

Unveiling the Cultural Clash through Females' Attire in *A Pair of Jeans by Qaisra Sheraz: A Transitivity Analysis*

Dr. Ambreen Mahmood
Assistant Professor of English, Govt. Graduate College for Women Mumtazbad,
Multan

Dr. Mehreen Zafar
Lecturer, Department of English, Ghazi University, D.G. Khan.

Dr. Aisha Naseem
Chairperson Languages Department, Paragon Overseas Education, Multan

Received on: 06-01-2024

Accepted on: 10-02-2024

Abstract

The current study helps to unveil the cultural clash through females' attire in the short story, *A Pair of Jeans* by Qaisra Sheraz. Halliday's transitivity system (1994) helps to analyse the text of the story. The selected 600 clauses from the story were analysed and discussed under transitivity framework. The results reflected that young Pakistani Muslim girl is judged and rejected because of her attire for marital relationship. The high frequency of material process (223) and relational process (175) represented protagonist Miriam as modest, educated, mannered, bold and liberal and her in-laws found her unsuitable for their son after finding her in jeans and vest. The attitude of a girl's mother advising her daughter to be silent and dominant behaviour of boy's parents bank on the stereotypical reflection of Pakistani society in UK. The discussion and expressions of family for jeans made Miriam perplexed for considering pair of jeans to decide her future societal relationship. The study tries to understand the ideological representation of generation X and Y (millennials) for clothing and marital relationship.

Keywords: Cultural Clash, Qaisra Shera, Transitivity Analysis.

Introduction

The present study is a transitivity analysis of selected Pakistani short story, namely, *A Pair of Jeans*, written by Qaisra Shiraz in English language. Using transitivity model of analysis, the study focuses on the stance of writer conveyed through the character of Miriam mainly. Qaisra Shiraz represented the issue of cultural clash through the life of Pakistani Muslim girl Miriam who considered jeans as seemingly harmless attire but actually turned into a matter at hand for her in-laws. Hester and Hehman (2023) identified dress as the basic tool for personality perception. The theme of the story is the same that females' clothing is not only a piece of cloth but also the mark of their chastity, nobility and purification.

Though the story, *A Pair of Jeans* has been written in 1980's time frame where the cultural

differences were louder enough and those differences could not be prominent in 2020's. However, the wide spread publication in India, UK, Pakistan and Germany still makes it popular among readers and researchers. The writer narrates the issue of marriage, culture and clothing in an interesting way where the reader finds sympathy with protagonist Miriam when she tears her jeans as it destroys her life, on the other side, some readers find Miriam taking charge her destiny by moving out in jeans to meet her fiancé.

The textual analysis through transitivity (Halliday, 1994) allows to interpret the text in detail by exploring linguistic choices, patterns of transitivity and structure of the text. In fact, transitivity bridges the text, interpretation and ideological realization (Eggins, 2004). The researchers try to reach out the ideology of the characters and writers through such analysis which in turn, discloses the spectrum of any society. The objective of the current research is to deconstruct the text by exploring the transitivity pattern (processes, participants and circumstances) and interpreting the linguistic choices. Fairclough (2003) emphasizes vocabulary and grammar for construction and ideological significance of the text.

The study helps to interpret the discourse of two Pakistani families in western culture where one family is dominant being groom's parents whereas bride's parents are submissive and silent as their daughter's attire becomes questionable for future in-laws. The transitivity analysis leads to explore the females' attire, cultural clash and institute of marriage in a separate country.

Theoretical Framework

Transitivity as one aspect of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) works to identify the experiential meanings of the users' communication and deeds. M. A. K. Halliday (1994) presented concept of meaning interpretation and functional use language. Transitivity supports the understanding of the "inner and outer meanings" of the language (Halliday, 2014: 14). Halliday devised three major units of the transitivity system. These units are process, participant, and circumstances. With the help of mentioned parts, the writers are free to pick available linguistic choices to shape the narrative or discourse. These six processes build the ideological representation of the characters and writer of the story and readers interpret their implicit and explicit meanings through applying transitivity analysis (Zheng, 2021). The identified processes; material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential play their role with respect to their participants and circumstances (Alharbi, 2021).

