

IDENTITY DENIAL IN THE STYLISTIC FEATURES OF TRANSGENDER LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Males and females differ due to the differences in their interpretation of the social world. The transgender community use language within the predefined gender binary. This research investigates verbal/non-verbal cues that highlight the dominant gender proclivity of transgender individuals by using Van Dijk's socio-cognitive theory and Feminist Critical Discourse approach rooted in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The data analysis will help find out if the transgender (with dominant male or female qualities) use or deliberately use the same kind of verbal and non-verbal language as socially acceptable genders do. The data was collected in the form of unstructured interviews from educated and uneducated transgender people, located in different areas of Lahore. Their voices were recorded and their photographs taken later to be analyzed by investigating the politeness strategies as well as the dominant speech acts associated with each gender. The researchers triangulated their research by conflating their findings with the Urdu/Punjabi stage drama, "Tesri Dhun" (Dec 2016) performed at Alhamra Arts Theatre, Lahore, based on transgender community. The researchers attempted to focus on the dominant gender quality/identity of the transgender individuals. The purpose of this research is to understand the personal identity formation and denial of transgender people with the help of their language and gestures. This helped the researchers understand the different roles they play within their social circles while exercising the same power relations that exist between so-called normal genders. Most of the studies conducted on transgender people pertain to their psychological, biological and social existence. This research is original as very few studies are conducted linguistically internationally and none nationally in the context of transgender community.

Key words: transgender identity, *hijras*, *khawajasira*, binary, transgender language.

INTRODUCTION

The word 'transgender' defines a secluded community of people who have a gender identity different from their assigned sex. They do not fit the typical binary notion of being male or female. Akhtar (2016) found that they constitute 2% of Pakistan's population. In Pakistan, like in most of the other countries around the world, this group of people is highly marginalized. They face massive rejections in all parts of the country. The derogatory manner in which people use language to address them alone tells the whole tale. Terms such as *Khawajasira*, *Hijras* and *Khusra* define the lives of a stigmatized community of not only Pakistani society but also communities spread across South Asia. These

communities, because of their marginalized position among the dominantly acceptable gender binary formation, have been overlooked and ignored even till now. In English language they are called transgender people or "third sex" (Von Walzogan, 1899). Lund (2012) states that this term, although not definable, spells out their daily experiences, psychological selves and identities. Even the term gender is an ill-defined term because of the ever confusing connotations made between 'sex' (biological identity) and 'gender' (social identity). 'Trans', prefixed before 'gender' means 'across' or 'beyond', thus complicating the gender status even further. Lund (2012, p.1), defines the word

'transgender' as "across gender binaries" or "beyond gender binaries." A transgender defined "across gender binaries" is either identified as male or a female. However, a transgender defined "beyond gender binaries" sees him/herself having the traits of both genders. The researchers are interested in the transgender defined across gender binaries. In Pakistan, transgender people are denied the right to be considered normal; salacious words *khusra* (eunuch), *hijra* (a person who adopts ambiguous gender role that is neither male nor female) and *khawajasira* (transvestite) with negative connotations are used to mock at their identities. Ferdinand de Saussure (1959) believed that meaning is a socially constructed representation of the reality given by the speakers of a language. When the speakers support new usage of the term 'the meaning' shifts, so is the case with the word transgender or *khawajasira*. The transgender use a language trapped within the binary (Lund, 2012).

In advanced countries like the UK, there has been an emphasis on raising the status of transgender people by helping them learn "appropriate" behaviours like using pitch, intonation, rhythm as well as words that suit the sex they believe they belong to. However, in Pakistan, no such step is taken. Although there are many transgender individuals in Pakistan, who have been able to acquire some education due to their better backgrounds and some of them have got major surgeries done to become socially acceptable, majority of them face criticism and people show biases when it comes to the provision of proper jobs and living to them. The literature on, by and for transgender men and women contains few references to language and speech. This current research is an attempt to investigate their verbal and non-verbal cues that signal their male/female dominant transgender binaries.

