

# A Systemic Functional Analysis of the Mystic Poet Baba Bullay Shah "Main Jana Jogi Day Naal"

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## Abstract

This paper is an attempt to analyze the poetry of Punjabi Mystic Poet Baba Bullay Shah. The linguistic analysis of the poem is made possible by application of Halliday's model of Systemic Functional Grammar. The organization of the linguistic component in a clause bear meaning potential in the text and supplement the overall effect the poet wants to communicate, through decoding the layers of meanings in the text. Halliday, as an argument, applied his method to convey the idea of the meaning potential in the linguistic components of any literary text and himself put Golding's novel, *The Inheritors* (1977) and few other literary texts to test to extract the clear effect of the linguistic fabric and internal pattern contributing to the overall impact of the literary text on the reader. Halliday's Model of linguistics analysis provides an in-depth critique on both linguistic and literary levels. Geoffrey Leech puts Stylistics to be "the study of the use of language in literature", that is the investigation of "the general characteristics of language, and especially the English language, as a medium of literary expression"<sup>1</sup>.

Stylistics or linguo-stylistics is general linguistics. It is the investigation of inventory of linguistics components securing the desirable effect of the text by their ontological features and investigation of certain types of discourses or texts distinguished by the pragmatic facet of the communication owing to the choice of language means and their arrangement in text. Stylistics was an off shoot of tendency of the grammarians to incarcerate their inquiry to sentences, clauses up to the word combination which are "well formed". This tendency laid what is now called descriptive grammar, giving space to generative grammar to limit its investigation to sentences which are considered to be well-formed. Any structure that fails to

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<sup>1</sup> Leech G., *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*.p.1

meet the required standard should then be excluded from linguistics.

Stylistics maintained its own status with its distinctive tools of investigation, its particular object of investigation and its own peculiar methods of research. In the attempt of exploration of the language potentialities, attention of the researches have been diverted to linguo-stylistics to extract expressive means and their functions of linguistic components in a clause or a sentence, adding aesthetic value and additional meanings they may carry. The text can be put to stylistic test if it displays the unbreakable unity and the precision of its construction. I, as a functional grammarian, am more interested in finding the link between the grammar and the meaning, the grammar and the context. As de Sylva and Burns (1999) point out:

“... if we see language as functionally related to its context of use, grammar is seen as determined by the kinds of discourses and texts that people need to produce for different purposes in different social contexts.” (pg 34)

Language, especially in Systemic Functional Grammar, is a rich resource for making meaning and authenticating context with the supporting linguistic components in the text. Systemic linguistics realize language and trace the meanings emerging according to the way texts are used in the social contexts as the language is deliberately consumed to express specific meaning determining the way in which the meaning is perceived.

In the attempt of stylistic analysis of the mystical poetry of Baba Bullah Shah, theories of information, psychology, literature, theology, logic and even statistics may be touched upon where pertinent, for linguistics, the science of language, invites references in certain overlapping issues.

**Keywords:** Systemic functional Linguistics, Stylistics, Discourse, Mentor

## 1. Writer and the Summary

The revered Punjabi Poet, Baba Bullay Shah (1680-1758) addressed the Muslims, Sikhs and the Hindus in general. He devoted his entire life producing literature inviting scholars contesting his religious identity, calling him a Sufi or a Vedantic Sufi. He adored his Mentor Inayat Hussain who encouraged to tame his ego and attain heights as a mystic, a Sufi. In the attempt, he conducted empirical study of human as a *Being* and wrote highly interpretive text exploring the proximity of the Creator with the creation. The recognition of his poems challenges the boundaries among religions like Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism and one suspects the religion he belongs to. He addresses all religions in general and the Muslims in particular. His religious identity as a Muslim, can be traced in the poem under analysis as he craves for the intimacy with the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He establishes his relation with the Creator and His Prophet (PBUH) and yearns for the adherence to the teachings of Islam. He uses beauty of expression, images from the everyday life and folklore to transcript his longing for God.

His poems have been sung by numerous artist and internationally acclaimed artist such as Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. He gave idiomatic phrases from his most celebrated poems to the Punjabi Language.