The transitivity as tool of textual analysis looks into the interwoven web of characters, events, location and entities in the short story, *A Pair of Jeans*. Through transitivity framework, the current research explores how the linguistic features can develop the feminine and feminist text generally and verbs as process, characters as participants and prepositional and adverbial phrases as circumstances, in particular, discover the role of clothing in the life of a female even being resident of different culture. Overall, the study traces the cultural clash through female's attire in English short story by interpreting participant's role in identified process and circumstance.

Research Methodology

The current paper in the paradigm of mixed method research focuses on the transitivity

analysis of the selected text of *A Pair of Jeans* to unfold the cultural differences for womanly representation. Transitivity is the part of ideational metafunction of systemic functional linguistics where clause is the basic unit for textual analysis (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2011). The purpose of transitivity analysis is to explore the experiential meanings of women's clothing, cultural differences and dual ideological representation of Pakistani women. The research questions were;

1. How do patterns of transitivity employed in '*A Pair of Jeans*' represent Pakistani feminine youth in a western culture?
2. How do linguistic choices play their role in projecting cultural clash in '*A Pair of Jeans*' by Qaisra Shiraz?

Six hundred clauses were selected from the text of *A Pair of Jeans*; the selection of the clauses was done under the purposive sampling technique. The theme of the story is females' clothing and representation in society; therefore, the extracts engaging females' ideology regarding clothing and marital relationship were highlighted. Further, clauses were chosen from mentioned extracts. The criteria for selection of the clauses was position of protagonist, climax and resolution of the story, and characters of the story.

Analysis and Results

To obtain reliable and valid results, the present study follows mixed-method approach. Both qualitative and quantitative method have been used to trace the implicit ideologies in this short story. Initially, the linguistic features and textual constructions were identified and labelled. The involvement of three affairs were performed successively. Such process of transitivity analysis is possible at clause level (Eggs, 2004). The selection of verb, involved participants and used circumstances supports the text analysis respectively.

Table 1: Procedure of Transitivity Analysis

Step 1	The selection of the process (Verbal group)
Step 2	The selection of the participant (Nominal group)
Step 3	The selection of the circumstances (Adverbial group or Prepositional group)

Transitivity analysis provides a scientific way to answer the research questions by exploring linguistic choices of texts. The analysis further involves numerical procedures in order to investigate the most dominant process types, the participant roles and the circumstances which contribute in effective communication of the writers' stance. After the identification and labeling of the verbal group, the numerical count of every process as an essential part of the quantitative aspect of the analysis.

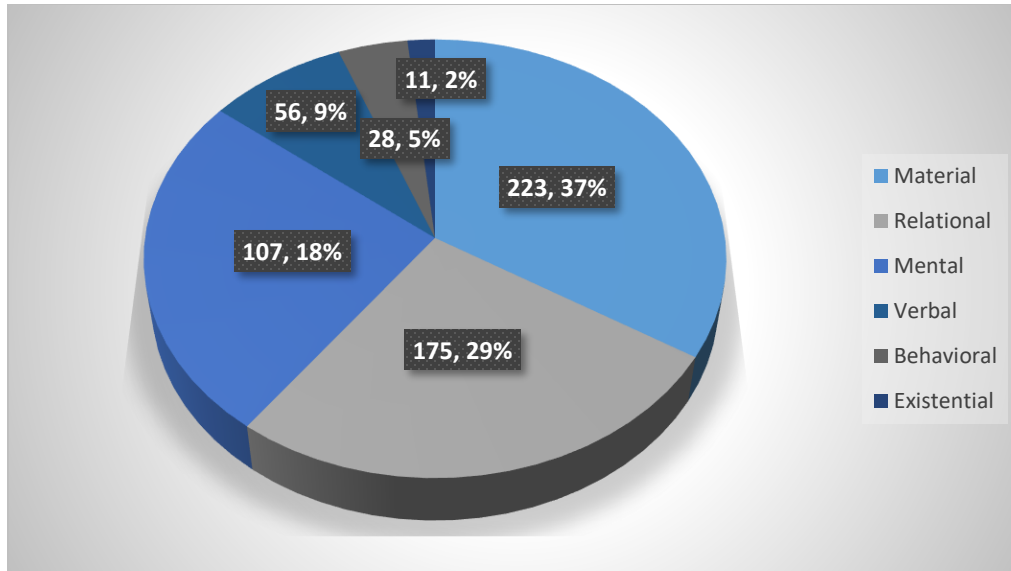


Figure 1: Frequency of Processes

This noticeable result (223 out of 600) regarding abundant use of material process underpins the doings or happenings in the experiential world. The dominance of material process shows that the author has developed the short story by telling what happened to the characters or what the characters did.

