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Experiential Clause Systems in Shahmukhi Punjabi: A Systemic Functional Perspective

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to identify and describe the experiential clause functions of Participant (s), a Process, and Circumstance (s) in Shahmukhi Punjabi using the Systemic Functional Language Description (SFLD) approach. Grounded in the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) framework, the study focuses on the Transitivity system, which was manually designed and implemented using the UAM corpus tool to annotate the sequence of experiential clause structures and their grammatical realizations from the groups/phrases to morpheme levels. A corpus of the news texts was compiled and uploaded into the tool for analysis. Each clause in the corpus was examined to identify experiential elements, exploring how these elements were configured through corresponding groups/phrases, words, and morphemes. The study offers a systematic description of the lexicogrammatical choices, contributing to a broader understanding of the experiential meaning in this underused language.

Keywords: Systemic Functional Grammar, Experiential Meaning, Transitivity System, System, Structure, Rank Scale

1. Introduction

Approximately 70 million Pakistanis speak Shahmukhi Punjabi as their indigenous language, written in the Perso-Arabic script that reads from right to left (Virk et al., 2011; Lehal & Saini, 2011; Shackle, 2025). Despite this widespread use, Shahmukhi Punjabi remains marginalized in formal domains, and young generations in urban sectors are increasingly reluctant to use it in everyday communication (Yasin et al., 2020; Haider et al., 2022). This decline in usage indicates the potential endangerment of Shahmukhi Punjabi. Skutnabb-Kangas and Harmon (2018) argue that most endangered languages are likely to disappear unless they are used in official domains. In this context, the limited presence of Shahmukhi

Punjabi in educational and governmental settings contributes to its endangerment status in Pakistan.

In response to this sociolinguistic marginalization, the present research aims to describe the experiential meanings in Shahmukhi Punjabi from a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspective. In SFL, language is understood as a system of meaning-making realized across three strata: discourse semantics, lexicogrammar, and phonology (Eggins, 2004). Phonology includes phonemes, syllables, rhythm, and intonation patterns. Lexicogrammar involves the organization of clauses, groups/phrases, words, and morphemes. Discourse semantics contributes to the textual coherence across stretches of discourse and is construed through lexicogrammar, which is subsequently realized through phonology. These strands of meaning are termed as metafunctions: ideational resource that construes human experience, interpersonal meanings that enact social relationships, and textual meanings that organize discourse into a coherent text. A key principle of SFL is that grammar is a resource for making multiple types of meaning simultaneously.

Although studies on Shahmukhi Punjabi grammar are scarce from a systemic and functional perspective, recent research (Haider et al., 2024, 2025; Parveen & Mahmood, 2025; Arslan et al., 2024) has investigated individual syntactic structures of Shahmukhi Punjabi and their functions. Haider et al. (2024) analyzed structural features of one-word verbs, while Parveen and Mahmood (2025) explored the potential patterns of passive voices. Haider et al. (2025) also analyzed the representation of experiential meanings in the Punjabi translation of an English short story. However, these studies have not comprehensively addressed the functional meanings of Shahmukhi Punjabi and their structural realizations, ranging from the clausal level to the morpheme level.

The present research, thus, aims to construct a grammar of experiential meanings in Shahmukhi Punjabi. According to Eggins (2004), the clause is the fundamental unit for construing the human experience. Yet, no published research to date has systematically established the experiential clause structure of Shahmukhi Punjabi. This study first identifies experiential clause structures of Punjabi and then analyze how these clause structures are further realized at groups/phrases and morpheme levels. Such an in-depth understanding of experiential meanings in Punjabi clauses will support the linguistic researchers in Pakistan in practical domains, such as Shahmukhi Punjabi teaching and learning, translation, and interpretation.

2. Literature Review

This section aims to establish the theoretical foundation of the current study, review previous literature in Systemic Functional Grammar description of languages, and clarify the goal of this research.

2.1.A Theoretical Justification for the Systemic Description

In the 20th century, Saussure (1966) defined a language as “a system of relations” (Martin, 2013, p. V). These relations operate on two dimensions: Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic. Syntagmatic relations involve linguistic units that are linked together in a linear sequence, such as elements in a clause. Paradigmatic relations, on the other hand, occur

between linguistic units that do not co-occur, but can substitute for one another within the same structural slot in a given context. Structure corresponds to syntagmatic relations, while system captures paradigmatic choices available in a given linguistic slot. According to Halliday (2013), a biaxial approach consisting of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations is essential for describing how a language makes meanings and grammatical coherence. Language thus comprises a system of meanings realized through structural patterns. A biaxial model is required to represent this perspective.

Building on this, meanings are formed through the selection of one option over others in context. The system consists of the paradigmatic choices presented in specific situations and realized through structural configurations (Martin, 2013). In a syntagmatic model, each item is described through its structure, represented in an isolated step and connected via transformation rules. Conversely, the paradigmatic model simultaneously describes and relates operations through interconnections. Choices are defined by their relationships to other potential items. This network of options ultimately underscores the intensity of interrelatedness whereby one choice differs from another, although each option is connected to every other option, at least at a similar level. System networks illustrate shared patterns at various levels of a choice. For a comprehensive linguistic description, paradigmatic relations must be considered to demonstrate the impacts of different choices on others, irrespective of their structural realizations (Eggins, 2004; Martin, 2013). Ultimately, the context determines the selection of choices, which are then realized through varied structures.

2.2. Metafunctions and the Systemic Approach to Grammar

Traditional grammar primarily emphasizes the syntagmatic relations. Constituent structure views a language as a hierarchy, combining smaller linguistic units into larger forms, such as clauses. According to Martin (2013), this approach is effective for the ideational meanings, which form a language user's understanding of the world through Process, an Actor, and a Goal. However, other types of meanings, such as interpersonal (related to social relationships) and textual (the organization of information), do not align very neatly with constituent structures. They are not structured as discrete building blocks but, instead, spread across different clauses or texts. To address this, the concept of a system captures the available choices at each point in discourse. This broader understanding of grammar emphasizes the paradigmatic dimension (the choices) alongside the syntagmatic. System networks thus enable language users to understand the interaction of different types of meanings and the system of meaning-making context.

