

Chapter 6

The experiential structure of the clause

What we've done so far

- We've discussed the interpersonal and textual meta-functions
 - More specifically, we've discussed the grammatical resources through which interpersonal and textual meanings are expressed in the clause.
 - For the interpersonal meta-function, we explored the MOOD system and partially discussed the system of MODALITY
 - For the textual meta-function, we explored the THEME system and discussed the difference between structural and non-structural resources

What we've done so far

- Structural resources are those related to the clause.
 - These resources have to do with clauses and go up until clause complexes.
 - The THEME system is an example of a structural resource.
- The grammar, however, offers textual resources to link parts of the text together — creating links beyond the clause complex.
 - These resources are grouped under the term Cohesion.

What we've done so far

- Now, we will discuss the experiential meta-function.
- But before that, a note on the system that we're describing so far:
 - The interpersonal, experiential, and textual meta-functions are simply perspectives on the organization of functional grammar.
 - In other words, when we discuss the resources of the interpersonal meta-function, for example, we're discussing the grammatical resources that have to do with enacting social relations and roles.

What we've done so far

- So, while we do discuss them as separate meta-functions, they are simultaneously expressed throughout our system and in certain structures such as the clause.
- The clause, as such, is made up of three different layers or structures: an interpersonal structure, an experiential structure, and a textual structure.
- These three structures are, again, simultaneous in the clause; they simultaneously make up the clause as a (meaning-bearing) unit in our grammar.

What we've done so far

- All of this is to say that, while we do treat the meta-functions and associated structures as separate, they are indeed simultaneous. The three strands of meaning make up the clause and the meaning expressed therein.

	The boy	kicked	the table
Interpersonal structure	Subject	F/P	C (DO)
Experiential structure	Actor	Process: Material	Goal
Thematic structure	Theme	Rheme	

The experiential structure

- The experiential meta-function has to do with how we construe our experience of the world through language.
 - In other words, it has to do with how we “go through” life and our expression of this experience.
 - Note that experience here means something beyond “past occurrence.”

The experiential structure

- Put simply, the experiential meta-function has to do with the grammaticalization of experience.
- The main grammatical resource that we're concerned with here is called the TRANSITIVITY system.

The experiential structure

- Broadly speaking, the experiential meta-function has two main functions:
 - It decomposes experience into a configuration of process, participants, and circumstances
 - It classifies experience into different fields or domains.
 - We'll go through each of these functions in turn.

The experiential structure

- Decomposition:
 - The experiential meta-function has to do with the choices we make to express our construal, our understanding, of the different phenomena of the world in and around us.
 - This involves decomposing “experience” into parts that can be combined into configurations with various meanings.

The experiential structure

- Decomposition:
 - For instance, let's say that there's a boy named **Omar playing in the field today**.
 - This is a phenomenon; a quantum of experience.
 - The experiential meta-function allows us to express our construal of this phenomenon by first decomposing it into three parts:
 - A process = playing
 - Participants = Omar
 - Circumstances = in the field; today
 - **Omar played.**

The experiential structure

- Decomposition:
 - A process:
 - The main event or phenomenon that makes up the core of the phenomenon.
 - There can be only one process per clause.

The experiential structure

- Decomposition:
 - Participants:
 - The entities involved in the event.
 - There can be up to three participants in a clause

The experiential structure

- Decomposition:
 - Circumstances:
 - The circumstances of the event expressed in the clause.
 - There can be up to seven circumstantial elements in the clause.

The experiential structure

- Decomposition:
 - Process
 - Participants
 - Circumstances
- These are the elements that make up the experiential structure of the clause.
- In other words, the clause as a representation of experience is a configuration of these elements.

The experiential structure

- Decomposition:
 - Process
 - Participants
 - Circumstances
 - The process is the central part of the experiential structure.
 - Participants are closely tied to the process.
 - Together, the process and participants make up what is known as NUCLEAR TRANSITIVITY.

The experiential structure

- Decomposition:
 - Process
 - Participants
 - Circumstances
 - Circumstances are not inherent in the experiential structure of the clause.
 - In other words, the clause as representation can include only the process and the participants.
 - More simply still, Circumstantial elements are optional in the experiential structure of the clause.