Problem Statement

Understanding the personal identity formation of transgender individuals by analysing and evaluating their use of language and gestures will help in understanding the different roles they play within their social circles. This will further highlight to what extent they are subjected to the same power relations that already exist between male and female genders in society. In order to integrate themselves in the wider social network, they further complicate/deny their identities by pretending or assuming what they are not.

Aim

There are a number of studies conducted on genders as well as on differences between genders based on the linguistic cues evident in the natural talk and through text. However, to the best of our knowledge, there is no research done to indicate differences within transgender individuals manifested in the language they use as well as in paralinguistic cues such as gestures, dance and body movements that portray their gender proclivity. Although, there are some studies done in the West which highlight their social problems, this specialized study is neither conducted in the East nor in the West. The researchers attempt to give voice to the "third sex" of society in an effort to give them a status worth significant research and, in a more general sense, of normal "human beings."

Objectives

The research strives to achieve the following objectives:

1. To record, understand, and interpret the verbal and non-verbal cues used by transgender persons with male-dominant and female-dominant qualities
2. To record, understand, and interpret the verbal and non-verbal cues common to transgender persons with both male and female traits
3. To analyse the linguistic structures assumed by transgender individuals to project a socially acceptable gender identity

Research Purpose

There is a dire need to revise the norms associated with gender interpretation. Freedom and equality are important for the politically disadvantaged, which includes transgender people, who have been systematically denied equality by law and society. They are denied freedom to control their lives or to make decisions. They cannot make choice and they cannot act as agents in the world. Giving freedom to disadvantaged involves universality in concrete rather than abstract form (Lazar, 2007). There is a need to acknowledge specific differences of contexts, material differences and situations of transgender people's lives, as depicted in the performance *Teesri Dhun*, to "carve out an alternative space, an alternative discourse vying against the hegemony of gender discourse" (Anwar, Dec, 2016).

Significance of Research

The research signifies that transgender persons, despite their ambiguous gender identities, are like other men and women in the world. The problem with them is biological and psychological which is then further aggravated by social gender constructs. They can become a part of our society, if treated properly and in conformity with the socially established norms. It is the wide-spread discourse that constitutes their identity. In order to understand them in depth, it is important to understand their discursive practices in situational contexts, which in turn constitute real events.

Literature Review

Language and Context

Goffman (1981), a renowned sociologist, underscored the importance of context in interaction and talk. Taking the idea further, Van Dijk (2008) asserts that the study of context is the pure psychology, sociology or anthropology of settings, social actors and their properties, including their cognitions, interactions, social practices and organizations. Understanding discourse means understanding text and talk in a given context. Context does not limit itself to text and talk but involves all the pragmatic aspects of a given situation. It encompasses the socio-historical situation or the social structure as well as face to face interaction. Self is assumed to be the central category of context models. This includes analysis of deictic expressions, personal pronouns, verb tenses, demonstratives, action verbs, prepositions, and politeness strategies, outlining the distinction between in-groups and out-groups expressed usually by “us” and “them”. Indeed pauses, hesitations, false starts and breaks in the fluency of talk are considered as a process of ongoing thought within and between turn taking in conversation. Pragmatic appropriateness is different from discursive rules (Van Dijk, 2008). Thus, being impolite means being socially inappropriate and threatening the face of the recipient.

Language and Gender

Language is inherently a social phenomenon. The differences between males and females are due to the differences in the way they interpret the social world. A large number of researches (Herring, 1993) in social sciences suggest that men use instrumental language for the purpose of giving instruction, while

females use language for social purposes (Brownlow, Rosamon & Parker, 2003). The connotations associated with males’ and females’ way of speaking are socially and culturally constructed by the use of power. For example, the difference between males’ and females’ way of speaking is established on the basis of difference, dominance and deficit parameters. Males’ speech is associated with dominance and power over females’ suppressed and deficit speech (Cameron, 1992). Bound in their gender proclivity, the transgender are forced to adapt to the male style of living without their free will. Their parents and relatives, who are normal human beings, force their biologically deformed children to mostly adopt male characteristics due to the social pressures that they face. Our research unfolds the psychological traumas that result due to these social barriers.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Feminist (FCDA)