The second prominent process is relational process as it is 175 (29%) out of 600 clauses. It indicates the relationship of happenings, description and attributes of characters and events. Among 175 relational processes, 102 are attributive, 66 are identifying and 07 are possessive. The extended number of attributive processes show the relationship of characters with their attributes particularly clothing. Next frequency range is by the mental process which is 107 (18%). Such process is to reflect the feelings, emotions, thoughts and expressions of the characters regarding the events and actions.

Only 56 clauses out of 600 reflecting verbal process is not very much used in the text of *A Pair of Jeans*. Female protagonist characters are silent mostly in the stories but they have strong ideological representation. The less frequency of behavioral process (28) is to reflect the social distance among the characters in the text where characters are observing and perceiving the situations by themselves but are not ready to reflect their thoughts. This is also one more reason to have less verbal processes. The most least frequent process is existential process which is only 2 % is the selected clauses.

To explore the research questions, it was important to interpret the relation of processes with the participants; therefore, the labelling and frequency of participants' role was also done.

Table 2: Participants' Role and Frequency in *A Pair of Jeans*

Participant Roles	Frequency	Percentage
Actor	61	19.81%
Goal	33	10.71%

Beneficiary	4	1.30%
Range	1	0.32%
Senser	44	14.29%
Phenomenon	34	11.04%
Sayer	14	4.55%
Receiver	3	0.97%
Verbiage	7	2.27%
Behaver	3	0.97%
Existent	4	1.30%
Token	8	2.60%
Value	8	2.60%
Carrier	42	13.64%
Attribute	42	13.64%
Possessor	2	0.65%
Possessed	2	0.65%
Total	308	100.00%

Miriam with the highest frequency; 28 times (39%) was found as major actor while Miriam's in-laws were found afterwards; like, 11 times (16%). The involvement of the linguistic choices like *her jacket*, *it (jacket)*, *her tight jeans*, *her way*, *her vest*, and *tight jeans*, *repugnant-looking article* and *a vicious kick* were identified as goal which is to clear the relationship of actor (Miriam) with the attire.

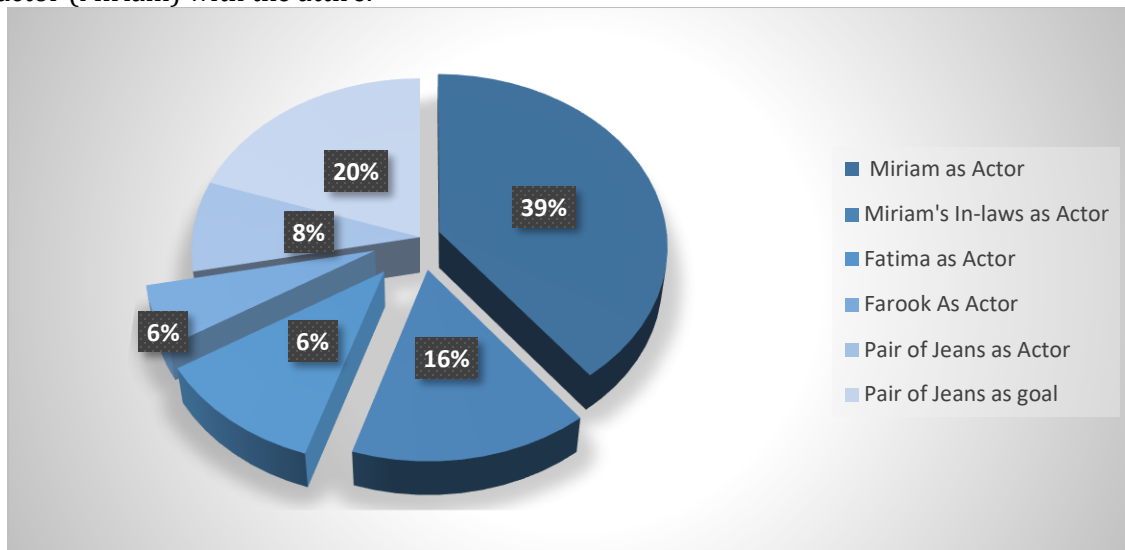


Figure 2: Frequency of Actor and Goal (participants)