## 2. Analysis of the Poem

The poem is mystical experience of the poet as he wishes his being carried by the Mentor, referred to as Jogi in the text, a term specific for hermit, who lives apart from the people and establishes proximity with the beloved ( God) and expedites his spiritual intimacy with the Creator. The poet, speaks in a tone of a female who implores the company of the mentor and wishes to surrender herself in the hands of that spiritual authority. The poet, making choices in the interpersonal functions, grant information about the participant in the speech utterance supporting the speech act with personal pronouns and deictic reference. There are 16 stanzas in the poem denoting personal references in almost all the lines. These references establish the overall impact of the poem on the reader. Twenty Five instances of “I” and its variants create the speaking voice, the poet, who addresses the people in the very first line and gets identified in the second line: “ I shy away from calling him shepherd”. The second major participant in the poem is the “Jogi”, the spiritual authority, the mentor to which poet requests his submission in a female voice. The third participant in the poem is the people in general, who are addressed by the poet as ‘O People ‘or ‘ O Friends’ five times in the poem. Though they are passive recipients, yet they are constructed to convey the feelings of the poet for the Jogi. We have three major participants in the poem, the poet, the mentor and the people in General. A dialogue is established through the setting of the poem as the poet addresses people and complains about his plight.

The distribution of the personal pronoun by the poet for himself and the Jogi in the speech act indicates the focalization on the part of the poet to focus suggesting the division of the poem structurally in four different stages supplementing the thematic concerns of the poem for the reader in the production of meanings in the analysis.

## 2.1 Stage One

Stage one of the poem consists of three stanzas ( 12 lines). The thematic structure of clauses in the stanzas establishes the persona in the poem: the first person pronoun “I” (6 times) refers to the poet, the pronouns like “He”, “ him” and the metaphor of “Ranjha” and “Jogi” refer to the spiritual institution of the poet. The opening line of the poem lays stress on the status of the Ranjha as a passive recipient. He occupies the role of the receiver as being called by the people, a shepherd. He participates only in the dynamic process of being adored by the disciple in the first two stanzas. Through the use of the making comparison between the poet and the mentor: “I am like a thousand Heer to him” (line 3), “ the ruler of Hazara’s throne ( line 5) and “ I am forever the plain Heer” (line 6), the poet ably communicates self awareness of his limited being engaged in imploring the company of the mentor. His repeated references to the mentor through two different pronouns “him” and “he” and calling him “Ranjha”, “The Ruler” and finally “Jogi” projects the dominance of the Mentor over the scene and makes us certain at the same time that the Mentor is the central figure around which the discussion is directed. The role assigned to the Speaker in Stage One is related to the category of material, Verbal, Mental and Relational processes.

The mentor in the stage one is actor in two material processes: “changed”, “exchanged”, and token and a carrier in two relational processes: “became” and “ruler” while the poet engages in three material processes as an actor : “going”, “become” and “shy away”. We also find him a token in relational process as “plain Heer”. Jogi in the first stage exercises the authority over the disciple.

Consequently, the transitivity roles ascribed to the Jogi are mainly material and relational while the other participants like the people who are addressed in the very first line are passive observers and the poet, a recipient of the mental bondage by the mentor displays mental, verbal and relational transitivity. His role is mainly connected to the category of mental processes as he assumes his status with that of the mentor and wishes to be with him.

Thus, stage one thematically establishes three main characters in the discourse: the poet, the mentor and the people. The high density of deictic references (13 times in 12 lines) shows the overwhelming impact of the mentor on the course of events in the poem. He is depicted as a dominating figure as he, operates through poet , the disciple, taking the role of actor in material processes and senser in mental processes. Meanwhile, the third participants, the people, constitute a secondary theme.

## 2.2 Stage Two

As for the general theme of Stage Two, thematic position is occupied by the poet, as he is the main figure in the transitivity roles. He is the doer of most of the actions. Stage two is an account of the poet mind as he discusses in details what Jogi has done to him and what is left of him. He details his mental insights.

