Transitivity And Meaning-Making In Travel Vlogs About Pakistan: A Linguistic Analysis

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Abstract

With the development of the Internet and social media not only communication has become vibrant but new ways of communication have also emerged such as vlogging. Vlogging generally and travel vlogging particularly has emerged as an effective medium of communication about tourist destinations based on the experiences of the travellers. Therefore, this study has analysed transitivity processes used in travel vlogs about Pakistan posted on YouTube employing Hilary Janks's rubric (2005) for linguistic analysis. The analysis of transitivity reveals a predominant use of action and material processes which make the travel vlogs engaging for the audience. The frequent use of mental, relational and verbal processes in the narrative of these vlogs reflects the cognitive states of the vloggers, the relationship between the entities and individuals, and their attributes and the acts of communication. These processes provide insight into the vloggers' thoughts, highlight positive attributes of the individuals and other elements in the context and make the message reliable through communication acts and interactions. However, there is limited use of physiological and existential processes in the travel vlogs about Pakistan. Overall, through the effective use of different transitivity processes, the vloggers have presented a positive and appealing image of Pakistan as a tourist destination.

Keywords: Travel Vlogs, Transitivity, Meaning-making, Linguistic Analysis.

Introduction

With the development of technology, travel vlogging is evolving rapidly. Nowadays, young travellers consider travel vlogs reliable travel accounts. They are curious to discover the world with the help of their modern devices. A travel vlogger after exploring tourist destinations, interacting with local people, and enjoying cultural cuisine and scenery, posts his opinions and thoughts on his social media accounts in the form of a vlog (Peralta, 2019). These travellers publish the stories of their travels on social media and receive feedback from their viewers as well (Carson, 2007).

Travel vloggers highlight the important characteristics of a destination and recommend it to their viewers for tourism. A survey report by Nielsen Global Survey of Trust in Advertising (2015) says that 81% of travellers consider personal endorsements trustworthy. Hence, travel vlogs, based on their large potential for tourism marketing play a significant role in this regard and travel vloggers are considered as travel influencers.

Since travel vloggers can share their experiences of the destinations and get feedback from their audience, they have become powerful individuals in the marketing of tourist destinations influencing and encouraging the followers to visit those destinations. According to a paper by Axon Marketing & Communications (2018), travellers are influenced by these travellers regarding their purchase decisions. The study revealed that

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85% of the surveyed consumers tracked at least three influencers in lifestyle, fashion and travel. These influencers had a very strong control over the buying of travel services, destinations and hotels.

Several researchers have studied different aspects of blogs related to tourism and travelling. They have studied travellers' choices, characteristics and motivations (Wegner 2008; Carson, 2008), tourists' purchase decisions (Litvin et al., 2006), and the influence of travel blogs on tourists' behaviour and destinations (Thurm, 2014; Bergmeister, 2015; Bosangit et al., 2009). These studies reveal that travel vloggers have a vital role in destination marketing and a strong impact on prospective tourists' decisions to book a destination (Pan et al., 2007). Similarly, travel blogs also influence travellers' purchase decisions because they find verbal recommendations more reliable than companies' traditional advertisements (Lange-Faria; Elliot, 2012).

Problem Statement

Travel vlogs are popular and influential in impacting the perception of tourist destinations; however, meaning-making through language in travel vlogs is under-researched. Particularly travel vlogs about Pakistan remain unexplored regarding the structure of the narrative and the way travel vloggers portray the image of Pakistan as a destination. The gap in the research needs to be filled because the language used by a travel vlogger plays a significant role in reflecting the image of a destination. Through the analysis of transitivity in travel vlogs about Pakistan, the research aimed to explore representation and meaning-making. The analysis helps to understand the depiction of activities, entities and situations which may shape the audiences' perception of Pakistan as a tourist destination. The study contributes to understanding how travel vlogs employ language and particularly transitivity to represent destinations.

Research Questions
   a. What are the transitivity processes used in travel vlogs about Pakistan?
   b. How do the transitivity processes contribute to meaning-making in travel vlogs about Pakistan?