The pair of jeans was found being as an actor and goal in the text. As an actor, it was found 08 times and the ideology being an actor represented jeans as a living persona to change the destiny of human being, a girl where as at the position of the goal (20%), it was not found only as a piece of cloth but has the power to represent the cultural and contextual values. The representation of jeans as actor is available in the clauses like;

The shabby and much worn pair of jeans lay at the foot of the bed, blissfully unaware of the havoc (C199)

it had created in the life of its wearer (C200)

as if it burned her (C196)

The mental processes reveal that total 46 senser and 38 phenomenons were found. Out of these 46, Miriam performed mentioned role 20 times (47 %). The high frequency related to Miriam and her clothes reflects the placement of a young, beautiful, unmarried Pakistani girl with unwanted western clothing which was cultural demand but it was not acceptable for the parents of the groom, Farook. Further, high frequency as senser but low frequency as sayer for the character of Miriam helps to anticipate the taciturn state of Miriam; who keeps on thinking but is not allowed to utter her thoughts openly.

Miriam's mind screamed, but she uttered not a word (C445)

Her mother, Fatima makes her silent and stops to say anything to Farook and her in-laws.

Fatima was desperately signalling her to end the call (C254)

Miriam, that wasn't the right thing to do or say (C551)

The attributive process (102 out of 175) reflects the maximum burden on Miriam and her jeans. Before identifying Miriam in western clothing, her in-laws values her for her beauty, manners and education.

Begum had liked the way Miriam had behaved (C125)

Above all, she had liked the way she dressed herself (C131)

The story revolves around Miriam's proposal, attire and her in-laws; therefore, maximum relational processes were found. Her clothing at attributive, token-value and possessive position made her selection as future daughter-in-law questionable. Begam and Ayub (Farook's parents) refused to accept her after seeing her in western clothing, jacket and jeans.

...in those clothes of hers, would you be proud to have her as your daughter-in-law? (C307)

She said that your engagement had to be broken off! (C437)

Their faces, their body language had told the whole story (C449)

The short story, *A Pair of Jeans* revolves around Miriam selection for marriage on the basis of her modesty as she was wrapped an eastern attire, Saree and rejection for marriage on the basis of her looks in western clothes, jeans and short vest. Therefore, it becomes important to place *Pair of Jeans* through transitivity analysis. Although the numerical representation of clothing especially pair of jeans is less but its mere representation creates a huge difference for interpretation of story, characters and their experiential world.

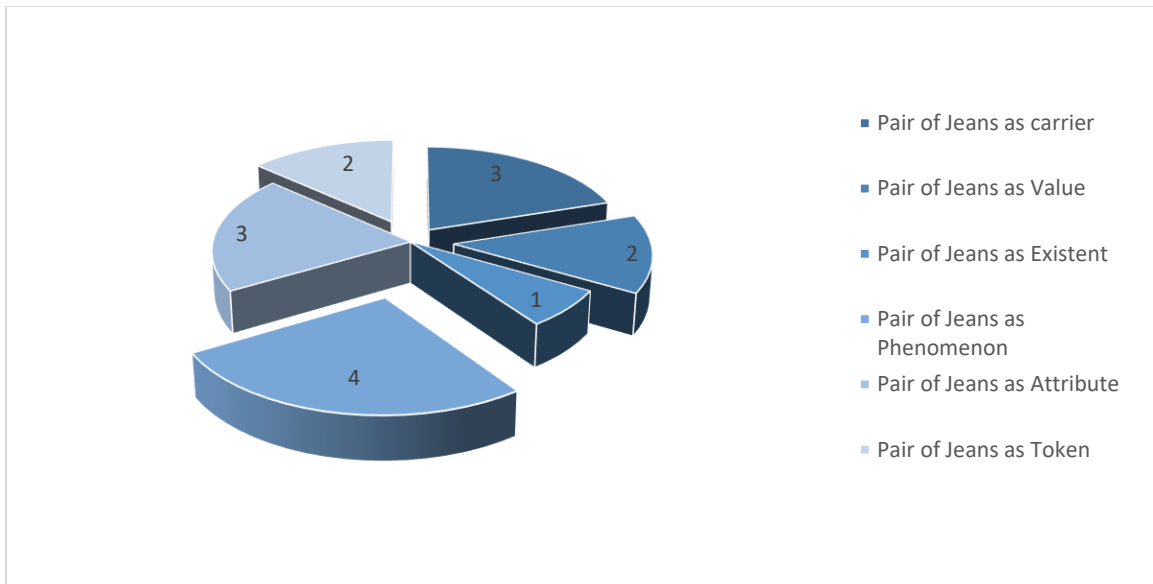


Figure 3: Representation of Jeans as participant with Frequency

The identification of circumstances is crucial enough to relate processes and participants' role; these help to interpret the reasons of the doings, sayings and feelings by the participants.