In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), meanings are categorized into metafunctions, reflecting the fundamental functions that a language serves in human life: construing human experience (ideational), enacting personal and social roles (interpersonal), and constructing ideational and interpersonal meanings into coherent discourse (textual) (Eggins, 2004; Martin, 2013). System networks present the full meaning potential of a language. While choices within a single metafunction are typically coherent, their combinations across metafunctions are more adaptable. For instance, ideational content can be expressed with interpersonal tone and composed in various textual structures. In short, although the three metafunctions served distinctive purposes, language users can combine choices from each to communicate complex and detailed meanings.

2.3. Contributions of Previous Studies to the Present Study

Recent studies (Martin et al., 2021, 2023; Kim et al., 2023; Quiroz, 2013) have applied Systemic Functional Language Description (SFLD) to provide the text-based description of various languages. Martin et al. (2021, 2023) selected genres such as stories, procedures, service encounters, conferences, interviews, and court trials, to explore nominal groups, verbal groups, Mood, Transitivity, and Theme systems of English, Spanish, and Chinese. Unlike traditional descriptive grammars, SFLD is grounded on textual data, where language description is defined as “a process of generalizing from the analysis of textual data” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, p. 54). While SFG-based descriptions of English are already well-established, the contributions by Martin et al. (2021, 2023) enhance our understanding how linguistic systems are realized from the clause to the morpheme level in Chinese and Spanish. Similarly, Kim et al. (2023) employed SFLD to provide a comprehensive grammatical analysis of Korean, focusing on nominal groups, verbal groups, Mood, Transitivity, Clause Complexes, and Theme systems. Quiroz (2013) offered in-depth description of the interpersonal and experiential lexicogrammar of Spanish, integrating metafunctions, systems, and rank scales through system-structure relations.

Based on the scarcity of SFG-based studies in Shahmukhi Punjabi, the present research adopts the Systemic Functional Language Description (SFLD) framework used by Kim et al. (2023), applying various functional categories to analyze Shahmukhi Punjabi from the clause to the morpheme level. The study initially identifies experiential structures of the Shahmukhi Punjabi and examines how these clausal structures are realized through groups or phrases and their corresponding structural patterns. This primary analysis aims to provide a foundational understanding of the experiential structures commonly used in Shahmukhi Punjabi that can be utilized for more detailed investigations in future studies.

3. Research Methodology

The current study investigates the experiential clause systems in Shahmukhi Punjabi, focusing on Transitivity System within Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). The methodology has been designed to answer the following research question (RQs):

RQ 1: Which experiential clausal systems are employed in Shahmukhi Punjabi, and how are they grammatically realized?

RQ1 is descriptive and structural. It aims to identify the types and structures of experiential clausal systems in Shahmukhi Punjabi and their lexicogrammatical realizations, such as Processes, Participants, and Circumstances.

RQ 2: How do experiential structures collaborate in Shahmukhi Punjabi clauses to construct ideational meaning?

RQ2 is interpretative and functional, exploring how different experiential elements interact together to represent actions, events, and experiences in text, contributing to the construction of ideational meaning.

3.1. Research Design of the Present Study

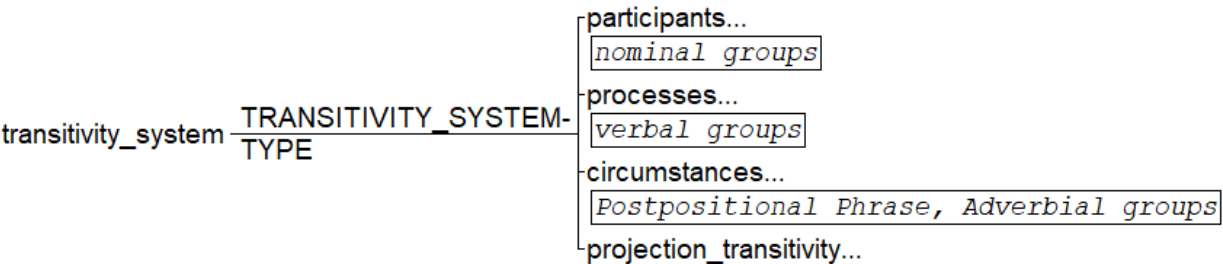
To answer the above research questions, the study applied an Exploratory—Confirmatory approach (Fred & Perry, 2011, p. 85) to encounter the challenge addressed in the literature. The exploratory design of the study facilitates the researchers to identify the experiential configuration specific to Shahmukhi Punjabi. This descriptive focus provides a systemic account of how these configurations are lexicogrammatically construed in the language. A purposive sampling technique was implemented to compile a corpus of authentic Punjabi texts in Shahmukhi Punjabi. The sample of 15 reporting articles published from 2022 to 2024 was compiled from RVEL.org (RVEL.org, 2025) reputable database for authentic Punjabi texts.

3.2. Analytical Framework

The analysis is based on Transitivity system of SFG, which categorizes experiential meanings through three core elements: Processes, Participants, and Circumstances. The analysis also consists of Projection structures. Figure 1 presents the Transitivity system used in this research:

Figure 1

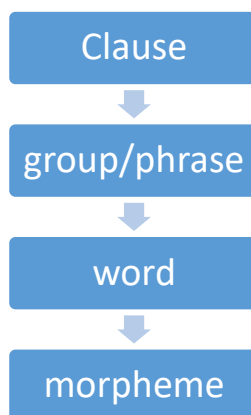
A Transitivity System in Shahmukhi Punjabi



As illustrated above, the Transitivity scheme was manually designed in the UAM Corpus Tool, programmed by O’ Donnell (2024), for linguistic annotation and analysis. This tagging scheme was developed to identify precisely nuanced experiential structures in Shahmukhi Punjabi clauses at multiple levels. Hence, the analytical precision of the UAM corpus tool contributes significantly to enhancing validity and reliability of the current study’s findings.