The experiential structure

- The Process is realized by the verbal group.
- Participants are realized primarily by nominal groups, but they can also be realized by prepositional phrases.
- Circumstantial elements are usually realized by adverbial groups and prepositional phrases.

The experiential structure

- Classification:
 - We've discussed how the experiential meta-function decomposes experience into a configuration of Process, Participants, and Circumstances.
 - The experiential meta-function also classifies the different facets of experience into fields or domains.
 - That is, along with decomposition, the experiential meta-function classifies the different facet of experience into different types of configurations.

The experiential structure

- Classification:
 - As a first step into classifying the different types of experience, we can say that phenomena can be external or internal.
 - External phenomena happen outside our consciousness.
 - Internal phenomena occurs inside or as part of our consciousness.
 - **I like that painting.**

The experiential structure

- Classification:
 - External phenomena: Such phenomena or events occur in the real world, outside our own consciousness. These are related to the field of experience of doing and happening.
 - For instance, a person moving a table is an external phenomena; it is a physical act that occurs whether or not it enters our consciousness.

The experiential structure

- Classification:
 - Internal phenomena: These occur as part of our own consciousness, in our minds.
 - For example, you liking a table occurs as part of your consciousness.

The experiential structure

- Classification:
 - The different fields of experience are reflected in the grammar through different Processes and different associated Participants.
 - For example, external phenomena, those of doing and happening, are reflected in the grammar through Material clauses, which center around Material processes.
 - Internal phenomena, those related to our consciousness, are reflected through Mental clauses, which center around Mental processes.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Let's begin by discussing the Material grammar (Material processes).
 - Material processes are those that reflect doings and happenings; physical acts and changes of state.
 - For example, the following clauses are all Material clauses, with a Material process realized by the verbal group (in bold) in each:
 - He **burned** the paper.
 - She **moved** the table.
 - The fire **destroyed** the building.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - He **burned** the paper.
 - She **moved** the table.
 - The fire **destroyed** the building.

He	burned	the paper
She	moved	the table
The fire	destroyed	the building
Nominal Group	Verbal group	Nominal Group
	Process: Material	

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - So, Material processes are those realized by verbs (verbal groups) that express physical acts and changes of state, such as develop, grow, produce, create, make, design, craft, bake, brew, cook, crush, demolish, destroy, send, advance.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - But what of the other elements within the following clauses?
 - He **burned** the paper.
 - She **moved** the table.
 - The fire **destroyed** the building.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - In each of these clauses, one nominal group is actualizing or effecting the Process. This Participant role is known as the **Actor**.
 - **He** burned the paper.
 - **She** moved the table.
 - **The fire** destroyed the building.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - The other nominal groups in the following clauses are directly impacted by the Process. These nominal groups realize the **Goal** Participant role.
 - He burned the **paper**. [Actor/Process:Material/Goal]
 - She moved the **table**.
 - The fire destroyed **the building**.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - So, the Actor participant role is realized by the entity actualizing the process or brining it about.
 - The Goal participant role is realized by the entity directly impacted by the Actor's involvement in the process.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Some clauses may express events where the Actor's involvement doesn't extend to impact another participant.
 - For example, in the clause "**The house collapsed**," there is no Goal; the Actor's undergoes the process without an external cause.
 - It could also be the case that the Actor performs a process that doesn't extend beyond itself: "She ran."

The experiential structure

- The builder destroyed the house.
 - The builder: Actor
 - The house: Goal
- The house collapsed.
 - The house: Actor.

The experiential structure

- The building was destroyed by the bulldozer.
- Process: was destroyed
- Actor: by the bulldozer
- The building: Goal

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Note also that the Actor could be animate or inanimate.
 - This participant role is not restricted to a certain class or property.
 - We will return to this discussion of animate/conscious participants later when we discuss Mental clauses.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Observe the following clauses:
 - He crossed the mountain.
 - He played tennis.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - He crossed the mountain.
 - He played tennis.
 - Obviously, the nominal group “He” here realizes the Actor participant role, and the verbal groups “crossed” and “played” realize the Material Process.
 - What about the nominal groups “the mountain” and “tennis”?