The poet metaphorically claims the proximity of the mentor and his company: “ I’m together with Jogi”, “ I have no I left in me”, “ its not me,its he himself”, “ I became just like him”, “ Jogi is my belief” , “ I belong to him”, all the instances of the poet as an actor in

the material and senser in the mental process with Jogi as the goal and the phenomenon.

It is also a matter of concern that the pattern of the tense selection in stage two with regards to Jogi is dynamic in nature: “ He’s disguised”, “Jogi has attracted me”, “ Jogi has established”and “Jogi has marked me”. Meanwhile, there is again an overwhelming use of deictic references, there are 27 instances in 30 lines for Jogi, mostly to engage the poet and occasionally for the people in general.. Such repeated occurrences intensifies the relationship among the participants in poem and permits the poet to be actor in material, senser in mental and carrier in relational processes.

In the meantime, the transitivity roles ascribed to the mentor in all clauses characterize him implicitly as a spiritual being: a characterization which cohesively links up with his portrayal in Stage One.

On the transitivity level, the Jogi is the phenomena of a series of mental processes and token in relational processes. There is a development in the transitivity roles attributed to the poet as attributing every change in his being to Jogi as the agent for bringing change.

On textual grounds, certain lexico-grammatical patterns develop link between this stage and the preceding one with the phrases like “He’s disguised as a Jogi” which recalls “He exchanged into a unique disguise” in stage one and further relates with the last line of the third and the last stage “ He came in disguise”. The phrase “ This Jogi has attracted me” and “ This Jogi has marked me” in the second stage foretells the consequence in the last stage as “ He stole away Heer of Sayal”.

### *2.3 Stage Three*

The third stage shifts focus from the Jogi and the disciple to the rivals. The poet stresses in the first stanza of the last stage that the relation with Jogi has been a subject of criticism and accusation from the rivals but the poet accepts all that comes in the way of loyalty to the Jogi.

He again maintains the praises of Jogi and exposes his identity along with the identity of the disciple in the last stanza. Transitivity patterns are again available as the dietetic references in the last stage again celebrate prominence of Jogi( 14 times), the poet ( 07 times) and the rival, “ Kharray”,only ( 01 time).

The first part of stage three discusses the Kharray engaged in “ deep talks” regarding Jogi and the relation with the disciple. They are sayer in the verbal process while the poet is behavior in the behavioural process and senser in mental process. Jogi , again is the actor in the last stage as he “ Stole away”, “ came in disguise” and “ came”. He is also a carrier in relational process as his name is “ Mohammad, The One with the shawl” and is “full of wonders”.

The poet also celebrates the arrival of the Jogi in the last stanza with million praises. He is the behavior in the behavioural process when he celebrates the arrival of Jogi at his place. It is worth mentioning that there is a use of parallelism among the stages of the poem. We find poet imploring for the company of the mentor in the first and the second stage and the final stanza marked the drawing of the curtain with the arrival of Jogi at the poet’s premises.

The analysis of the poem in relation to the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual meta-functions of language has given insight to the significant aspects and dimensions of meanings. The layered thematic structure shows a shift in themes in the stanza from Jogi to Poet, from Poet to Jogi, to rivals and finally to Jogi and the poet. The poem has been sufficiently divided into phases to develop the thematic concern of the poet from the very beginning till the final stanza displaying his wish for a courtesy visit by the Jogi, his mentor. Deictic references and the transitivity roles in the stage one reveals the poet as an addresser and the people, or friends, as passive recipient. The attributes of the Jogi in comparison to the poet's communicates the dominance of and spell of Jogi, the mentor, on his disciple. Jogi, in stage one, is referred to fifteen times, indicating extra-ordinary attributes and exercising his control over the senses of the poet. It is also to communicate his opulence and grandeur as he is the agent who convinces the poet to get involved in four mental processes directed towards him i.e 'I'll become', 'I'm going', 'I am like' and 'Who am I', projecting his mental capacity to engage himself in praising his mentor and appraising his attribute. Jogi is the only person who controls the overall environment of the poem and has the authority of drawing attention of poet and the of the people addressed. He also displays relational process as he is 'the ruler', 'became a Jogi' and participates as actor in material process also as he 'exchanged' and 'changed his name'.

