

VERBAL PHRASES IN THE NOVEL *LIFE OF PI*: A SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study is intended to find out the types and functions of verbal phrases used in the novel *Life of Pi*. This research belongs to descriptive qualitative research, where the data are not analyzed by using statistical procedure; the data in this research are taken from the novel *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. To collect the data the writer uses the noting technique. The first step, the writer read and observed carefully to find out the verbal phrases. Then, the writer took notes of the sentences contained verbal phrases in *Life of Pi*, and then analyzed the data by classifying the verbal phrases and finding the function of verbal phrases. The research finding shows that there are three types of verbal phrases used in the novel *Life of Pi*, namely, gerund phrase, infinitive phrase, and participial phrase. Each type of verbal phrases has a different function. The researcher finds three functions of verbal phrases, namely noun, adjective, and adverb. Gerund phrase functions as a noun. Infinitive phrase functions as a noun, an adjective, and an adverb. Participial phrase functions as an adjective and as an adverb.

Keywords: *verbal phrases, Life of Pi, Syntactic Analysis*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dimaksudkan untuk mengetahui jenis dan fungsi frasa verbal yang digunakan dalam novel *Life of Pi*. Penelitian ini termasuk penelitian kualitatif, dimana data tidak dianalisis dengan menggunakan prosedur statistik, data dalam penelitian ini diambil dari novel *Life of Pi* karya Yann Martel. Untuk mengumpulkan data, penulis menggunakan teknik mencatat. Langkah pertama, penulis membaca dan mengamati dengan seksama untuk mengetahui frasa verbal. Kemudian, penulis mencatat kalimat-kalimat yang terdapat frasa verbal di *Life of Pi*, kemudian menganalisis data dengan mengklasifikasikan frasa verbal dan menemukan fungsi frasa verbal. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada tiga jenis frasa verbal yang digunakan dalam novel *Life of Pi*, yaitu frasa *gerund*, frasa *infinitive*, dan frasa *participial*. Setiap jenis frase verbal memiliki fungsi yang berbeda. Peneliti menemukan tiga fungsi frasa verbal, yaitu kata benda, kata sifat dan kata keterangan. Frasa *Gerund* berfungsi sebagai kata benda. Frasa *infinitive* berfungsi sebagai kata benda, kata sifat, dan kata keterangan. Frase *participial* berfungsi sebagai kata sifat dan kata keterangan.

Kata kunci: *frase verbal, Life of Pi, analisis intaksis*

INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, the study about the sentence of languages is the syntax. The syntax is the study of the principles and processes which sentences are constructed in particular languages. The study of syntax is fundamental to linguistics and language study. It is because of syntax studies the rules and the ways in which words combined to form phrases, clauses, and sentences. Moreover, Crystal (1992) stated that syntax is the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences. In other words, syntax studies the sentence structures. There are many grammatical forms in a sentence. One of them is a phrase. In grammar, a phrase is a group of words that does not contain a verb and its subject and is used as a single part of speech.

Verbal phrase is one kind of phrases in English which is frequently used. A verbal phrase is a verb form that does not serve as a verb in the sentence. Instead, it functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb. Verbal phrases contain verb elements but

function as a noun, adjective, or adverb. There are three types of verbal phrases, they are gerund phrase, infinitive phrase, and participial phrase. Each phrase is used in a different way. The gerund phrase is used as a noun. The infinitive phrase is used as a noun, an adjective or an adverb. The participial is used as an adjective and an adverb.

Understanding verbal phrases are important, especially in understanding literary works. In this modern era, there is a great development of literary works. Many people are interested in learning literary works. The literary study expands our capacity to sympathize with other human beings, enhances our ability to see and imagine human complexity, and broadens our intellectual horizons by enlarging our power to life experience vicariously.

One of the literary works that is largely read by people all over the world is novel. A novel is a piece of fictional prose usually written in a narrative style. A novel is an invented story in prose, long enough to fill a

complete book. One of the quite well-known novels is *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. This novel was published in 2001, it has been sold more than ten million copies worldwide. It's also made into a film with the same title. Therefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing this novel especially the linguistic units which focus on verbal phrases.