Table 3: Frequency & percentage of Circumstances in A Pair of Jeans

Circumstances	Frequency	%
Location	88	47%
Manner	43	20 %
Contingency	25	13.39%
Cause	17	8%
Extent	7	4 %
Matter	5	3%
Accompaniment	6	3%
Role	2	1.08 %
Angle	1	0.53%
Result	194	100.00%

Observing circumstances in the selected text, it came out that the most frequently used circumstance was of location. The analysis of 600 clauses shows that this circumstance was found 88 times (47%). Therefore, it was interpreted that the writer wanted to point out the cultural displacement which was associated with the location.

The second highest frequent circumstance was of manner. It has been used 43 times (20%). Through this circumstance, the writer reflected the stances of the characters; how Miriam's in-laws were impressed by her behavior and beauty but just after finding her in western attire, they changed their perspective. The connection between Miriam and her clothes,

Miriam and her mother and Miriam and her fiancé was elaborated in the text through this circumstance. The circumstances played the role of a bridge to understand the perception of actor-goal, sayer-verbiage, senser-phenomenon and carrier-attributes.

The third representation (13.39%) in circumstances was of circumstance of contingency which is to highlight the flow of the text. The cohesion and coherence of the narratives were loud and clear because of contingency. This type of circumstances is to bring the logic in the events and happenings of the text; How jeans as an attire can disclose the cultural difference, how Pakistani Muslim girl dressed in western attire can make a big difference for marriage considerations, how Pakistani mother can have the prescience of the situation and how the adoption of the western cloth in western culture can bring the confidence in Pakistani girl to get charge of her destiny. Every single turn and ride of the story lies on the circumstance of contingency. The circumstance of Cause was found as 8%. Such frequency represents the command of the writer on the lives of the characters to provide the flow of the text. The circumstance of extent was used 7 times (3.72%). The circumstance of accompaniment, extent, matter, role and angle were used to make the role of clothes of a Muslim female clear in different culture.

Discussion

The transitivity analysis of the text selected from, *A Pair of Jeans*, unearthed the cultural ideology associated with dressing style. This ideological strand has been represented through Miriam's Western clothes, short vest and a pair of jeans which proved to be a source of constant anxiety for her and finally ruined her future prospects. A variety of explicit and implicit meanings are attached with clothing. Clothing works as an indicator of one's social identity; therefore, the personal representation in any society is linked with attire. A piece of clothing can describe a structure of social life, ideology, history, class, community, and above all social identity.

Miriam as an actor was observed by performing and influencing different goals especially related to the clothes, jeans and vest.

She pulled her jacket suddenly conscious of her jean -clad legs and the short vest underneath her jacket (C9)

All day she had kept pulling it down to cover her midriff (C11)

She glanced down at her tight jeans (C34)

she tugged at the hemline of her vest (C21)

she peeled off her jacket, vest, and tight jeans (C87)

She pulled off the repugnant-looking article from the hanger (C197)

Then she gave it a vicious kick with her foot (C198)

Miriam was observed at the level of dynamism; Actor and goal at the same time. As an actor, she was appreciated, admired, defamed, and rejected because of her attire. Miriam and Farook's families were from Pakistan but they were resident of UK. Begum (Farook's mother) admired the appearance and manners of Miriam. Whenever they met with Miriam, they found her in eastern clothes and it was first time when they were meeting her while she was dressed up in western attire, jeans and vest. Miriam's in-laws selected her for Farook by finding her in '*saree, modest clothes,*' and called her '*sharif and modest girl*'. She was judged by her looks and clothes. As goal, she was again come across through her jeans.

Through transitivity analysis, it was found that Miriam's In-laws were dominant and were actually controlling the situation. It seems that they were center of action;

they then were coming today (C32)

what if they had already arrived? (C33)

they darted not at her as Miriam, but at the figure (C71)

we can find lots of other women for our son (C165)

The attire is a symbol of cultural values, personality traits and ideological representation of individual and society (Gilligan, 2023). Therefore, a pair of jeans was considered not merely a piece of garment but as a symbol of cultural representation. That is the reason, finding her in western clothes, Miriam's in-laws were not in favor to get their son married with her.