In spite of a variety of thematic foci in all the stages of the poem, the poet, as a character of the poem remains dominant as enmeshed in his relation and devotion to Jogi. He is referred to in the second stage for thirty two times, emphasizing his 'being' in devotion to his mentor.

The poet's role as a disciple of is highlighted all over the second stanza through reference to his own mental, relational and material acts. Stage two is the monologue of the poet's character and psychological insight of his mind with regards to his relation with Jogi and his faith in him. 'I belong to him', 'my eyes inter-meshed', 'Jogi is my belief and faith' and 'has established residence in my heart' are indications of Jogi's control over his disciple.

Stage three is the description of rivals in the way of fidelity to Jogi on the part of the poet. Poet refers to them as 'Khayrray' who are engaged in deep talks fabricating rumours about the relation of the poet with Jogi. The verbal process, 'they have deep talks' on the part of Khayrray and the 'accusations' to which the poet is bound to imbibe, declaring his commitments to Jogi as he 'don't know anything else' except Jogi. The poet again relates the attribute of the mentor and reveals the identity of the mentor by revealing his name and the title, [Mohammad] "The One With The Shawl".

The last stage, details the wish of the poet for the courtesy visit of the mentor at his premises. He wishes to 'celebrate a million praises'. He engages in mental process by declaring again that Jogi has stolen away the heart of the disciple.

### **3. Conclusion**

The present paper has attempted a Systemic Functional analysis of the mystic poet Baba Bullay Shah, "Main Jana Jogi Day Naal" with the endeavor to highlight its linguistics uniqueness contributing to the meaning potentiality of the poem before the reader. The



humble attempt of making linguistics analysis is aimed at proving that different approaches in linguistics supplement the text and investigate meanings in a different fashion.

The application of Halliday's model has demonstrated that the language of the poem supports the splendor and the grandeur inherent the mystical poetry of Bullay Shah. He makes use of binaries in portraying contrast with his mentor. He successfully manages to keep his self in place and praises the attributes of the mentor in this connection.

Investigating the interplay of the functions in the poem at ideational, interpersonal and the textual levels, the poem unfolds different phases of the meanings. The distribution of the processes among the participants demonstrates that the character of Jogi dominates the scene while the poet is addressing in the humble tone about his feelings for his mentor. The people, the addressees, are passive participants of the process towards the speech act is directed. All the three participants differ one another linguistically, as they present different linguistic structures developing thematic concerns. A detailed analysis of the patterns in the poem and the selection of the transitivity roles, personal and textual references and the logic of structure prove how the clauses relate to the other clauses and supplement meaning in the semantic property of the poem.

Thus, the attempt to carry out Systemic Functional analysis, it has been shown that the model can help us acquire a comprehensive vision of the literary message embedded in the poem. It also invites contemplation of linguistic structure on which the literary text is constructed, intensifying the overall understanding of the reader and deeper understanding of the linguistic dimensions.

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## Appendix

Poem " Mian Jana Jogi Day Naal"