This analysis also takes into account the lexicogrammatical units, which are organized through a constituency hierarchy known as the rank scale in SFL. In Shahmukhi Punjabi, a clause is considered to consist of one or more groups and phrases, which is, in turn, composed of one or more words, and words are made of one or more morphemes. The rank scale adopted for analyzing the grammar of Shahmukhi Punjabi is illustrated in Figure 2:

Figure 2



Rank Scales in Shahmukhi Punjabi Grammar

3.3. Analytical Procedure

This study followed these analytical steps:

1. **Corpus Compilation:** The researchers first retrieved the authentic Shahmukhi Punjabi texts from 15 news articles published between 2022 and 2024, sourced from a well-known online platform, REVEL.org.
2. **Transliteration:** The Shahmukhi Punjabi texts, saved as Notepad files, were transliterated to ensure their compatibility and uploaded into the UAM corpus tool.
3. **Designing the Manual Scheme:** A manually constructed analytical framework was developed using the UAM corpus tool to precisely annotate the linguistic features of the reporting texts.
4. **Annotation:** Each text was manually tagged using the UAM corpus tool to identify the experiential structures present in Punjabi clauses.

4. Analysis and Discussion

A. Findings and Analysis

4.1. Experiential Clausal Structures in Shahmukhi Punjabi

At the level of ideational discourse semantics, experiential meaning captures what is happening, who is involved, and the circumstances surrounding the action, such as when, where, why, and how (Kim et al., 2023, p. 180). This dimension of meaning reflects both inner and outer experiences by representing them through language as Participants in a Process (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999, p. 3; 2014, p. 213). The Transitivity system provides the key grammatical resource to express occurrence or state figures. At the lexicogrammatical level, Occurrence figures realized doings and happenings through Processes (typically realized by verbal groups), Participants (realized by nominal groups), and Circumstances (realized by postpositional phrases or adverbials), reflecting changes as perceived through the senses or consciousness. State figures configure Participants concerning the relations with one another and with attributes. Both types of meanings can be further expanded by circumstantial elements. By analyzing how these figures function together, the researcher revealed how Shahmukhi Punjabi constructs and communicates experiences through a Transitivity system.

In both English and Shahmukhi Punjabi, clauses that realize Occurrence figures and State figures typically contain a verbal group that functions as the nucleus of the clause, which is termed as the Process in SFG. However, transitivity patterns in Shahmukhi Punjabi can be influenced by the use of post-positional clitics with nominal groups and by the morphological features that mark gender, number, modality, aspect, and tense.

To further comprehend the experiential clause meanings, the following analysis examines Shahmukhi Punjabi clause with its English counterpart. Firstly, the transliteration and translation of the Punjabi text are provided to ensure accessibility for international readers. Subsequently, each element is analyzed in terms of experiential meanings, i.e., Process, Participant, and circumstance, to present how experience is lexicogrammatically configured through the Transitivity system in Shahmukhi Punjabi.

Table 1

Transliteration and Translation of the Punjabi Text

تے	بارے	اکٹھ	ایس	نے	ہوراں	رحمان	نبیلہ	ڈاکٹر	پروفیسر
te	bārē	Akath	Es	nē	Hōrā	Raḥmān	Nabīlah	Ḍākṭar	Profesar
And	about	gathering	this	EF M	IFM	Shahbaz	Nabeela	Dr.	Professo r
کیتی	گلبات	اُچیچی	نال	حوالے	دے	شخصیت	دی	ملک	ڈاکٹر
Kītī	Galbāt	Uchīchī	nāl	Ḥavāle	de	Shakhṣiyat	dī	Malik	Shahbāz
spoke		specifically	with	reference	to	personality	of	Malik	Shahbaz
Professor Dr. Nabeela Rehman talked specifically about this gathering and, with reference to Dr. Shahbaz Malik's personality.									

The above example was retrieved from the website's news stories, intended to report several events along with highlighting the matter and angle of the news report to present a more detailed account. Each clause in the experiential grammar of Shahmukhi Punjabi consists of the following linguistic choices: Process, Participant(s), and Circumstance (s). The Process realized by a verbal group is the primary component of each clause. In Table 1, the clause

contains two circumstances, alongside one Participant, and a Process, reporting on the gathering for the commemoration of Professor Dr. Shahbaz Malik and his services for the Punjabi language. Example 1 presents experiential meanings of the clause:

Example 1

پروفیسر ڈاکٹر نبیلہ رحمان ہوراں نے... اُچیگی گلبات کیتی										
کیتی		گلبات	اُچیگی		نے	ہوراں	رحمان	نبیلہ	ڈاکٹر	پروفیسر
<i>Kī-tī</i> V:PST.HAB.FEM.SG**		<i>Galbāt</i>	<i>Uchī-chī</i>		<i>nē</i>	<i>Hōrā</i>	<i>Rahmān</i>	<i>Nabīlah</i>	<i>Ḍākṭar</i>	<i>Profesar</i>
Did		talk	<i>specifically</i>		EFM	IFM	<i>Shahbaz</i>	<i>Nabeela</i>	<i>Dr.</i>	<i>Professor</i>
Process			Cir: manner: quality		Participant 1					
Verbal group			Adverb group		Nominal group					
Dimension		event	adverb		Clitics		thing		epithet	epithet
Auxiliary verb		noun	Head	f.sg*			noun		adjective	Adjective
Head	Tense marker/ f.sg*		Stem	suffix						
Stem	Suffix	Head	Stem							
Professor Dr. Nabeela Rehman talked specifically ...										