Literature Review

Various aspects of travel vlogs/blogs have been studied through different approaches. Gurung and Goswami (2017), through content analysis, studied travel blogs created by both foreign and domestic tourists to distinguish the features that influence the image of Sikkim as a tourist destination. Liang's (2020) exploratory study on the promotion of destination images in travel vlogs identified factors such as culture, language, source of information, nature of travel, experience with the destination, the vlog's format and social media platform to be significant. Similarly, Peraltra (2019) examined how Facebook vlogs impact destination images. Besides, an e-ethnographic study by Thurm (2014) explored the impact of travel blogs on tourism destinations and Elliot (2009) explored travel vlogs to comprehend customer-to-customer (C2C) promotions. Moreover, Banyai and Glover (2012) studied research methods, content analysis and narrative analysis, dealing with travel blogs and found them the most popular for investigating travel stories posted online. According to Cheng, Wei and Zhang (2020), the reliability of a source strongly impacts consumer engagement behaviour (CEB). Similarly, Monika (2019), through content analysis of vlogger-created videos and tourist board-generated videos identified vlogger videos to be more attractive and emotive. In 2021, Chen, Cuo and Pan, through empirical analysis revealed that interactivity, vlogger's attraction, potential amusement and perceived effectiveness have a positive influence on consumers' planning to travel.

The literature reviewed reveals that most of the researchers have employed content analysis and narrative analysis to examine the impact of travel vlogs on tourist destinations. However, little research has been done to study the use of linguistic features such as transitivity in meaning-making within travel vlogs. The research aimed to make a

significant contribution to the understanding of how vloggers use transitivity to share their experiences and thoughts about tourist destinations.

	Travel Vlogs about Pakistan by Foreign Travellers							
S#	Vlog's Title	Vlog's Length	Views of the Vlog	Date of Publication	Vlogger	Subscribers	Vlogger's Origin	Video Link
1	Why is Everything Free in Pakistan	4:07	9.9 Million	Mar 31, 2019	Drew Binsky	3.77 M	USA	https://youtu.be/CWeWxl7ruGE
2	Pakistan Changed My Life	10:12	4.1 Million	Feb 3, 2020	Rosie Gabrielle	641K	Canada	https://youtu.be/Dv75wGwQ2t4
3	Living with a Local Pakistani Baloch Family/Solo Female Biker's Experience	4:00	2.1 Million	Jun 6, 2019	Rosie Gabrielle	641K	Canada	https://youtu.be/9Pt4GvdtcpY
4	Pakistan-Why I Chose to Travel Solo	6:44	1.9 Million	Aug 15, 2019	Rosie Gabrielle	641K	Canada	https://youtu.be/wTuV0B7n5Zg
5	What Western Media Won't Tell You About Islamabad	10:57	1.7 Million	Oct 6, 2018	Eva Zu Beck	1.63M	Poland	https://youtu.be/506DaT8MmB8
6	Pakistan Day 1	17:33	1.6 Million	Nov 26, 2020	Jay Palfrey	1.48 M	Britain	https://youtu.be/0U0TISCikhU
7	Trying the Pakistani "Anday Wala Burger!" My First Day in Pakistan	9:01	1.9 Million	Mar 27, 2021	Khalid Al Ameri	2.15M	UAE	https://youtu.be/YzuELjSBPkE
8	Pakistan/Most Dangerous Country	5:27	1.2 Million	Apr 21, 2020	Rosie Gabrielle	641K	Canada	https://youtu.be/ZH22VpMp_wc
9	Can't Believe It's Pakistan (Didn't Expect This)	19:47	1.4 million	Apr 5, 2020	Indigo Traveller (Nick Fisher)	1.88 M	New Zealand	https://youtu.be/7VpJ6oPD7wQ
10	Is Pakistan Safe?	3:19	1.1 Million	Mar 25, 2019	Drew Binsky	3.77 M	USA	https://youtu.be/S_NUHA4mElg

Methodology

This qualitative research employs Hilary Janks' (2005) rubric for linguistic analysis to explore transitivity and meaning-making in travel vlogs about Pakistan. The framework for

critical literacy is specifically appropriate to study the use of language for the construction of power, identity and meaning within a social context. Janks' rubric helps researchers to perform a comprehensive analysis of transitivity processes to understand the representation of actions, situations and participants in the travel vlogs.