Miriam was found sagacious as she quickly understood the situation and wanted to confirm from her mother. As generation millennials, she was bit hesitant to accept the reason (jeans) of odd behavior of her in-laws. The frequency of participant has already mentioned that Miriam was not allowed to speak but she was allowed to think ; hence, being senser (47%) she observed, felt and thought 20 times related to clothing.

In her heart she knew (C191)

...strange, she felt odd in her clothing now (C12)

somehow here, in the vicinity of her home, she felt different (C 15)

She sensed their awkwardness (C 75)

Begum and Ayub (In-laws) performed the role of senser (13.64 %) just to observe the appearance and looks of Miriam in eastern and western clothes and to consider her as future daughter in law or not. In clause 74 and 93, they identified '*western version of Miriam and your other persona*'.

The story does not only reflect the cultural relation with dress but also identify the role of mothers in Pakistani brought-up. Miriam's mother, Fatima was found the most verbal character labelled as sayer (28 %). She actually wanted to defend her position, guide her and cry for her rejection. Miriam is the most silent character as the clause 189; '*she uttered not a word*' represented her participation as sayer (4%).

Ayub as father of Farook instructs her wife to end the engagement of Farook with Miriam. Initially, Begum *stammers* and *wanted to excuse Miriam* but it seems that Ayub's position is strong in the family to take the decisions. Again a few clauses like observation of facial expression of Ayub by Begum (his wife) and silence of Begum reflected the stereotypical relationships of husband and wife in Pakistani culture. Gender discrimination is high in Pakistani society (Ali et al., 2022).

The relational process divided in identifying and attributive relational processes is an essential verbal group and its participants are of equal importance. Maximum carrier and attributive features were attached with Miriam and her clothes. Further, it was Miriam who carried them and it was the jeans and vest who decided her future. Miriam and her attire complete each other for her appreciation, acceptance and rejection. By reading and analyzing the story, it feels that jeans was found as major character rather than an item. The '*shrunk vest, tight jeans*' were the real culprits to destroy the life of Miriam. Their traits affected her life; the cultural values attached with jeans and vest were in contradiction of Pakistani cultural and traditions and it was not acceptable for the generation X to ignore the piece of

clothing. The involvement of clothes in the story made text interesting and ironical where individuality ends but dressing matters. Begum as behavior (43 %) reflected the control of the story. Using her husband's ideology, she responded during and after meeting with Miriam and her parents.

Begum just stared (C151)

Existential process is to disclose the description of the narration. Through such process, the description of the plot, story, characters and events is possible. In this process, only one role is present; existent.

There is no need for communication (C126)

New Ending...A Pair of Jeans (C 271)

The existent was found only for 8 times in selected clauses; it was to reflect the happenings without actors, action and goal. The presence of existent was to affirm that something really exists.

Table 2 provided the detail of participants. Among these participants, the most frequent one was actor (61 %) and least found participant was range (0.32 %). Carrier and attributive, token and value were complement for each other. The frequency of verbiage (7 times) is less than sayer (14 times) while same was found between senser (44) and phenomenon (34). However, possessor and possessed were equal in number as in case of carrier and token relations. All participants in selected clauses were found 308 times. The less verbiage reflects that most of the time sayer was without the voice; representation of female is unvoiced. Senses were allowed to think but their thoughts (phenomenon) were not figured out. Miriam was voiced only in front of her mother, Begum was voiced and heard by her husband before finding Miriam in western clothes. Fatima was voiced in front of Miriam and her relatives. In the end of story, Miriam took the charge of her life and decided to meet Farook in same western attire so that she can get his opinion about marriage.

A pair of jeans were found as actor, goal, carrier, attribute, token and value. Through such linguistic choices, the writer revealed the mind set of generation X in the synchronic study. No one can deny the time frame of the story; during 1980s, the western clothing was linked with liberalism, women's modesty and rebellious attitude of women. Dennis and Monnie (2023) describes that clothing as a tool of communication can function for the identity, customs, and individualistic nature of its users.