... ایس اکٹھ بار تے ڈاکٹر شہباز ملک دی شخصیت دے حوالے نال ...										
<i>nāl</i>	<i>Ḥavāle</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>Shakhṣiyat</i>	<i>dī</i>	<i>Malik</i>	<i>Shahbāz</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>bārē</i>	<i>Akath</i>	<i>Es</i>
<i>with</i>	<i>reference</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>personality</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>Malik</i>	<i>Shahbaz</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>about</i>	<i>gathering</i>	<i>this</i>
Complex Circumstance										
+2								1		
Circumstance 2: Angle							Conj	Circumstance 1: matter		
Postpositional Phrase								Postpositional Phrase		
...about this gathering and, with reference to Dr. Shahbaz Malik’s personality...										

*Feminine Singular;
**Verb: Past Tense

se, Habitual Aspect, Feminine Singular

In Example 1, Participant 1 پروفیسر ڈاکٹر نبیلہ رحمان ہوراں نے *Profesar Ḍākṭar Nabīlah Rahmān Hōrā nē* (Professor Dr. Nabeela), appears at the beginning of the clause and is followed by a Complex Circumstance, a Circumstance of manner اچھی *Uchī-chī* (specifically), and a Process گلبات کیتی *Galbāt Kītī* (talked). The Participant is followed by functional markings realized by the post-positional clitics. Functional markings are divided into three types: experiential functional marking (EFM), interpersonal functional marking (IFM), and textual functional marking (TFM) (Kim et al., 2023). Functional markings are

realized by the post-positional clitics that specify the functions of nominal groups in a clause and answer who is doing something (agent role), who is affected (the **object**), or what the circumstances are (place, time, etc.). In Shahmukhi Punjabi, the post-positional clitics like, نوں → nū, دا → dā, تے → te, refer to grammatical relationships of possession, direction, and topic, etc. The EFM refers to who does what to whom (transitivity roles). The IFM points to the speaker's attitude, e.g., modality, respect, and emphasis. The TFM shows topic and contrast markers.

The Process is realized by a conjunct verbal group consisting of a noun گلبات *Galbāt* (talk), and a verb کیتی *Kīt-ī*. The verbal group includes the Event realized by the noun گلبات *Galbāt*, functioning as a lexical verb and a Dimension realized by an auxiliary verb کیت *Kīt* with a suffix ی- *-ī*, which serves as a past tense marker and singular feminine aspect. According to Kim et al. (2023), the Dimension construes multiple ideational meanings, such as aspectual, tense markers, and projective. In this case, the Dimension indicates that the verbal action having a singular feminine aspect occurred in the past.

The Participant in Example 1 is realized by a nominal group. The core element Thing function is followed by both an Interpersonal Functional Marking (IFM) and an Experiential Functional Marking (EFM). The IFM reflects honorific usage, showing respect for the Participant, while the EFM indicates the grammatical role of the Participant in the Process. In this case, Participant 1 (P1)'s nominal group is typically marked by the Process by the EFM clitic نے *nē*, which shows that the Participant is the performer of the action.

In example 2, the two Circumstantial elements are present. First, a complex Circumstance is composed of Circumstance 1 and Circumstance 2, both realized by the postpositional phrases. Second, a Circumstance of manner is formed from the stem *Uchi* and a suffix *chī*, which reflects the feminine singular morphology that aligns with the noun component of the Process it modifies.

In the preceding clause, the functions of Participant 1 (P1) were examined, and the following example further presents the functions of more than one Participant in the clause. From Example 2 onward, a consistent set of abbreviations will be used throughout this section. At the clause rank, P1, P2, and P3 will represent Participants, Cir will indicate Circumstance, and Pr will refer to Process. At the group rank, EFM (Experiential Functional Marking), IFM (Interpersonal Functional Marking), and TFM (Textual Functional Marking) will be employed. In addition, TM will stand for Tense Marker, EM for Exchange Marker, and SM for Stance Marker. At the group and phrase level, ng will represent a nominal group, vg for a verbal group, advg for an adverbial group, ptcl for a particle, postp for a postposition, and pp for a postpositional phrase. At the word rank, sfx will be used to denote a suffix. These abbreviations aim to streamline the analysis and maintain consistency across the descriptions of clausal and group structures.

Example 2

اوہناں نے مینوں اپنے لکھے ناول دا مسودہ تبصرے واسطے دتا

دتا		واسطے		تبصرے		مسودہ		دا	ناول		لکھے		اپنے		میںوں		نے	اوبناں			
Ditt-ā V:PST.HAB. MASC.SG*		vāste		tabsare		masū dā		dā	nove l		likhe		apne		menu		ne	Unha ñ			
Pr		Cir: Reason				P2								P3		P1					
gave		for		Commentar y		manu script		of	nove l		written		his		me		-	He			
Vg		PP				Ng								ng		ng					
Event		postp		ng		Thing		Qualifier						Thing		EFM		Thing			
Verb		postp		Thing		Noun		postp		Ng						pronoun		clitic		Prono un	
Head	TM	ptcl		noun				ptcl		thing		epithet		Deictic							
Stem	Sfx							ptcl		noun		adjective		determiner							
He gave me the manuscript of his written novel for commentary.																					

