genre of the story, but in fact it has nothing to do with literary works which in fact is also a series of stories. In Western societies, the classification of the genre type of the story is based on the sequence of its social activities (Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter, 1997; Martin & Rose, 2007). Therefore, for the genre of this story has 4 types of recount, anecdotes, exemplum and narration. The social function reconstruction genre recounts events or the existence of social phenomena in society. Of course this recon is different from the reconnaissance of the factual genre because reconnaissance in the story genre has no unusual or ordinary (recording / phenomenon) events (Martin & Rose, 2007; Santosa, 2011). While other types of genres such as anecdotes, exemplum and narrative something unusual that became a special characteristic. The sequence of activities can be seen in the following table:

TABLE III. STORY GENRE

Types of Genre	Sequence of Activity		
Recount	Record of events		
Anecdote	Crisis	Reaction	
Exemplum	Incident	Interpretation	
Narrative	Complication	Evaluation	Resolution

(Adapted from Martin 1992 in Santosa 2012)

By looking at the table III, it can be seen that the sequence of events / events in the recording genre is a recording of events that are ordinary or common. But unlike anecdotes that have something unusual or extraordinary in the flow of crisis events which is then connected with a reaction. Such reactions vary in various forms such as frustrating misses, satisfied, safe and so on depending on the crisis. The same can be found in the genre of eksemplum that something unusual occurs in an incident plot which is then greeted with an interpretation whose content is a representation or inference of an incident that occurred. And the latter is the narrative genre, which gives rise to the unusual in the path of complications that eventually leads to a problem. Then departing from the problem is finally investigated in the evaluation flow so as to find a solution for solving the problem in the resolution path. This narrative genre will be used by researchers to explain the flow of events in the novel A & D in accordance with its structure so as to enable researchers to see the change in the flow of the story activity.

**III. METHODOLOGY**

This research is a qualitative descriptive research and embedded case study. This study is descriptive because this research tries to describe the patterns of extra-purpose ergative clauses contained in Dan Brown's Angels and Demons detective genre. This is in accordance with what is expressed by Surakhmad (1994: 139) which states that the descriptive investigation interprets existing data, for example about views, processes that take place, attitudes and so forth. Then, this research is also qualitative because the research data is an ergative extra cause clause that is analyzed based on the type of process and the role of the participants.

This study includes a case study or embedded case study (Sutopo, 2006: 137), because before the study was conducted, the researcher has determined the formulation of the problem or case first. This study included a single case study and the research focuses only on the novel detective genre called Angels and Demons.

**IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

Before discuss to the main topic, researcher provides the ergative data based on Dixon concept. This data taken from previous research (McGregor, 2010). Examples:

'He is the one who prepares the meals.'

From the provided data, Mcgregor described that the ergative mark lies on the subject 'He' and 'He' is an agent (rather than a patient, recipient, or whatever). In this research, he only identified the ergative marker and there is no further explanation about the classification. This is where the distinctive feature of Martin concept to the ergativity. This is only about identifying the agent, but the classification of the agent will be determined as well based on the process. One more examples about ergative based on Dixon concept (Legate, 2014):

'The man will hit me'

Legate defined that the words 'the man' is noun phrase and the head of the noun marked as ergative, the word 'hit' as the verb then finally 'me' as the object. Legate only stated about the phrase in the initial clause as the agent of the verb (Thompson, 2004), but still doesnt mention the classification of the agent. It means that the concept from Dixon about egativity does not as deep as the Martin concept of ergativity. So thats why in this research, the concept from Martin will be conducted to analyze the novel to figure out the phase in each stage.

The researcher investigated that there are many phases in every stage in the narative genre. As the researcher explained before that the narrative genre has three stages, they are complication, evaluation and resolution. But there is one stage exist before the complication, and it is orientation. The orientation tells the reader about the introduction of the characters and the setting in the story. In this case, the researcher found that there is also small conflict that appeared in the orientation, it is also known as introductory conflict. So this small conflict or fractions that exist in the orientation stage has a function to lead the readers to the main conflict

that may exist in the complication. In the mean time, the researcher also found the role of ergativity in building the phase to the stage. In this data that is found in orientation stage, there is a phase as a small conflict that Robert Langdon (the main character) recieved a fax and brutal photos within. The image on the page was that of a human corpse. Here the researcher provides the data:

The body	had been stripped	naked
Carrier	Attributive relational process	Attribute

Agentless: Illuminati worshipper as attributor

Fig. 2. Analysis of ergative clause

The word "the body in the clause as a carrier, and then the process "had been stripped" as a attributive relational, then the word "naked as attributive. From this data the researcher observed that there is no explicit agent that did the process. But, by relating to the context, in the page, it has a symbol that it is quiet familiar to Langdon, it is the symbol of Illuminati. So, from the context, the researcher figured out the agent / the doer that stripped the body of victim, it was the illuminati worshipper. As the classification that Martin stated about additional agent based on the process, the type of agent in the clause is an attributor.

its head	had been twisted	facing completely backward
Recipient	Material process	Circumstance

Agentless: Illuminati worshipper as initiator

Fig. 3. Analysis of ergative clause

The second data, still at the orientation stage, the researcher observed that there is no explicit agent in the clause. By relating to the context, the real agent or the doer is the Illuminati worshipper who twisted the head of the victim. The type of agent based on the process is an initiator.