Syntax

In general, the syntax is a study of sentences; it is about how to formulate well-formed sentences. The syntax is the arrangement of words into phrases and of phrases into a sentence (Hornby, 1995:1212). A similar definition is also given by Hadumodbusmann (1998:1169). He says, "Syntax is a subcategory of the grammar of natural languages: a system of rules which describe how all well-formed sentences of a language can be derived from basic elements."

Phrase

Hadumodbusmann (1998:902) states, "A phrase is a term for word

groups without a finite verb that belongs together syntactically". Furthermore, leech (1989:361) states, "a phrase is a unit of grammar and it builds clauses and sentences". A phrase may consist of one word or more than one word. Thus, phrases are smaller than clauses and sentences and they build up clauses and sentences.

Verbal Phrase

According to Kusman Abdi (1999:38), a verbal phrase is a verb form that does not serve as a verb in the sentence. Instead, it functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb. Verb phrase which begins with finite auxiliary is called *finite verb phrase* and its function must be a verb in a sentence or a clause. Otherwise, there is the formation of verb phrase which begins with non-finite auxiliary which is called *Non-finite Verb Phrase* or known as *Verbal phrases*. Its function is not as a verb, but as an adjective, an adverb or a noun. Frank (1972:304) states that verbal constructions function as parts of speech other than verbs, usually as nouns, adjectives, or

adverbs. According to Kusman Abdi (1999:38), the forms those are similar to the verb but function not as a verb is called verbal. There are three types of verbal phrases; they are gerund phrase, infinitive phrase, and participial phrase. The gerund phrase is used as a noun. An infinitive phrase is used as a noun, an adjective or an adverb. A participial phrase is used as an adjective and as an adverb.

Types of Verbal Phrases

a. Gerund Phrase

The gerund phrase is a gerund which is followed by complementary elements. Wishon (1980:266) states that a gerund phrase is a phrase form followed by a complementary element for gerund's element. The arrangement of gerund added by the complementary element makes a gerund phrase. A gerund phrase consists of a gerund and its complements or modifier. Like the gerund, gerund phrase is used as a noun.

b. Infinitive Phrase

According to Dornan (1993:21), an infinitive phrase includes the infinitive, the plain form of verb proceeds by *to*, as well as its complement or modifiers. Wishon (1989:275) states that the infinitive is made up of *to*+ the simple form of the verb, though *to* may be dropped when the infinitive follows certain verb such as let, help, make, have, see, watch, bear and feel. Wishon also states that infinitive an infinitive phrase may function in the sentence as a noun, adjective, and adverb.

c. Participial Phrase

According to Hadumodbusmann (1998:866) Participial is non-finite sentimental expression composed of a participle and modifiers. Furthermore, he says that participles are non-finite verb form in English, the present participle and past participle: doing vs done. A participial phrase consists of a participle and its complements of modifiers. There are two types of participial phrases. They are present

participle phrase and past participle phrase.

Functions of Verbal Phrases

a. Functions of Gerund Phrase

The function of a gerund phrase is the same as a single gerund. It functions as a noun and could occupy all functions of the noun. According to Frank (1972:314), gerund phrases may perform all the functions that noun is capable of fulfilling such as a subject of a verb, an object of a verb, an object of a preposition, a subjective complement, and an appositive.

b. Functions of Infinitive Phrase

The functions of infinitive phrase are a noun, adjective, and adverb. Frank states," the infinitive phrase my function, not as the main verb of a clause, but as another part of speech either as a noun, adjective or adverb (Frank:328). In addition Kusman Abdi (1999:45), infinitive phrase can function as a noun besides it also functions as an adverb or an adjective.

c. Functions of Participial Phrase

Although the participial phrase has two types present participle phrase and past participle phrase, they have the same functions. The functions of the participial phrase are as an adjective and adverb. But mostly the function of the participial phrase is as an adjective. Frank (1972:307) states," Most participial phrases have adjectival functions."

METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative research design. The data source in this research is the novel *Life of Pi*. The research objects of this research are utterances or sentences containing verbal phrases found in *Life of Pi*. The technique which is used is noting technique, because the object of the research is writing form (verbal phrases). In analyzing the data, the writer takes the following steps: Classifying the types of verbal phrases, finding the functions of verbal phrases, and drawing the conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Types of Verbal Phrases in Life of Pi

1. Gerund Phrase

A gerund phrase is a phrase form followed by a complementary element for gerund's element. Like the gerund, a gerund phrase is used as a noun. Here two sample sentences which contain gerund phrases found in the novel *Life of Pi*.

1. The obsession with **putting ourselves at the centre of everything** is the bane not only of theologians but also zoologists. (Life of Pi, page 39)
2. Babu stepped up to the trapdoor between the cages and started **pulling it open**. (Life of Pi, page 44)

In datum (1) the gerund phrase is *putting ourselves at the centre of everything*. This phrase consists of *putting* as the gerund, *ourselves* as the direct object of the gerund and the prepositional phrase *at the centre of everything* as the modifier. In datum (2) the gerund phrase is *pulling it open*. The gerund is *pulling* with a

direct object *it* and this phrase is modified by an adjective *open*.

2. Infinitive Phrase

An infinitive phrase includes the infinitive, the plain form of verb proceeds by *to*, as well as its complements or modifiers. Here two sample sentences which contain infinitive phrase found in the novel *Life of Pi*.

3. Normally the big cats were not given food one day a week, **to stimulate conditions in the wild**. (Life of Pi, page 44)
4. It jumped over the zebra onto the stern, where the lifeboat's side benches came together **to form a triangular bench**. (Life of Pi, page 142)

In datum (3) the infinitive phrase is *to stimulate conditions in the wild*. This phrase contains infinitive *to stimulate* and the direct object of action expressed in infinitive *conditions*, and modifier in the form of prepositional phrase *in the wild* and. In datum (4) the infinitive phrase is *to form a triangular bench*. It includes an

infinitive *to form* and the direct object of action expressed in infinitive is *a triangular bench* which is formed in a noun phrase.

3. Participial Phrase

A participial phrase is made up of a participial and all of its modifiers. There are two types of participles. They are present participles and past participles. Here some samples of present participle phrases and past participle phrases found in the novel *Life of Pi*.

a. Present Participle Phrases

5. And in the pond, you realize those are hippopotamuses **floating in the water**. (*Life of Pi*, page 16)
6. I walked in last, **wearing my crown of thorns**. (*Life of Pi*, page 25)

In datum (5) the present participle phrase is *floating in the water*. The present participle is *floating* and the modifier is formed in a prepositional phrase *in the water*. In datum (6) the present participle phrase

is *wearing my crown of thorns*. The present participle is *wearing*.

b. Past Participle Phrases

7. **Frightened by visitors**, the deer bolted for the nearby forest, which had its own herd of wild roe-deer and could support one. (*Life of Pi*, page 24)
8. Munrar is a small hill station **surrounded by some of the highest tea estates in the world**. (*Life of Pi*, page 63)

In datum (7) the past participle phrase is *frightened by visitors*. *Frightened* is the past participle and the modifier formed in a prepositional phrase is *by a visitor*. In datum (8) *surrounded by some of the highest tea estates in the world* is the past participle phrase. *Surrounded* is the participle and *by some of the highest tea estates in the world* is the modifier in the formed of a prepositional phrase.

The Function of Verbal Phrases in *Life of Pi*

1. The function of the gerund phrase

The function of the gerund phrase is the same as a gerund. It functions as a noun. Below are some sample data which show the functions of the gerund phrase as a noun in sentences.