### Stage one

**O friends/, don't / call / Ranjha / a shepherd**  
Sayer / Process:Verbal / Receiver / Verbiage

**I / shy away/ from calling / him / a shepherd**  
Senser / Pro;Mental / Pro:Verbal / Receiver / Verbiage

**I /am /like a thousand Heers to him**

Senser/Mental /Phenomenon

**Who /am/ I, like countless others**

Mental/ Senser/ Phenomenon

**He / 's/ the ruler of Hazara's throne**

Token/Pro;Intensive/ Value

**And I / am/ forever the plain Heer**

Token/Pro;Intensive/ Value

**Bulleh Shah/ may / God hear my wail**

Actor/ Material/goal

**And I'll become / shepherded by the Shepherd**

Senser/ Mental /Phenomenon

**Ranjha/ became /a Jogi and/ arrived**

Carrier/Pro;Intensive/Attribute/ Pro;Material

**He / exchanged / into a unique disguise**

Actor/ pro;Material/ goal

**He / changed/ his name/ from Ahad (One God) to Ahmad (Prophet Mohammad PBUH)**

Actor /Material/Goal /Circ:Manner

**I' /m going/ together/ with / Jogi**

Actor/Material/Circ; accompaniment/Goal

### *Stage two*

**Someone's with someone else, this one's with that one**

Circumstance

**I' / m/ together with /Jogi**

Actor/Material/circ;accompaniment/ Goal

**Since I/ have become/ Jogi's**

Senser / Mental / Phenomenon

**I /have /no "I"/ left/ in/ me**

Senser / Phenomenon/Mental/

**Repeating /Ranjha Ranjha**

Agent /attributor

**I / became / Ranjha myself**

Carrier /Pro;causative/ attributor

**Call / me / Ranjha**



Pro;verbal/ receiver/ verbiage

**Nobody / call / me/ Heer**

Sayer / verbal /receiver/verbiage

**It /'s/ not me/ , it/ 's/ he/ himself**

Attribute/intensive/Carrier, attribute/ intensive/carrier/Agent,attributor

**He / amuses/ his own self**

Actor/ Material/ Goal

**The one with whom/ I / connected /my heart**

Goal /Actor/Material / Beneficiary

**I / became/ just /like him,/ O friends**

Carrier/intensive/ attribute,/.....

**Jogi/ is /with me**

Phenomenon/ mental/ senser

**I / am /with Jogi**

Senser/ Mental/ Phenomenon

**I' m /going / together with Jogi**

Actor/Material/Circ;accompanied

**After putting earrings in my ears and decorating my forehead with Tilak/**

Circ;manner

**Hey he /'s/ not [a] / Jogi**

Token/intensive/ Value

**He/ 's /some form of God**

Carrier/intensive/Attribute

**He/ 's disguised /as Jogi**

Actor/material/ Range

**This Jogi / has attracted/ me**

Phenomenon/mental/ senser

**This Jogi /has established / residence /in my heart**

...../mental/ phenomenon/ senser

**I / swear/ by the Quran it's true**

Actor/material/range

**Jogi / is/ my belief and faith**

Token/intensive/ value

**This Jogi/ has / marked me**

Phenomenon/ mental/ senser

**Hey I/ belong / to him**

Senser/mental / phenomenon

**Now I'/ m / not worth any one else (Now there's no other Jogi)**

Senser/mental/ phenomenon

**I' / m floating/, I'/ ve drifted / across, O people**

actor/material/, actor/material/Range/..

**My eyes/ inter-meshed / with Jogi's, /O people**

Actor/ material /Goal /

**Call / me / Jogi's female Jogi**

Verbal/receiver/verbage

**Heer/ is / dead, O people**

Senser/mental/phenomenon

Stage three

**In Khayrray/ they /have / deep talks**

Circ:location/ sayer/verbal/verbiage

**I /have to listen/ to accusations about**

Behavior/ behavioural/phenomenon

**I / don't know / anything about anyone else**

senser/ mental/ phenomenon

**If I / know / anything/ , I/ only know/ Jogi**

Senser/mental/phenomenon, /senser/mental/phenomenon

**No one / has attained/ what/ he /has /attained**

Actor/ material /Goal/ actor / material/ goal

**His shadow/ is/ on both worlds**

Actor/ material / circ;location

**His fame/ is celebrated/ in both world**

Goal / material / location

**His shoes/ were kissed / by Heaven**

Goals / material / actor

**This Jogi / is /full of wonders**

carrier/ intensive/ attribute

**In his hand / is / the rosary of "There is Nothing But One God"**

Goal / material / actor

**Hey, his name / is / [Mohammad] “The One With The Shawl”**

existential/ existent

**Stage four**

**If / Jogi/ comes / to my home**

Circ/ actor/material/goal

**All your fights / will/ end**

Actor/material/goal

**I/ will embrace / him**

Behaver/behaviourail/phenomenon

**And /celebrate /a million praises**

Mental/ phenomenon

**Bulleh Shah / a Jogi / came**

...../actor / material

**To our door....(... ?... )**

*Location*

**He / stole away / Heer of Sayal**

Actor/ material/ goal

**He / came / in a disguise**

Actor/ material/ circ;manner