The man	had been branded
Carrier	Attributive relational process

Agentless: Illuminati worshipper as attributor

Fig. 4. Analysis of ergative clause

The third data in the orientatin stage, the researcher also found implicit agent. The existence of the agent in the clause is nil. By relating to the context, the real agent or the doer is the Illuminati worshipper who branded the man. The type of agent based on the process is an attributor.

Imprinted	with a single word
Material process	Circumstance

Agentless: Illuminati worshipper as initiator

Fig. 5. Analysis of ergative clause

The fourth data in the orientation stage, again, the researcher found implicit agent in the clause. The body of victim was imprinted by someone with a single word, By relating to the context, the real agent or the doer is the Illuminati worshipper who did that. The type of agent based on the process is an initiator.

Langdon	collapsed	in a chair
Carrier	Attributive relational process	circumstance

Agentless: illuminati fax as attributor

Fig. 6. Analysis of ergative clause

The fifth data in the orientation stage, finally the researcher found the agent directly in the clause. As we can see in the table above, “Langdon” as the carrier, the word “collapse” as an attributive relational process and then “in a chair” as the circumstance. If the reader read this clause directly, we know that “Langdon” as the agent, but not the real agent. In this case, there is a role of ergativity that “Langdon” as a person has a role as a medium. Relating to the context, Langdon collapse in a chair after he finished observing the fax. So the researcher may conclude that the real agent is the Illuminati fax as attributor based on the type of process. So in this phase we have a sequence activities that lead the reader to the small conflict that chronologically construct the stage.

#### V. CONCLUSION

By seeing from those five example data, the researcher succeeded to construe the phase that build the stage. Those five data are the phase of introductory conflict that exist before the phase of character and setting introduction. So in this stage, orientation stage, the researcher found three stages; character introduction, setting introduction and introductory conflict. On the other, the researcher also found that those five data consisting ergativity. This ergative clause made the reader unable to understand the circumstances easily, and the writer made this kind of situation in purpose. This deliberateness is conducted by the writer for getting the unclear situation as the character of detective novel. Finally, from the examples data above, the researcher claimed that the ergativity is able to develop the construction of narrative genre in the detective novel. Even better, the ergative clause made the situation in the story to be more effective in building the plot of detective novel.

### References

Aldridge, E. (2012). Antipassive and ergativity in Tagalog. *Lingua*, 122(3), 192–203. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2011.10.012>

Brown, D. (2000). *Angels and demons*. New York: Pocket Books.

Coon, J. (2012). Split ergativity and transitivity in Chol. *Lingua*, 122(3), 241–256. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2011.11.005>

Dixon, R. M. W. (2010a). *Basic linguistic theory, vol. 1: Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dixon, R. M. W. (2010b). *Basic linguistic theory, Vol. 2: Grammatical topics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dixon, R. M. W. (2012). *Basic linguistic theory*, 569. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CB09781107415324.004>

Doron, E., & Khan, G. (2012). The typology of morphological ergativity in Neo-Aramaic. *Lingua*,

122(3), 225–240. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2011.11.008>

Ezeizabarrena, M. J. (2012). The (in)consistent ergative marking in early Basque: L1 vs. child L2. *Lingua*, 122(3), 303–317. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2011.11.009>

Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2015). *Introduction to functional grammar*. London: Routledge.

Legate, J. A. (2014). Split ergativity based on nominal type. *Lingua*, 148, 183–121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2014.06.002>

Markman, V. G., & Grashchenkov, P. (2012). On the adpositional nature of ergative subjects. *Lingua*, 122(3), 257–266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2011.10.010>

Martin, J. R., Matthiessen, C. M. I. M., & Painter, C. (1997). *Working with functional grammar*. London: The Hodder Headline Group.

Martin, J. R., Matthiessen, C. M. I. M., & Painter, C. (2010). *Deploying functional grammar*. Beijing: The Commercial Press.

Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2007). *Working with discourse: Meaning beyond the clause*. London: Continuum.

McGregor, W. B. (2010). Optional ergative case marking systems in a typological-semiotic perspective. *Lingua*, 120(7), 1610–1636. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2009.05.010>

Polinsky, M., Gallo, C. G., Graff, P., & Kravtchenko, E. (2012). Subject preference and ergativity. *Lingua*, 122(3), 267–277. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2011.11.004>

Rumsey, A. (2010). “Optional” ergativity and the framing of reported speech. *Lingua*, 120(7), 1652–1676. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2009.05.012>

Santosa, R. (2011). *Logika wacana*. Surakarta: UNS Press.

Thompson, G. (2004). *Introducing functional grammar*. London: The Hodder Headline Group.