The researchers have used the theories of CDA by Van Dijk and FCDA by Judith Butler as a theoretical framework to analyze the data. CDA is used by the social scientists (such as Fairclough, Van Dijk etc) to analyze various forms of social inequality and injustice (Lazar, 2007). FCDA aims to understand the power and ideology used in discourse to sustain hierarchal social arrangement of genders. The issues of gender, power and ideology have become extremely important and complex in the western societies (Diabah & Amfo, 2014). A large number of these issues exist in our society too. Gender is a social category, which intersects with other categories like sex, ethnicity, age, social class and geographical location. Lazar (2007) states that gender ideology and power relations are assuming subtle dimensions in different forms and degrees in the discourse of postmodern societies (p. 141). Although these theories are formulated for biologically normal human beings, however the researchers claim that they are equally applicable for the rights of stigmatized and marginalized transgenders.

FCDA aims to uncover complex and subtle ways (Lazar, 2005) in which stigmatized gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, distributed, maintained, interpreted, challenged and consumed in different communities. These issues have material and phenomenological consequences for men and

women in specific communities. FCDA is interdisciplinary as, on the one hand, it gives feminist dimension to discourse and language and on the other hand, it gives importance to language and discourse studies in the investigation of feminist issues in gender studies. It aims to change sexist, man-made language into non-sexist language. So conflated together, CDA and FCDA, can provide a powerful and rich political critique of negative social actions and degrading attitude of our society towards transgenders. Both are applicable to text and talk along with other semiotic modalities such as gestures, visual images and sounds which pave way for holistic and insightful analysis. Whereas, CDA commits itself to the social and cognitive order by analyzing discourse, FCDA deals with the patriarchal social order in discourse. It analyzes power relations, how men are privileged and females are disadvantaged as a social group. The researchers include the transgender people as a third category in the social group which has been excluded and disempowered. Inclusion in one gender helps the participants in a community to structure and make sense of their particular social practices. Also, gender as a social relation constitutes all other social relations and activities (Lazar, 2007).

Gender as an Ideological Formation

Ideology from Marxist perspective reflects unequal power relations and dominance in class relations. However, Fairclough & Wodak (1997) have added gender in this dichotomous social formation as well. A feminist perspective views gender as an ideological structure which divides people into men and women. The feminists criticize categorization of biological sex as social gender. For them, it is all socially structured (Butler, 1993). Grant (1993) states that gender structure acts through our sexed bodies. Gender ideology is hegemonic, consensual and acceptable in a society. The relations of dominance and consent winning (Gramsci, 1971) are achieved by discursive means, which becomes common sense. Lazar (2007) persuades that the naturalness of two sex idea is inherently contrastive and complementary. The heteronormativity of gender appropriate norms include gender crossing, which indicate dualism of gender structure. The behaviours of masculine women and feminine men are read against the expected behavioural norms of the 'other' (Lazar, 2007,148). The idea was very well explored through Clair Pamment and Shahnaz

Khan's performative efforts to revise socio-cognitive ideological constructs. Anwar (Dec, 2016) notes:

The third tune brought the shadowy world of transgender community into light as well as suggested the change in mind-sets reflective of how we perceive things and phenomena by shutting doors to more inclusive alternatives. The effort allowed an interstitial space both for the socially acceptable and marginalized communities to get together under one roof and allow the 'Other' to become a part of their world by shedding all fears and ill wills.

Power relations and Gender

Overt manifestation of power over females and transgender people is a reality in many societies, whatever the law may specify and define in this regard. Foucault (1977) asserts that power is everywhere and gendered subjects are affected by it. Power is internalized and manifested in the text and talk of people, which makes it legitimate and natural (Bourdieu, 1991). Butler (1990) argues that heterosexism and gender produce gender identities that privilege heterosexual women to lesbians. The class of lesbians, gays and transgender people experience greater discrimination as they are not only marginalized by hetero-gendered order but are also made invisible by them. There is a need for political action to be asserted according to cultural, historical and institutional frameworks (Lazar, 2007). FCDA, in this regard provides a comparative rather than a universal framework and perspective.