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - He crossed the mountain.
 - He played tennis.
 - What about the nominal groups “the mountain” and “tennis”?
 - These realize the Scope participant role.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Scope:
 - This participant role differs from the Goal in that it isn't affected or impacted by the actualization of the process.
 - To be more precise, the Scope is (i) the domain along which the process unfolds, and (ii) it is an extension or an expansion of the process.
 - These relate to the two types of Scope.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Two types of Scope:
 - Observe the following clauses:
 - He crossed **the ocean**
 - She climbed the mountain
 - Here, “the ocean” and “the mountain” realize the Scope participant role as they delimit the Scope of the process.
 - In other words, they are the domain where the process unfolds.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Two types of Scope:
 - Observe the following clauses:
 - He crossed the ocean
 - She climbed the mountain
 - Here the Scope is of the type “entity,” as it exists outside of the process.
 - Put simply, whether the process is actualized or not has no effect on the existence of the Scope.
 - Scope: entity.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Two types of Scope:
 - Observe the following clauses:
 - He played football.
 - She made a mistake.
 - They sang a song.
 - They played tennis.

The experiential structure

- Observe the following clauses:
 - He played football.
 - She made a mistake.
 - Sing a song.
- Note how “football,” “mistake,” and “a song” are not directly impacted by the process.
- They are extensions or expansions of the process; they elaborate the process.
 - They don’t exist outside of the process.
 - Here, the type of Scope is called “process”; as it is an extension of the process.
 - Scope: process

The experiential structure

- He crossed the mountain
 - The mountain -> Scope: entity.
- He played tennis.
- She made a mistake.
 - Tennis -> Scope: process
 - A mistake -> Scope: process

The experiential structure

- He travelled the world.
- He: Actor
- Travelled: Process: Material.
- The world: Scope: entity.
- She had dinner.
- She: Actor
- Had: process: Material
- Dinner: Scope: Process

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Observe the following clauses:
 - She gave **Omar** money.
 - She gave money **to Omar**.
 - Here, “money” is the Goal, as it represents the entity directly affected by the process.
 - “Omar” and “to Omar” realize the Beneficiary participant role.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - The Beneficiary participant role represents the entity benefitting from the process.
 - The Beneficiary is affected by the process, but rather indirectly.
 - As is shown here, the Beneficiary can be realized by nominal groups as well as prepositional phrases.
 - She gave **Omar** money.
 - She gave money **to Omar**.

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Usually, the Beneficiary participant role denotes a human or at least a conscious/animate entity.
 - She gave **Omar** money.
 - She gave a walnut to the squirrel.
 - But not ?“She gave the wall money.”

The experiential structure

- Material grammar:
 - Note finally that the Beneficiary participant role can appear with a Goal or a Scope:
 - She sent me money. [Actor/Process: Material/Beneficiary/Goal]
 - She sang me a song. [Actor/Process: Material/Beneficiary/Scope]

The experiential structure

- Internal field of experience:
- So, we've discussed the external field(s) of experience and explored how they're reflected in the grammar through Material clauses.
- What about internal experiences?
 - Remember that what we're discussing here are phenomena that are part of our own consciousness.

The experiential structure

- What about internal experiences?
 - Remember that what we're discussing here are phenomena that are part of our own consciousness.
 - In other words, the internal field of experience has to do with our consciousness ranging over certain phenomena.
 - Such phenomena and going-ons are reflected in the grammar through Mental clauses centered around Mental processes.

The experiential structure

- Mental processes:
 - Mental processes are realized by verbs of sensing, such as:
 - Verbs of perception: see, hear, smell, feel
 - Verbs of cognition: think, dream, believe, understand
 - Verbs of desire: want, desire, wish, need
 - Verbs of emotion: fear, dread, like, love.

The experiential structure

- Mental processes:
 - Mental processes, as such, represent the event of our consciousness ranging over a certain phenomenon.
 - He saw the birds.
 - She remembers her days at the university.
 - He wants that piece of candy.
 - They love grammar.

The experiential structure

- Mental processes:
 - **He** saw the birds.
 - **She** remembers his days at the university.
 - **He** wants that piece of candy.
 - **They** love grammar.
 - Here, we have a participant that is endowed with consciousness that senses the phenomenon.
 - This participant is labelled the **Senser**.
 - The Senser is usually conscious or animate.

The experiential structure

- Mental processes:
 - **He** saw the birds.
 - **She** remembers his days at the university.
 - **He** wants that piece of candy.
 - **They** love grammar.