***Verb: Past Tense, Habitual Aspect, Masculine Singular**

Example 3

احمد شہزاد بوراں نوں ڈاکٹریٹ دی ڈگری جاری کر دتی گئی۔												
گئی		دتی		کر	جاری	ڈگری	دی	ڈاکٹریٹ	نوں	بوراں	شہزاد	احمد
Ga-ī		Ditt-ī V:PST.HAB.FEM.SG*		kar	jārī	ḍigrī	dī	ḍāktarīṭ	nū	horā	Shehzād	Aḥmad
Was		...ed		award...		degree	of	doctorate			Shehzad	Ahmad
Pr						P2			P3			
Vg						ng			Ng			
Dimension					Event	Thing	Qualifier		EFM	IFM	Thing	
Passive aux		Tense marker		Secondary 1 Verb	Lexical Verb	noun	postp		Clitic	clitic	Noun	
head	Sfx	TM		head	Head		postp	thing				
		Head	Sfx									
	Fem. Sing		Fem. sing	stem	Stem		ptcl	noun				
The degree of Doctor of Philosophy was given to Ahmad Shehzad.												

***Verb: Past Tense, Habitual Aspect, Feminine Singular**

Examples 2 and 3 present the use of EFMs with P1 and P3. In Example 2, P1 takes EFM نے (ne), which is followed by P3 and P2. In Example 3, the IFM بوراں (horā) and the EFM نوں (nū) follow P3, with the EFM preceding the IFM. It is noteworthy that, in Punjabi, the IFM

¹Secondary Verbs refer to the light verbs in Shahmukhi Punjabi.

typically precedes the EFM. The Process in example 1 is a single word verb whose inflection indicates a tense (past habitual), gender, and number (singular masculine). Conversely, the verbal group in example 3 is a compound verbal group structured as V+V in which *Ga-* functions as a passive operator. Within this verbal group, the first verb, a lexical verb, indicates a semantic content, while the auxiliary verb *Ditti* encodes tense and gender and number. Table 1 provides a list of clitics that realize EFMs in Shahmukhi Punjabi.

Table 2

Participants Followed by Experiential Functional Markings (EFMs) in Shahmukhi Punjabi

Experiential Functions	Examples of Markings
Participant 0	No post-positional Clitic
Participant 1	نے <i>ne</i>
Participant 2	وے <i>ve</i> ; نوں <i>nūm</i> ; دا <i>da</i>
Participant 3	نوں <i>nūm</i>
Circumstance	نال <i>na</i> ; نوں <i>nūm</i>

In Shahmukhi Punjabi, the usual clitics are primarily associated with Participants 1, 2, and 3; however, these clitics are not inherent components of the Participants themselves and may be used interchangeably. Additionally, Textual Functional Marking *تاتان* is also employed. It mostly appears after Participant 1, as illustrated in Examples 4 and 5.

Example 4

ایہناں نوں تان رب دا کوئی ڈر ای نہیں اے										
اے	نہیں	ای	ڈر	کوئی	دا	رب	تان	نوں	ایہناں	
Ae	nahī	e	ḍar	koī	dā	Rab	tā	nū	eh-nā	
Have	not	even	fear	any	of	Lord	TMF		They	
Pr		Cir	P2				P1			
head	adv	adv	Ng				ng			
event	negative	adverb	Thing	Deictic	Qualifier		TMF	EMF	Thing	
Verb/TM/singular			Noun	determiner	Postp	Thing	clitic	clitic	noun	
					ptcl	Noun			Head	sfx
Stemplural										
They do not even have any fear of the Lord.										

Example 5

مُلاں دی دوڑ وی تان صرف مسیت تیکر بوندی اے									
اے	بوندی	تیکر	مسیت	صرف	تان	وی	دوڑ	دی	مُلاں
Ae	Hond-ī	tekar	masīt	sirf	tāṇ	vī	doṛ	ḍī	Mullān

extends				the mosque	only			hustle	of	cleric
Pr				Cir: place	Cir: degree	P1				
Vg				adv g	adv g	ng				
Dimension			Event	Adverb	Adverb	TFM	EFM	Thing	Qualifier	
TM	Habitual aspect		Lexical verb			Clitic	Clitic	Noun	Postpositional phrase	
Head	Head	sfx	Head						Postp	Thing
Stem		Fem. sing	stem						Ptcl	Noun
.A cleric's hustle, after all, only extends as far as the mosque										

In examples 1 to 5, the typical sequence of Participants in the Punjabi clause structure is P1^P2 and P1^P3^P2. These patterns can be changed without affecting the experiential meanings of the clause, and the patterns of postpositional clitics with Participant nominal groups are IFM^EFM^TFM. Finally, the verbal groups construing the Process are a one-word verbal group (see example 5), a two-word verbal group with patterns V-V (see example 3), and N-V/Adj-V (see example 1).