(De)construction of Gender through Discourse

The relation between discourse and society is dialectical (Lazar, 2014), since discourse constitutes and is constituted by social situations, institutions and structures (Fairclough, 1992). Every act of meaning making by discourse (spoken, written or semiotic) contributes to the reproduction, resistance, transformation and maintenance of the social order. Doing gender in interaction means to create hierarchical differences between groups of people (Zimmerman & West, 1987). Feminist theorists have pointed out the flaws in classical liberal notions of equality and freedom. Lazar (2012) claims that problems faced by females in public sphere, in spite of education and employment opportunities, are due to the unchanging gender structure created by men. The social issues faced by females are discursive in

nature, which include exclusion, alienation, marginalization and the double shift work done by females. The respondents in our data set reflect on the opposition they face if they choose to adhere to female gender identity. They are either forced to go through complex medical procedures such as surgeries (applicable only if the transgender belongs to a rich family) to choose the gender of their choice or they have no choice but to disguise themselves as males. No one accepts them as what they naturally are.

The society plays a vital role in giving binary outlook to transgender identity. Those who operate beyond these binaries are socially stigmatized, unrecognized, and illegitimate. They find it hard to get their social rights. Many countries have given transgender people a new identity, but ironically only after they go through a surgery. This surgery becomes a metaphor to hide and liberate their *trans* identity. Butler (1999, 30-31) expands Foucault's notion of political structures that exercise power over the population by mechanization of human bodies. She extends it to gender binary and notes that these structures of power have their interest in keeping the body bounded by sex markers (Lund, 2012). Since *trans* people's physiological development is not normal, their early socialization helps them shape their self-defined identities.

Methodology

The nature of this research is very sensitive. We focused on the language of transgender people and socio-cognitive reasons behind the use of that language. In-depth interviews from 30 transgender people located in Ichra, Model Town, Liberty and Akbar Chowk areas of Lahore, were taken. To validate the research, the data was collected from as many transgender persons and from as many social classes as was possible. The data was collected from educated as well as uneducated members of the transgender community. The educated members selected for this research were the workers in a beauty parlour. They were interviewed in their work place located in Model Town, run by a transgender individual playing male role in his community. That person was quiet influential; he called himself "guru" and "artist" who taught other transgender members the art of doing make-up. The researchers took unstructured interviews from them and also observed them silently two hours each day for a week. The data was recorded on Iphone voice recorder memo.

Paralinguistic features were also observed. The researchers observed the differences between the speech of male transgender to male transgender, male transgender to female transgender, female transgender to male transgender, female transgender to female transgender, female transgender speaking to female gender, female transgender speaking to male gender, male transgender speaking to male gender and lastly male transgender speaking to female gender. The parameters that determine the gender are: use of tag words, hedges, first person singular 'I,' first person plural pronoun, use of affective words, politeness strategies and the use of words expressing emotions. Due to the time constraints, the focus of this research is neither on dialects nor on age group, but on the general differences associated with the speech of genders within each transgender. The focus was on the politeness strategies used by the transgender people. The respondents were asked a series of open ended questions regarding their identity, names and the roles they played in the community. As far as paralinguistic cues were concerned, the researchers observed their gaze, hand and face movements, gestures and their body movements.

Results & Analysis

Names index a person's gender in the mind of the hearers. They carry information about the bearers. For transgender people, the name becomes the primary reason of moulding their perceptions about a specific gender identity and consequently to attain socially acceptable status (Vanderschans, 2015). The names assigned to them become the driving force behind the gender transition they go through in their lives. For transgender individuals, the transition between assigned gender and gender identity is not an easy one. They feel empowered by the name they are assigned and feel solidarity with that particular gender to which the name belongs (Emmelheinz, 2012). Having said that, it may be worthwhile to note that they sometimes showed affiliation with the weaker gender of society in order to integrate themselves within the available professional context. The researchers observed that almost all male looking transgender people had male voices. However, they were named as females and exhibited the politeness strategies that are mostly used by females. They also identified themselves as females, playing female roles in their community. As their voice was biologically shrill, high pitched and had

male characteristics; they tried to lower its intensity by nasalising it.