9. **Shipping the animals to the moon** couldn't possibly have been more complicated. (Life of Pi, page 112)
10. I doubted hyenas were capable of **swimming in open seas**. (Life of Pi, page 137)

In datum (9) the gerund phrase is *shipping the animals to the moon*. In this sentence, the gerund phrase functions as the subject of the auxiliary verb *could*. In datum (10) *swimming in open seas* is the gerund phrase. It is the object of the preposition *of*.

2. The functions of the infinitive phrase

The functions of the infinitive phrase are a noun, an adverb, and an adjective. Below are samples of

sentences found in the novel *Life of Pi* which functions as noun, adverb and adjective.

a. Noun

11. Otherwise, **to grab a wild guinea pig with your bare hands** would be like taking hold of a knife by the blade. (Life of Pi, page 48)
12. Yet there will always be animal that seek **to escape from zoos**. (Life of Pi, page 50)

In datum (11) the infinitive phrase is *to grab a wild guinea pig with your bare hand*. Here the infinitive phrase is as the subject of the sentence. Therefore, it is a noun. In datum (12) *to escape from zoos* is the infinitive phrase which functions as a noun because it is the subject of the sentence.

b. Adjective

13. There was a scramble **to buy our animals**. (Life of Pi, page 111)
14. The stills looked pretty and very technological as they floated on the water, but they also looked flimsy, and I was doubtful of their capacity

to produce fresh water. (Life of Pi, page 218)

In datum (13) the infinitive phrase is *to buy our animals*. It functions as an adjective because it modifies *a scramble*. In datum (14) the infinitive phrase is *to produce fresh water*. It modifies *capacity*. Therefore, it is an adjective.

c. Adverb

15. In the Sundarbans they have been known **to swim five miles in open, choppy waters.** (Life of Pi, page 198)

16. **To start with details,** I saw that the whole island was covered with the algae, not just its edges. (Life of Pi, page 334)

In datum (15) the infinitive phrase functioning as an adverb is *swim five miles in open, choppy waters*. It describes the verb phrase *have been known*. In datum (16) the infinitive phrase is *To start with details*. It describes the verb *saw*. It is, therefore, an adverb

3. The Functions of Participial Phrase

a. Present Participle Phrases Function as Adjective

17. Upstairs in his office, there is a brass Ganesha **sitting cross-legged next to the computer**, a wooden Christ on the Cross from Brazil on a wall, and a green prayer rug in a corner. (Life of Pi, page 58)

In datum (17) the present participle phrase is *sitting cross-legged next to the computer*. It modifies *a brass Ganesha*. Therefore, it functions as an adjective.

b. Present Participle Phrases Function as Adverb

18. She pulled back her lips, **showing off enormous**, and began to roar. (Life of Pi, page 14)

In datum (18) the present participle is *showing off enormous*. It modifies *She pulled back her lips*. Therefore it functions as an adverb.

c. Past Participle Phrases function as an adjective

19. His upturned pads with their wet fur looked like little desert islands **surrounded by seaweed**. (Life of Pi, page 216)

In datum (19) the past participle phrase is *surrounded by seaweed*. It modifies *little desert islands*. It, therefore, functions as an adjective.

d. Past Participle Phrases function as an adverb

20. You must imagine a hot and humid place, **bathed in sunshine and bright colors**. (Life of Pi, page 15)

In datum (20) the past participle phrase is *bathed in sunshine and bright colors* functioning as an adverb. It modifies *you must imagine a hot and humid place*.

CONCLUSION

This research is descriptive qualitative research. It is conducted to find out the type and the function of verbal phrases in the novel Life of Pi. In this research, the writer uses the

noting technique to collect the data. Then the writer analyzes the data by conducting the following: reading the novel, observing and describing the data. The researcher finds three types of verbal phrases used in the novel Life of Pi. The first is the gerund phrase. The second is the infinitive phrase and the third is the participial phrase.

In this study, the researcher finds three functions of verbal phrases. They are a noun, adjective, and adverb. Gerund phrase functions as a noun. Infinitive phrase functions as a noun, adjective, and adverb. Participial phrase functions as an adjective and adverb.

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