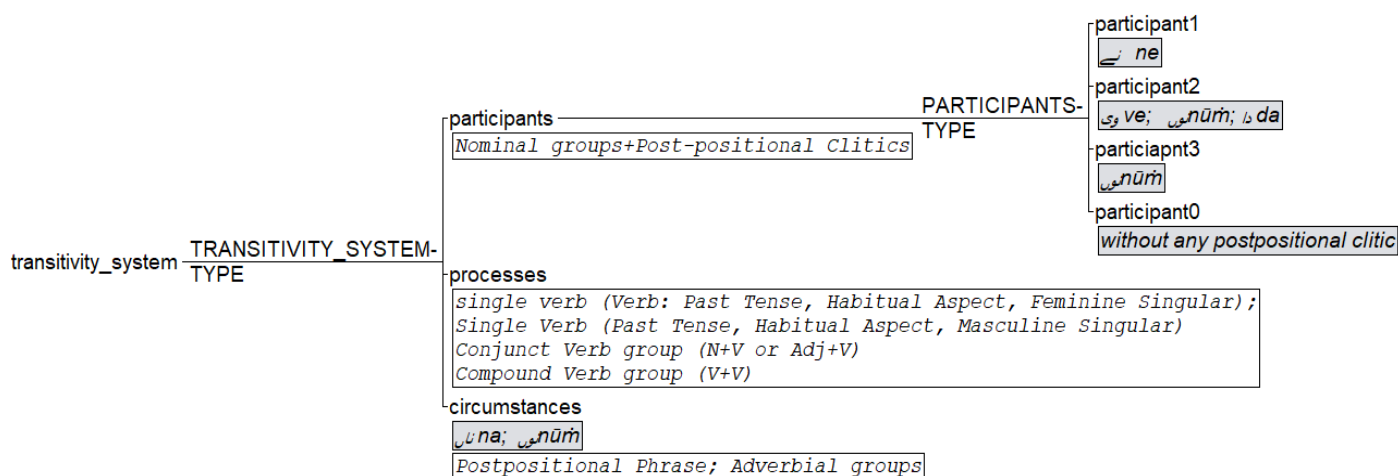
B. Discussion

Response to RQ1

This section includes the grammatical units that realize the primary experiential structures of Shahmukhi Punjabi. The description of structures is based generally on analyzing the resources and grammatical patterns selected from the corpus of the news reports. In these reports, the clauses employed a fundamental structure of a Process, one to three Participants, to report different events and states that occurred in the physical world. At the clause level, the experience is encoded in Shahmukhi Punjabi clauses through Participants, Processes, and Circumstances as illustrated below:

Figure 3

Transitivity System in Shahmukhi Punjabi



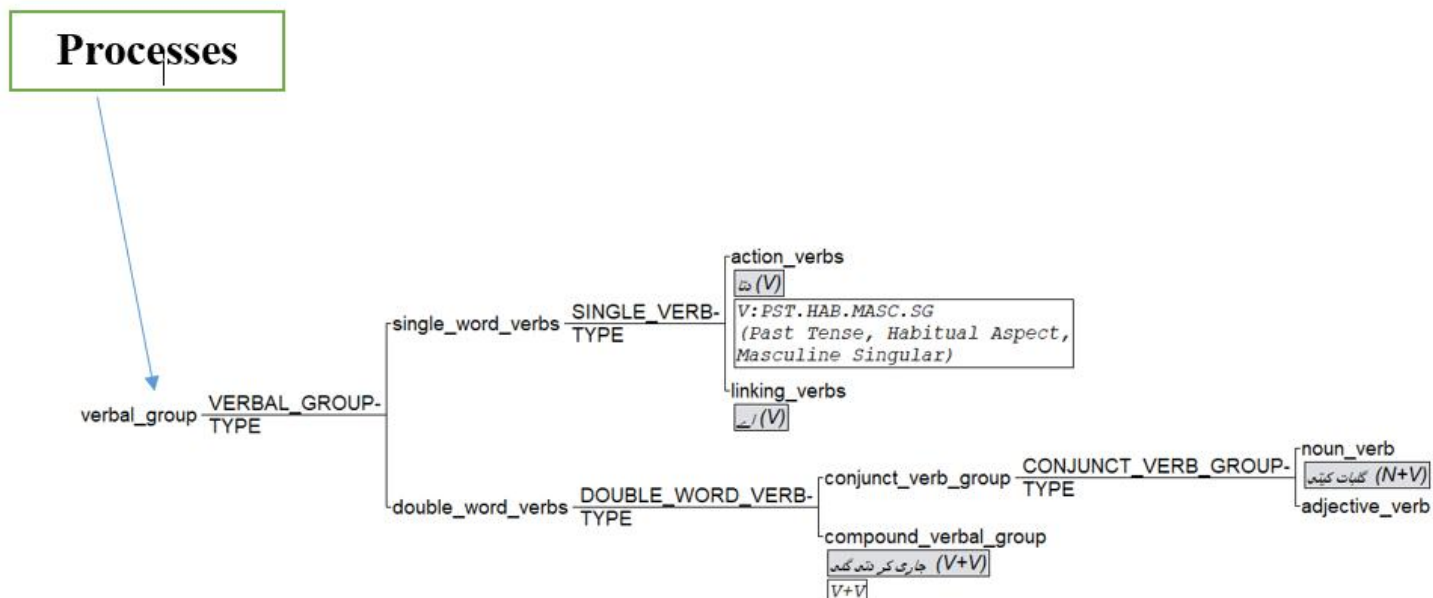
The above figure indicates that the Punjabi clause contains Participants and a Process as the core components, and a peripheral part is Circumstances. These Participants, P0, P1, P2, and P3, are commonly followed by functional markings to maintain the discursual features of the clauses. In active (finite) clauses, the arrangement of the Participants can be of three types. If only one Participant exists, the clause takes P1 preceded by postpositional clitics (Example 1). In case of two or more than two Participants, the Participants can be arranged in P1^P2 or P1^P3^P2. The Participants are followed by the Process, that is, a single-word verb or a double-word verb. Similar to the English patterns, the Circumstance does not have any position in the Punjabi clauses, but it comes before the Process.

At the Group Level

At the group/phrase level, a verbal group realizes the Process in Punjabi clauses as outlined below.

Figure 4

Structures of Verbal Groups in Shahmukhi Punjabi



As mentioned above, the verbal groups in Shahmukhi Punjabi are structured through one-word verbs or double-word verbs. A one-word verb can be a linking or lexical verb. In case of a single-word lexical verb, the inflectional forms reflect simultaneously tenses, genders, and numbers as exemplified below:

دیتا	
Dit-	tā
gave	
Process	
Verbal	
Head	Tense Marker/ Masculine Singular
stem	suffix

The inflectional form “tā” of the verbal group “Ditta” manifests the past habitual tense and a masculine singular gender. Contrarily, the linking verb merely indicates the time of a clause. As far as double-word verbs are concerned, they are configured either as conjunct verbal groups or as compound verbal groups. The following example concerns a compound verbal group:

گئی	دتی	کر	جاری
Ga-ī	Ditt-ī	kar	jārī
Was	...ed	award...	
Pr			
Vg			
Dimension			Event
Passive aux	Tense marker	Secondary Verb	Lexical Verb
head	Sfx	head	Head
	TM		
was awarded			

The above compound verbal group consists of a lexical verb “jārī”, followed by a vector verb “kar” indicating the action. This is then followed by the auxiliary verb “Ditt-ī”, which marks a past habitual tense and agrees in feminine singular form, and finally, the passive auxiliary verb “Ga-ī”, which shows the passive voice and also agrees in feminine singular gender. In contrast, an example of a conjunct verbal group is given below:

کیتی	گلبات
<i>Kīt-ī</i>	<i>Galbāt</i>
Did	talk
Process	
Verbal group	
Dimension	event
Auxiliary verb	noun
Head	Tense marker/ f.sg
Stem	Suffix
	Head
	Stem

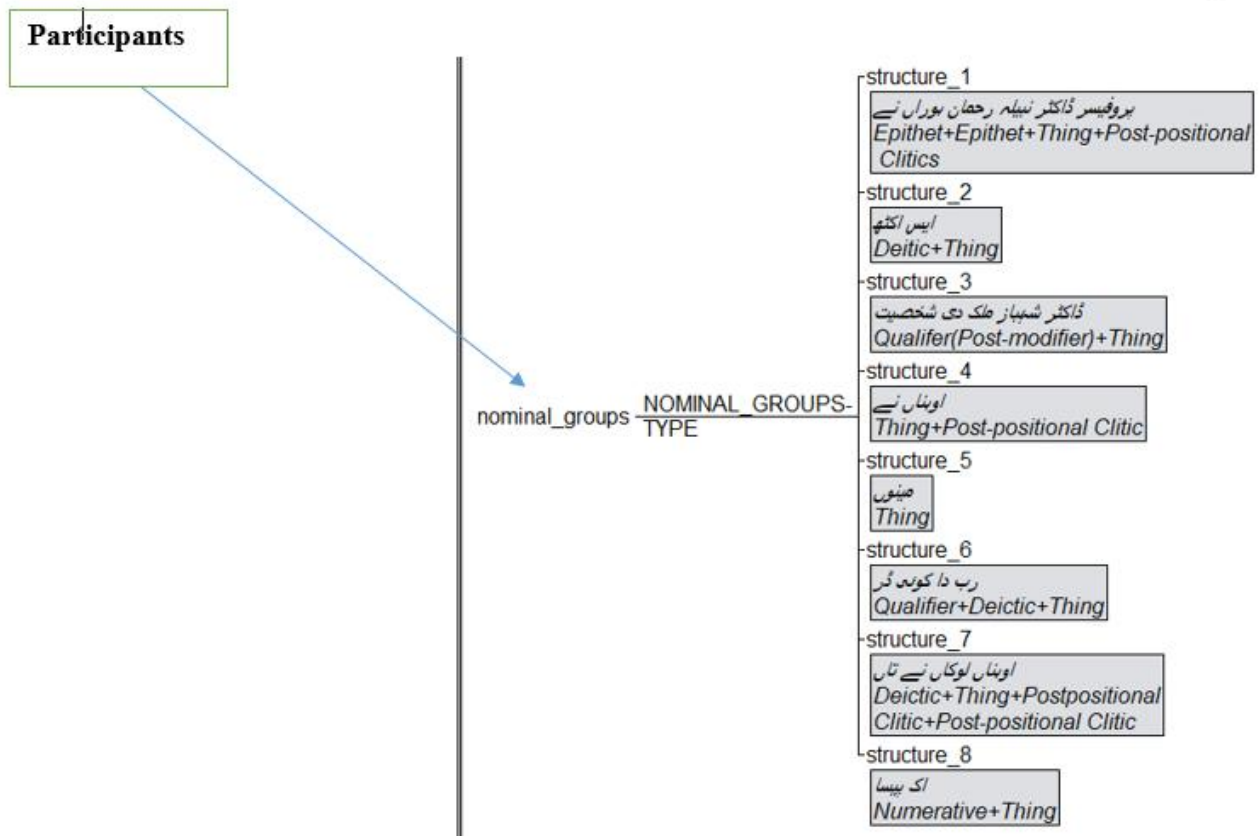
In the above example, the conjunct verbal group is structured as a noun + verb construction. The noun component of the verbal group functions as the lexical verb, carrying the main semantic content. This is followed by an auxiliary verb in the form of a vector verb, whose inflectional form “ī” indicates a tense marker (past in the above example) and a gender and number (feminine singular).

Participants

The Participants in Shahmukhi Punjabi clauses are realized through different nominal group configurations as mentioned below:

Figure 5

Experiential Configurations of Nominal Groups in Shahmukhi Punjabi



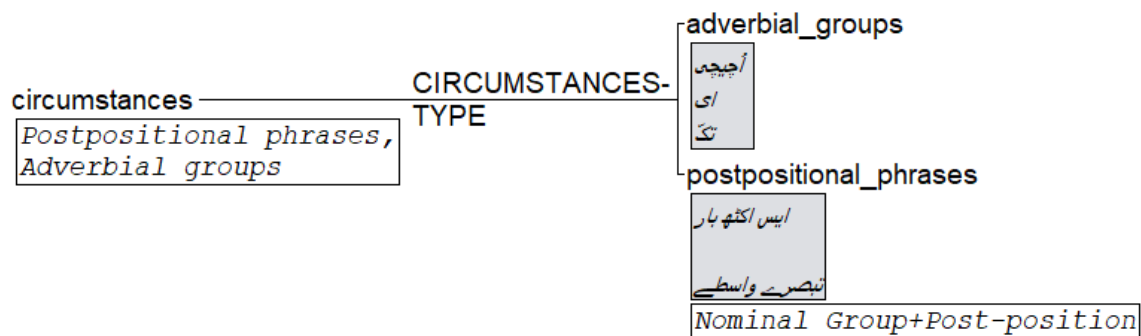
The description of the news reports presents the eight most commonly occurring nominal-group configurations. Each nominal group consists of a Thing (head), along with modifiers (Epithet, Deictics, Numeratives, and Qualifiers), and post-positional clitics. In contrast to English, the Qualifiers realized by post-positional phrases precede the Thing and thus function as the premodifiers. Within these nominal groups, the Thing and its modifiers reflect the grammatical features, such as gender and number. For instance, the postpositions *دی* *Di* in structure 3 and *دا* *Da* in structure 6 mark singular feminine and singular plural forms, respectively. In summary, these eight structural nominal groups in the news-text corpus primarily construe most Participants involved in the constructions of experiential meaning.