The male transgender individuals prolong the phrases at their end unnecessarily. It was noted that the male guru (named Lucky) stretched the verb phrase consistently. Although he hesitated to tell his name, he took up the female transgender's turn when the researcher asked her a question. He used the authority marker – modals like “*theek hai?*” (right?) at the end of each phrase – hence projecting his power not only over his “*chailay*” or disciples but over the researchers as well. The use of modals is an indication of the use of ‘bald on record’ politeness strategy.¹ Another similar strategy used by him pertained to his assertive speech acts when he accused ‘their’ parents for not being caring enough. He used directive speech acts mostly in the form of suggestions and requests. For example, “*nai pics na lain ? Abhi get up nai kia. ? Sham ko aa jain*” (no, don’t take pictures right now. Haven’t made up yet. Come in the evening).

It was observed that the first person singular pronoun was mostly missing at the start of each utterance. However, the guru established his identity as a resourceful person, to whom others looked for help. He used the utterances like the one given below, to show his power: “*mein aap ko theek bata sakta hon, kiyonkay mein in ki feelings ko kisi say bhi zaiada achay say janta hoon,*” (I can tell you better about them, as I understand their feelings better than anyone else). He used the terms “*aapi*” and “*sister*” to address the researcher to show solidarity with them. He code switched from Urdu to English language frequently to show that he possessed enough knowledge to sustain in social and professional life. It is evident that transgenderism affirms the permeability of gender boundaries. It highlights the contrived, contingent and contextualized nature of male and female existence. The female transgenders depicted different attitude than their male partners while talking to the researcher. They showed more solidarity by constantly smiling and welcomed all questions and suggestions warmly. They hesitated at the beginning of interview to open their hearts to the researchers, but were at ease after ten minutes of conversation. They had two identities; a male identity which they had assumed in front of the

society (even their families) from which they felt excluded, and the female identity in front of their transgender community where they were welcome. It exemplified in the use of their verbs and pronouns. During the interview, a female transgender used masculine gender pronoun in her conscious interaction with the researcher to represent herself. However, the same individual used feminine gender pronoun for herself, in her unconscious interaction with her friends.

It was observed by the researchers that there were two kinds of individuals in female transgenders who looked like males; confident ones who were supported by their families, and the other with puzzled minds. The interview showed that the less confident ones were not supported by their families and were driven out of their houses at an early age. Their speech reflected fragmented talk. However, when they interacted with each other, they indulged freely in female talk. For example:

“*aap kahan theen kal. Mai nay aap ko bohat miss kia. mai nay kal bohat mazay ka achari gosht banaya tha.*”

(Where were you yesterday? I missed you a lot. I had made an excellent *achari gosht* yesterday.)

Female transgender members showed deference, solidarity and politeness more than the male transgender members. They used both linguistic and non-linguistic cues that indicated friendly attitude. Moreover, they used more face saving acts than males did. For example, one of the members while complaining about her parents made use of intensifier in regard of her parents’ face.

“*hamara kasoore hai magar is mai hamari family ka bhi qasoor hai.*”

(We are to be blamed but in this our family has to be accused too.)

They used more tag words like *aisa hi hota hai. Hai na?* (“It happens like this Isn’t it?”). They also used empty adjectives like *piyari* (darling or pretty) and laughed out loud, using *hahaha, hehehe* to show solidarity towards others. It was observed that females laughed more. They sought agreement with others in the use of up-graders like *bilkul* (indeed), *aap theek keh rahay hain* (you are right). The first person plural pronouns (*aap, hum, humara*, we, us, our etc.) as well as the communal words such

minimize face-threatening acts implicitly, such as giving advice in a non-manipulative way.