Janks' rubric for linguistic analysis deals with four main elements such as power, diversity, access and design. The purpose of analysing power is to study how language strengthens or challenges power dynamics whereas diversity refers to the analysis of different languages and cultural differences. The dimension of access deals with the study of the presentation of information and design refers to structure and choice of language in a narrative.

However, the current research focuses on the analysis of transitivity in travel vlogs about Pakistan to explore different types of processes reflected by verbs to understand how meanings are created through the representation of events, activities and participants. Janks (2010) proposes the following six transitivity processes:

1. **Verbs of Doing**
   The verbs which denote physical actions and activities refer to action and material processes.
2. **Verbs of Being or Having**
   The verbs of being and having refer to relational processes denoting connection between different entities or the relationship of an entity with its attribute.
3. **Verbs of Thinking/Feeling/Perceiving**
   These verbs refer to mental processes.
4. **Verbs of Saying**
   The verbs of saying describe different acts of communication and interaction.
5. **Verbs of Physiological Process**
   These verbs deal with behavioural processes referring to psychological or physiological behaviours.
6. **Verbs of Existence**
   These verbs simply indicate the presence of something without relating it to any quality or attribute.

Sample

The sample of the study includes the top ten travel vlogs about Pakistan based on their views count on YouTube. These travel vlogs have been created and posted on their YouTube channel by foreign travel vloggers who visited different places in Pakistan. These vlogs were transcribed to get the data in the form of text for the analysis of transitivity. Table 1: Sample of the study

Data Analysis

The basic concept of transitivity is rooted in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) which refers to the study of the portrayal of actions, states and events through language. According to Janks (1997), studying transitivity is significant in understanding how language plays its role in meaning-making in a narrative specifically in media texts. Janks' rubric for linguistic analysis consists of six processes such as material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioural and existential. These processes of transitivity play a significant role in shaping the structure of the narrative as well as the tourists' image of the destinations (Janks, 1997). Janks' rubric for linguistic analysis is appropriate to examine the travel vlogs about Pakistan to identify how vloggers use language in their vlogs for meaning-making to represent tourist destinations and influence tourist perception.

1. Action and Material Process

The verbs in Table 2 reflect the predominant use of action verbs which make the vlogger's visit to Pakistan active, engaging and dynamic. Activities such as going, exploring, drinking, paying, following, finding and making (Transcription 8) highlight the strong and

lively travelling across different parts of the country. This variety of activities of the vloggers makes the description exploratory and engaging for the audience.

Transcription	Verbs showing action and material processes
1	bought, gave, take, show, try, buy, offer, went
2	pushing, complete, go, suffered, witnessed
3	made, spend, go, eat, make
4	helped, invited, meet, arranged, cooked, met, getting
5	traveling, spending, take and go
6	jumped, heading, walk, drive, go
7	filming, go, try, going, show, ordering, trying, testing, putting on top
8	going, explore, drink, paid, follow, find, made
9	getting, show, go, heading, grab, took, picked, demolished, get, jump
10	received, arrived, exposed, doing, met, give, bring

Table 2: Verbs showing action and material processes

Similarly, the verbs showing physical activities are a predominant feature of the vloggers' narrative about Pakistan. "Getting" in "getting me to Pakistan" (Transcription 9) reflects the physical activity of travelling to Pakistan. Similarly, the verb, "show" in the statement "I show you some news clips" denotes an act of conveying some information visually. The expressions "go there and see what it's like" and "going to explore" both refer to the actions of "going", "seeing" and "exploring" highlighting the unearthing of novel places. Moreover, the phrases, "heading to like some older parts", "grab some tea" and "picked up and demolished a bit of street food" denote the direction or movement to some old places, getting some tea and eating food respectively. These action verbs reflect the vlogger's activities of travelling and buying food and drinks to emphasize his keenness in the local culture and cuisine.