The transitivity analysis of the text selected from *A Pair of Jeans*, unearthed the cultural ideology associated with dressing style. Clothing is an indication of one's social identity, so that the boundaries of every person's personal comfort are different. A piece of clothing can describe a structure of social life, ideology, history, class, community, and above all social identity. The ideology of religion in clothing, regarding moral and ethical issues, is a rule or law regarding how to dress according to the conditions of space, place, and time that needs to be understood and implemented. Feminism today, claims the freedom and equal rights of the woman as human including the right to wear whatever she wants. In this context, the ever-changing European fashion is also used as a tool for the promotion of feminist agenda.

A person's dressing style is influenced by many things such as culture and the values that are inherited from community groups, family, environment, media, fashion trends and personal character. All of them refer towards how to dress and shape their preferences. Same applies in Miriam's case, as her own parents and her fiancé's family both belonged to Pakistan. They

shared the same cultural mind sets. This similarity of culture became the strongest reason behind Miriam's selection as their daughter in law. She came up to their mark being respectful, obedient, wearing eastern attire, having eastern values, overall *a very sharif and a very modest girl*. She consciously and successfully maintained to wear eastern clothes whenever her in-laws paid a few informed visits to them but all the mess started when one day her parents-in-law arrived unexpectedly, bit earlier and found Miriam in a pair of jeans which ultimately made them angry and decided to change their mind. So, the role played by the pair of jeans (symbolic of western dressing), in overall progression of the story, is significant at the ideological level. Johnson et al. (2014) mentioned that dress as attribute influences the self and others. One can not come out of the influence of the impact of the attires of the wearer.

Conclusion

On account of limited time and space, the present study could focus on the ideational metafunction of transitivity system of the selected text whereas interpersonal and textual metafunctions await further researches. Though the story was written in the time frame of 1980's but still it reflects the mindset of many people who prefer to live in different culture and country for better and improved life style but they are not willing to accept the cultural change even for attires and relationships. The same mindset was displayed through A Pair of Jeans where Miriam's modesty and individuality was faded out by the worn pair of jeans and short vest. However, the dejected Miriam turned to be a feminist and decided to meet Farook by wearing same pair of jeans because of which his parents considered her unsuitable for marrying their son. A few last clauses of the story twisted the angle of the story and shaped guilty, shy and gloomy Miriam in a bold and confident lady who owns her attire and decided to meet her fiancé in her pair of jeans. It means that she accepts the reality of resident culture and moves on. Moreover, the study can be extended to other genres. The present study sets a trend to unveil the thematic stance of the text through the lens of transitivity for future research aspirants.

References

1. Alharbi, A. (2021). Controversy and Discourse: the arts of transforming negativity through transitivity. *SAGE Open*, 11(4), 215824402110668. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211066896>
 2. Ali, T. S., Ali, S. S., Nadeem, S., Memon, Z., Soofi, S., Madhani, F., Karim, Y., Mohammad, S., & Bhutta, Z. A. (2022). Perpetuation of gender discrimination in Pakistani society: results from a scoping review and qualitative study conducted in three provinces of Pakistan. *BMC Women's Health*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-022-02011-6>
 3. Dennis, A., & Monnie, P. D. (2023). Clothing selection and appearance of pro-vice chancellors: A case of University of Cape Coast, Ghana. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 7(1), 100490. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100490>
 4. Eggins, S. (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* (2nd ed.). London: Continuum.
 5. Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London and New York: Routledge.
 6. Gilligan, I. (2023). Dress or cover? The origin and meaning of clothing. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 8(1), 100730. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100730>
 7. Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge,
-

Chapman and Hall

8. Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (3rd ed.). London:Arnold
 9. Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. (2014). *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar* (4th ed.). Oxon: Routledge.
 10. Hester, N., & Hehman, E. (2023). Dress is a Fundamental Component of Person Perception. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 27(4), 414–433. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10888683231157961>
 11. Johnson, K. K. P., Lennon, S. J., & Rudd, N. A. (2014). Dress, body and self: research in the social psychology of dress. *Fashion and Textiles*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40691-014-0020-7>
 12. Sheraz, Qaisra (2007). *A Pair of Jeans* in Muneeza, S. (Ed.). *And the world changed: A contemporary short stories by Pakistani women* (pp.169-181). Karachi: Oxford University Press
 13. Zheng, X. (2021). Transitivity Structure of Research Articles: Variations across Sections. *English Language Teaching*, 14(8), 8. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n8p8>
-