¹Bald on-record strategy does not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face, although there are ways that bald on-record politeness can be used in trying to

askhawajasira, *hijra*, *guru* and *cheelay*, are suggestive of in-group identity markers. They exhibited greater willingness to listen and they did not interrupt during a conversation. They smiled more and also nodded more to encourage others. They also exhibited respect towards each other by using the word “*aap*” (you – for formal situations showing more distance or respect) instead of more informal term “*tum*,” (you – showing intimacy and friendliness) although they were acquainted for a long time.

On the other hand, male transgenders interrupted their female counterparts while talking. During the observation, they used their hands to stop and sometimes encourage female transgenders on a specific detail. It was evident that the male transgender members occasionally used aggressive tone to control others. They mostly used assertive and directive speech acts in their interactions with the rest. It was also noticed that the male transgenders spoke more, took turns without invitation, exploited the Transition Relevance Points,² and had to be stopped so they could give others an opportunity to take the floor. The female transgenders were observed to use more expressive and commissive speech acts than their male counterparts.

Along with the positive politeness strategies used by the interlocutors, negative politeness strategies were also used, including modals, questions, hedges and in-direct language. For example:

Hmmm....mai soch rahi thi... kia aap NGO say taluq rakhtay hai?kia aap kisi ko janti hain jo Kami ki madad ker sakay?

(“hmmm...I was wondering...Do you belong to NGO? Do you know anyone who can help Kami?”)

The paralinguistic features used by transgender males and females consisted of pauses, silence, hand and body movements, their dress styles and gaze. It was noted that all transgender members in the parlour were dressed up as males, although three of them showed their affiliation with and identities as females. All three had their nails made up, one of the she-man had applied lip colour, streaked her hair and was wearing a ring in her finger. They used their body language (use of hands, arms and hands) to express themselves as females do.

During the second day of the interview, an unhappy incident happened. One of the female transgenders, who belonged to a well off family in Lahore, a second year student, was kicked out of her house to live on her own. The family had refused to provide that child with financial support and shelter, even the father refused to give her share in the property. It was touching to see them console her and support her as a community. The *guru* danced and sang a sad song to cheer her up and to show that they were with her. The female transgender just 19, was extremely silent that day, crying her heart out and missing her mother badly, who had told Kami that she could no longer live with them as her husband and other sons could not accept her anymore. The child sobbed relentlessly:

“I do not know what I will do in my future. I want to live a normal life, but each morning my brothers and my father remind me what I really am.... They (his brothers) tell their children to stay away from chacha (uncle).”(translated).

This painful story reveals the social structure and ideology hidden behind the discourse, how the marginalized individuals are not even supported by their own family. It is the society that constitutes this “third sex,” by treating them as “other” and is responsible for the discursive practices of transgenders, which apart from a few, mostly include low life tendencies and activities such as prostitution and begging. Rather than retaining her identity, Kami was ready to forego her biological and psychological tendencies:

“I want to change. Want to do whatever they tell me, but my brothers remind me who I am”. (translated)

The rare individuals like Lucky, the owner of the cheap parlour, emerge as an iconic figure, taking on the responsibility to save these souls by changing their mind sets. Lucky claims:

I am trying to change them. I am trying to change their thinking. To love and live with what they are endowed with by Allah Almighty. I don't want them to go through operations and change themselves. Allah has made us all. We are normal. We are normal. We are normal. I am teaching them so people will not know who they really are. They will feel it themselves soon. Kami has changed a

² Conversation analysts define a transition relevance point (TRP) as the point which allows switch between parties. At the TRP point, a simple rule system can be

used to determine who would be expected to speak next (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1978).

lot ever since he met me. He was very sensitive. I taught him to live with what he is blessed with.(translated)

It seemed that Lucky had made it his life statement to encourage the lost souls to carve out a space for them in society. He was training them to learn the art of becoming a make-up artist for free. This positive attitude might bring a change in the thinking of this community and help them emerge as significant contributors in the social set-up of Pakistan. However what still perturbed the researchers was the way they were ready to deny their female traits in order to bag greater weight in the environment surrounding their limited circumference.