The frequent use of verbs of doing showing material and action processes in travel vlogs about Pakistan places a strong emphasis on physical actions and concrete experiences. Similarly, these verbs play their role in the process of meaning-making by reflecting a sense of discovery, adventure and personal link with different places and local individuals ultimately making the audience a part of the narrative and the journey.

2. Relational Process

The verbs, (Table 3) "is", "am", "are" and "has been" are the verbs of being and having which show different states and feelings of the vloggers as well as the people they are talking about. All the verbs show positive states and feelings as observed and experienced by the vloggers while visiting different places and interacting with different people. The verbs reflect the vloggers' relational and emotional experiences during their visit to Pakistan (Transcription 6).

Transcription	Verbs showing the relational processes
1	is, am, are
2	want to be, is, are, was, am, knowing
3	is, have, was, want, am
4	is, are
5	is, is
6	is, am, are, has been
7	is, are
8	think, feel, reminded, wonder

10	is, has, goes, am

Table 3: Verbs showing the relational process

Similarly, the verbs, "is" and "are" indicate the state of being showing the relational processes between entities. These verbs create a link between different elements in the narrative. They show the states and characteristics of different elements (Transcription 7).

Moreover, these verbs denote relationships, descriptions and characteristics. The expressions such as "He is a photographer", "That is Balochistan" and "That is Pakistan" show the certain attributes and identities of the subjects. Similarly, the statement, "They are very kind" denotes the innate quality and the statement, "She is my wife" denotes relationship. The expressions, "Today is Friday" and "It is closed" reflect states of being (Transcription 8). Through these verbs, a positive portrayal of Pakistan as a tourist destination provides authentic contextual references which show audience engagement with the vloggers' thoughts about social and cultural aspects of Pakistan.

3. Mental Process

The verbs in the given examples (Table 4) such as "think", "feel", "reminded" and "wonder" show the mental process of the vlogger during his visit to different places in Islamabad and while his interaction with locals and while experiencing different things. These verbs represent the processes that involve the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of the vlogger. They provide us an insight into the vlogger's thought process and feelings helping the audience to better understand the vlogger's message and perspective. These verbs help the vlogger to involve the audience in his observations and perception, describe the states and characteristics of various things connected to Pakistan and reflect his thought process as well (Transcription 7).

Transcription	Verbs showing the mental processes
1	feel, think
2	know, want, see, being, love, pray, hope
3	can't wait, want
4	teach
7	think, feel, reminded, wonder
8	Feeling, trust
9	guess, hope, recommend, impressed, my mind's been blown
10	assume, think, realized, feeling, thinking

Table 4: Verbs showing the mental process

Similarly, these verbs denote the emotive and cognitive states of the vloggers while experiencing and observing different aspects of Pakistan as a tourist destination and the people of Pakistan. The use of the verb, "feeling" reflects the emotions of the vlogger showing her extemporaneous response to the natural beauty and landscape in Pakistan. She also expresses her faith and confidence in the local people as she says, "I trust them". The verb, "trust" highlights the vlogger's mental process of appraising and indicating the trustworthiness of the local people whom she encounters and they volunteer to help her out. The use of the word, "trust" further carries a sense of assertion and security portraying the vlogger's positive perception about the Pakistani public. (Transcription 8).