The experiential structure

- Mental processes:
 - He saw **the birds**.
 - She remembers **her days at the university**.
 - He wants **that piece of candy**.
 - They love **grammar**.
 - The other participant is the phenomenon that the sensing ranges over.
 - It's labelled, simply, the Phenomenon.

The experiential structure

- Mental processes:
 - The Phenomenon could be realized by a nominal group or a clause:
 - He likes **grammar**.
 - He likes **the fact that grammar is easy**.
 - He remembers **his days at the university**.
 - He thought **that he should finish his manuscript**.

The experiential structure

- Mental processes:
 - Emotive processes are bidirectional:
 - That is, the sensing can range over the phenomenon or the phenomenon can cause the sensing.
 - I like grammar. -> Sensing ranging over the phenomenon.
 - Grammar pleases me. -> The phenomenon causing the sensing.

The experiential structure

- Mental processes:
- This alternation includes examples such as:
- Like :: please
- Fear :: frighten
- I fear darkness.
- Darkness frightens me.
- Grieve :: sadden
- Belive :: convince

I	like	grammar
Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon
Grammar	pleases	me
Phenomenon	Process: Mental	Senser

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
- Relational processes reflect the outer field of experience in that the phenomenon is more stable through time.
 - In other words, Relational processes reflect phenomena of being and having.
- Material processes reflect phenomena of doing and happening.
 - Material processes -> The phenomenon is changeable through time.
 - Relational processes -> The phenomenon is relatively stable through time.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Material processes -> He kicked the table. (The phenomenon occurred; there is a change through time)
 - Relational processes -> He is very smart. (The phenomenon is more stable; it is a relationship of being, not doing)

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - There are two main types of relational processes:
 - Attributive
 - Identifying

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Attributive:
 - These processes have to do with relating an attribute to an entity:
 - She is smart
 - He was very generous.
 - They are leaders in their field.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Attributive:
 - These processes have to do with relating an attribute to an entity:
 - We have a Carrier that “carries” the attribute, and the Attribute itself.
 - So, as a rule, we can say that Relational processes always have two participants
 - Relational processes encode a relationship between these two participants.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Attributive:
 -

She	is	Smart
He	was	Very generous
They	are	leaders
Carrier	Process: Relational (attributive)	Attribute

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Attributive:
 - Note how you can't reverse attributive Relational clauses:
 - He is very smart.
 - But not: ?Very smart is he.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Identifying:
 - This type encodes a relationship of identity between the two participants.
 - In other words, we're identifying one participant with/through another.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Identifying:
 - The two participants here are Token and Value.
 - Token is the participant that is assigned a Value.
 - Value is the participant that is assigned to a Token.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Identifying:
 - You can think of it as the Token realizing the Value.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Identifying:
 - Examples of Identifying clauses:
 - She is the leader.
 - Birzeit University is the best.
 - She is the smartest.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Identifying:
 - Note how identifying clauses are reversible:
 - Birzeit University is the best.
 - The best is Birzeit University.

She	is	the leader
Birzeit University	is	the best
She	is	The smartest
Token	Process: Relational (identifying)	Value

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - How do we identify the Token and the Value:
 - If the clause is active, the Subject realizes the Token.
 - If the clause is passive, the Subject realizes the Value.

The experiential structure

- He kicked the table.
- The table was kicked by him.
- **Birzeit University is the best.**
- **Subject -> Token**
- **Birzeit University -> Token**
- **The best -> Value**
- **Is -> Process: Relational (identifying)**
- Birzeit University represents the best. ->1
- Birzeit University is represented by the best. ->2

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - She is the smartest.
 - She represents the smartest.
 - Active clause.
 - She -> Token.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - She is the tall one.
 - She represents the tall one.
 - The tall one represents her.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - She is the tall one.
 - The tall one represents her.
 - Passive.
 - She -> Value.
 - The tall one -> Token.

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - The most diligent is her. (Identifying)
 - The most diligent is represented by her (Passive)
 - The most diligent represents her (Active).
 - The most diligent: Value
 - Her: Token

The experiential structure

- Relational processes:
 - Men are the weak ones. (Identifying)
 - Men represent the weak ones. (Active)
 - Men are represented by the weak ones. (Passive)
 - Men: Token
 - The weak ones: Value