As for the data collected from the beggar transgender females, the researchers noticed that they did not use the first person pronoun very often, denying their identity as a human altogether. They even denied their identity as *Khawajasira*. For example, “*humey*” (us) is missing from: “*jeenay nahi daitay*” (Don’t let live). It was noted that they were even more polite than the educated female transgender members. They kept on praying all the time during their interview. However, they did reveal how they are being treated unfairly by society. These beggars lived at an underprivileged location in Ichra with their guru, who was also a female transgender, and mostly made their living by begging. Although, they gave their interviews in Urdu language, they talked with each other in Punjabi mostly.

Pakistan is a third world country in which most of the transgender people are poor. They cannot go through surgeries to become socially acceptable. Hence living with their true selves throws an unbelievable tough challenge to them. This marginalization in turn forces them to make their living through illegitimate means. There are a few who have tried to mask their true identity, but with little success. It is the language itself that reveals their identity. The media has projected some of their problems through television programs. The performance *Teesri Dhun* also highlighted how the relation between transgender people, famously called ‘*moorat*’ and other so-called normal members of society is restricted. Anwar’s review (Dec, 2016) portrays their anguish:

Traversing through their life cycle from the woes of birth, rejection by their communities and their own families and suppression of childhood desires to the right to love and being loved and denial to respectable social

institutions such as marriage, the performance portrayed how the transgender community has remained a victim to demeaning social behavior and sexual harassment over the years.

The drama questioned why transgender people are not accepted even in their own families? Why they are tormented, threatened and tortured? How people use them in the name of their fake lustful love. They revealed their anger and pain through their forceful voices and energetic movements in the form of dances. Their extravagant dresses and make-up revealed their desire to enjoy the life to its fullest and to be treated as normal. They used the metaphor of vultures for humans, who under the din of empty slogans for gender empowerment and human rights have totally forgotten them. In the auditorium mostly accommodating transgender people, some preferred to hide their identity; however, there were others who were brave and proud to reveal their identity for who they really were. The performance concluded on a powerful trigger which demanded: “*I need social change and I need social identity*”. Unlike the real life interviews with the *trans* people, the researchers observed that *trans* people performing on the stage made more use of “I,” “We,” “our” etc., to promote their identity. They were louder and used obscene language freely. This might be due to their comparatively stronger links with people of privilege in society.

Conclusion

The results of this research are clear. Transgender people should be given a socially acceptable position in our society, as they are no lesser than others we call humans. They are normal human beings with the sex organs trapped in the wrong binary. They are named according to the binary their parents think they belong to. They try to adjust to that binary, but are set in a conflict which causes problem for the society to accept them. As far as the language is concerned, male and female transgenders use language norms that are set for male and female members of our society respectively. As female transgender people associate themselves with females, although their appearance and voice is like males, they use politeness strategies appropriate for females and vice versa. The only difference that the researchers found was the unnecessary nasalization and extra stretching of sentences along with extra hand and body movements and high pitched voice.

The researchers associate these behaviours as their attempt to gain their lost identity and also to assert themselves loudly to be heard.

The research on verbal and non-verbal cues helped us analyze the social identities transgenders willingly/unwillingly adapt in order to get social acceptance. We were able to get deep insights into their marginalized lives through their narratives which were an interface between their language and social identities. These narratives and interviews served the purpose of understanding their cognitive thoughts, the speech acts they used, topic initiation and topic control, use of inclusive and exclusive pronouns, and coded language such as an extensive use of claps, where each clap signified something intentional. The narratives helped us understand the problems they face in their daily lives such as stigmatization and marginalization and in even getting the basic essentials of their lives. The researchers hope that this research may help in stimulating positive feelings towards the plight of the transgenders.

The researchers wanted to get their data from all social classes and also wished to include a variety of age groups. However, due to time restraints, they were able to get data from the begging class and lower and middle educated class of the transgender community. To interpret gender differences is a nuanced matter. Men and women exhibit different language abilities. This is truly applicable to male and female transgender members of our community, who develop different language tendencies due to their inclination towards the binary they think they belong to. However, most of the times they have to further restrict their identity in order to conform to different contexts. The researchers hope that this stigmatized and secluded social class does not have to adopt dual identities to survive and sustain in society.

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