Moreover, the phrase, "I guess most of you know" relates to the mental process of the vlogger of imagining that the viewers know specific information and the phrase, "My

mind's been blown" (Transcription 9) expresses his admiration for Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan rather he reflects his astonishment by saying,

4. Verbal Process

The verbs, "said", "chatting" and "invited" in the above examples (Table 5) show verbal processes which indicate the acts related to communication and speaking. The verb, "said" is a direct reporting verb that refers to the act of conveying an opinion. The vlogger uses this word to relate the opinion of people in general who declared Pakistan a dangerous country; whereas, the vlogger's experience is a contrast to what she was told about Pakistan. Similarly, the verb, "chatting" denotes a current casual conversation between the vlogger and a local individual. It shows a two-way friendly discussion. It also denotes a sense of comfort between the vlogger and the other individuals. Moreover the word, "invited" in "They have invited me to their village" signifies a courteous and formal request from the local individuals to the vlogger suggesting a gesture of generosity and hospitality of Pakistani people. This verb also highlights a welcoming social gesture demonstrating the friendliness of the local people and their acceptance of a foreigner (Transcription 8).

Transcription	Verbs showing the verbal processes
1	said
2	hello, hi, go, pray, beg, hi, hello
4	asked, told, explaining
5	function
8	said, chatting, invited
9	urging, ask, thank
10	warned, announce, talked, said

Table 5: Verbs showing the verbal processes

Similarly, the verbs, "urging", "ask" and "thank" in the above examples show acts of communication and expression of gratefulness in the narrative. The vlogger interacts with locals involved in various business activities. He talks to them to know about their life and whether they are happy or facing financial and security issues (Transcription 9).

5. Physiological Process

The use of verbs showing physiological or behavioural processes is relatively uncommon among vloggers (Table 6). However, the verbs, "stress" in "They don't stress much" (Transcription 1) and "putting" and "boiled" in "Putting this paranda in my hair" and "…Farzana has boiled some water" respectively (Transcription 3) show physiological processes of the local individuals the vloggers have interacted with. The expression, "They don't stress much" refers to the behaviour of the local Pakistanis towards their life and the phrases, "putting paranda" and "boiled some water" denote the behaviour of the local female host of the vlogger who is kind enough to take care of the vlogger.

Transcription	Verbs showing the physiological processes
1	stress
3	putting paranda, boiled some water

Table 6: Verbs showing the physiological processes

6. Existential Process

The verbs showing existence (Table 7) are also not common among travel vloggers. However, there are a few instances of the use of such verbs such as "am" and "are" in "I am in Pakistan" and "There are two horses" (Transcription 6) and the verb, "are" in "We are here for the second time" (Transcription 7). The phrases, "…I am in Pakistan" and "We are here…" refer to the presence of the vloggers in Pakistan reflecting their excitement and satisfaction. The phrase, "There are two horses" is a reference to the presence of elements of nature within the scenery around.

Transcription	Verbs showing the existential processes
6	am, are
7	are

Table 7: Verbs showing the existential process

Conclusion
Analysis of transitivity processes in travel vlogs about Pakistan by foreign travellers uncovers a theoretically nuanced approach to meaning-making through the strategic applications of a variety of linguistic processes. This research sought to identify the transitivity processes employed and explore how these processes work to build the narrative about the travel destination, Pakistan. The contextualized findings are as follows:

1. Predominant Use of Action and Material Processes
The recurrent use of action verbs showing material processes as demonstrated by verbs such as "show", "try", "gave", "bought", "explore, "arranged", "met" and "jumped" emphasizes the active and dynamic nature of the vloggers' travel experiences in Pakistan. The use of these verbs presents the vloggers' experiences full of physical actions making the narrative a vibrant portrayal of the travellers' journey. The focus on the action processes fulfils various purposes.

    i.   **Immersion and Engagement**
        The description of the live actions such as buying, pushing, helping, trying, drinking, exploring, jumping, and travelling engage the vloggers' social media followers in their experiences. The audience can feel and imagine the material processes described in the narrative making it more effective and engaging.

    ii.   **Sense of Adventure**
        The representation of activities like witnessing, jumping, exploring and trying carries a sense of discovery and adventure. The use of such verbs reflects the vloggers' experience and observations of dynamic activities which ultimately involve the audience in the narrative and they feel like travelling along with the vlogger.

    iii.   **Cultural interaction**
        The verbs usually described interaction with local culture and people: The verbs in the phrases, "grabbed some tea", "demolished a few street food", "invited" and "helped" reflect that the vloggers are actively participating in the life of the local area, which emphasizes their interest in the culture of Pakistan and respect for it.