Circumstance

Apart from the core components of Punjabi clauses, some peripheral elements in the form of Circumstance expand the experiential meanings. The circumstantial elements are illustrated below:

Figure 6

Circumstantial Elements in Shahmukhi Punjabi



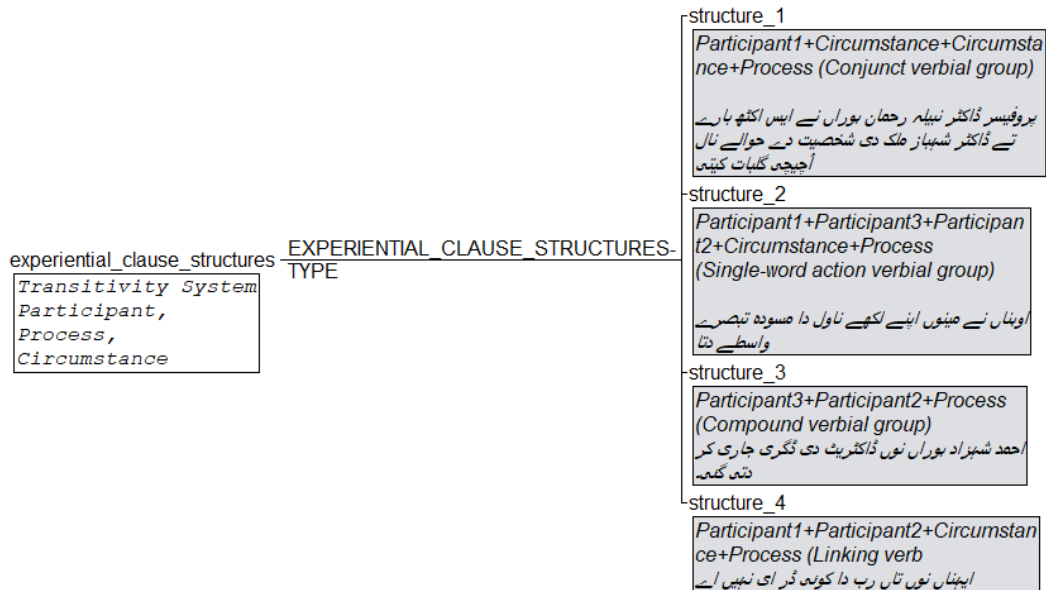
In the above figure, Circumstances are realized through adverbial groups and postpositional phrases. The single-word adverbial groups, such as “ای” and “اُچھی”, typically express manner, time, or extension. The inflectional form of اُچھی also reflect the singular feminine gender agreement. The postpositional phrases are represented as structures formed by a Nominal group + postposition. These canonical patterns demonstrate that Shahmukhi Punjabi encode Circumstances through extended nominal groups followed by postpositions rather than the prepositions found in English.

Response to RQ2

RQ2 demands the experiential clause structures to represent the world, including experiences, thoughts, actions, and perceptions. The ideational meaning is constructed through the following clause structures in Shahmukhi Punjabi:

Figure 7

Experiential Clause Structures in Shahmukhi Punjabi



The commonly used experiential clause structures report participants in different events in the news corpus. In these clause structures 1 to 4, Process is the final component to represent a verbal process in structure 1, a material process in structures 2 and 3, and a relational process in structure 4. To communicate varied happenings, Participant 1 in the active clauses is traditionally the Subject that comes first, and other Participants P2 and P3 are placed after them. However, the sequence of Participants in a passive clause is P3^P2, which is a common structure.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the grammar of experiential meanings in the clauses of Shahmukhi Punjabi by examining the grammatical units across multiple levels, from the clause down to the morpheme. The analysis, grounded in the Transitivity system of Systemic Functional Grammar, demonstrated that the core elements in Punjabi clauses are Participants, Circumstances, and Processes.

Typical Participant structures in the clauses follow patterns, such as P1^P2^Process or P1^P3^P2^Process. While these structural patterns may vary, any structure variation can significantly affect the experiential meaning of clauses. Participants are primarily realized through nominal groups and postpositional clitics, which are followed by Interpersonal and Experiential Functional Markings. Varied Participants are preceded by different postpositional clitics to perform the discoursal features.

Processes in Shahmukhi Punjabi are construed through either a single-word verb or a two-word verb. These can be categorized into conjunct verbal groups (e.g., Noun/Adjective+Verb) and compound verbal groups (Verb+Verb). The inflectional forms of verbal groups encode grammatical features, such as tense, gender, aspect, voice, and number.

Circumstances are typically realized through adverbial groups or postpositional phrases. The inflectional forms of Circumstances present number and gender systems.

Although the research focuses on experiential grammar of the Shahmukhi Punjabi clauses and uses limited sampling, its in-depth and multi-layered analysis of clauses provides a precise and systematic understanding of how experiential meanings are constructed in Shahmukhi Punjabi. This lexicogrammatical insight has practical implications for various linguistic applications, including language teaching, translation, and text interpretation.

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