2. Relational Processes

The verbs like "is", "am", "are" and "has been" denote relational processes and refer to states and qualities in the vlogs. These verbs are crucial for:
    i.   **Setting the scene:** They provide important information and context about the things and individuals in the surroundings.

ii. **Relationships and Attributes:** Phrases like "He is a photographer" or "That is Balochistan" emphasize the qualities/identities and descriptive nature of the vlogs.

iii. **Positive Framing**: The repeated use of relational verbs to describe desirable states and relations reflects a positive image of Pakistan. This image of the country is important in influencing the way audiences perceive the destination, by contrasting the previous negative connotations and stereotypes of the country.

3. Mental Processes

The frequent use of mental processes through the verbs ranging from think and feel to reminded and wonder, reveals the vloggers' cognitive and emotional states. These processes contribute to show:

i. **Personal Reflection:** The vloggers share thoughts, reflections, and feelings, and build an intimate relationship with the audiences. The audiences are given an insight into the vloggers' experiences and opinions making the narrative reliable for them.

ii. **Positive Emotions:** The expressions such as "My mind's been blown" and "I highly recommend" highlight a positive image of Pakistan and also reflect the vloggers' satisfaction making Pakistan a travel destination appealing to the viewers.

iii. **Emotional Engagement:** The vlogs provide a sense of being secure and optimism comes via the use of verbs such as "trust" and "hope".

4. Verbal Processes

On the other hand, verbs of saying such as "said", "chatting", and "invited", indicate verbal processes and are characteristic of the communicative interactions between the vloggers and the locals. These processes play their role in:

i. **Facilitating Conversation**: Words like "chats" and "invites" indicate the exchanges the vloggers have with locals, representing Pakistani culture's social and welcoming side.

ii. **Conveying Opinions**: Direct reporting verbs like "said" enable the vloggers to report the views of others, and compare the views of others with their own. This strategy creates a story of exploration and empowers assumptions.

5. Limited Use of Physiological and Existential Processes

The analysis reveals a relatively sparse use of physiological and existential processes.
Some verbs showing these processes in the travel vlogs about Pakistan are "stress", "putting", "boil water" (physiological) and "am" and "are" (existential). The verbs denoting physiological processes offer actual behavioural insights leading to the cultural validity rooted in the vlogs. In the same way, the existential processes refer to the existence of elements and the presence of foreign vloggers in Pakistan signifying a special time in their lives.

To sum up, the transitivity processes used by travel vloggers create a powerful narrative in their vlogs about Pakistan. The action and material processes are more dynamic and more suitable for representing a vlogger's experience. The mental and relational processes are more informative and more emotional and thus more inter-sentential, setting the context for the action and the narrative. Their narrative in the vlogs has been witnessed to apply more verbal processes to report communicative acts and to demonstrate how the local people interacted with them, supporting greater message authenticity. The paucity of physiological and existential processes indicates less focus on the presence and existence of entities and individuals. All of these processes of transitivity together help the vloggers

to voice their positive representations, ideas and perceptions about Pakistan and accentuate it as an appealing tourist destination.

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Appendix
Transcription 1: https://youtu.be/CWeWxl7ruGE
Transcription 2: https://youtu.be/Dv75wGwQ2t4
Transcription 3: https://youtu.be/9Pt4GvdtcpY
Transcription 4: https://youtu.be/wTuV0B7n5Zg
Transcription 5: https://youtu.be/506DaT8MmB8
Transcription 6: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0U0TISCikhU
Transcription 7: https://youtu.be/YzuELjSBPkE
Transcription 8: https://youtu.be/ZH22VpMp_wc
Transcription 9: https://youtu.be/7VpJ6oPD7wQ
Transcription 10: https://youtu.be/S_NUHA4mElg