



Empowerment, Social Identity, and Language Use: A Case Study of Educated Working Women at the University of Chittagong

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Abstract: The empowerment of women is a multifaceted topic that connects with several social, cultural, and political identities. Language, as a medium of communication and expression, significantly influences and reinforces gender identities and power relations. The objective of this research is to investigate the ways in which language can either strengthen or challenge gender stereotypes to create a fair and equitable society. Specifically, a case study of 20 female academics at the University of Chittagong has been conducted through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The results indicate that education, social identities and empowerment visibly influence the language use of highly educated working women. This research underscores the pivotal role of women's empowerment in shaping their social identity and its impact on linguistic expression within the societal context. This research on women's empowerment in language use has ultimately revealed the importance of linguistic practices as both reflective of and instrumental in shaping social power activities.

Keywords: Social Identity, Women Empowerment, Education and Empowerment

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Introduction

Napoleon once stated, “Give me an educated mother, I shall promise you the birth of a civilized, educated nation,” underscoring that educated women in society have the potential to influence communities and transform a nation positively. Education empowers women and instill self-reliance and confidence. Empowering women is a concept that argues for gender equality and the promotion of women’s participation in a variety of disciplines. In contrast to the traditional definition of gender as either male or female, it entails acknowledging and appreciating the diverse perspective of women. The objectives of both concepts are to empower women to excel in any industry by enhancing their lives without fear or hesitation. It is essential to advocate for gender equality, as women are often regarded as inferior which undermines their self-esteem.

Education, social identity and empowerment are interconnected. Education stands as a beam of empowerment, that can help the individuals to navigate the complexities of modern society. Beyond its fundamental role in acquiring knowledge, education drives social mobility, economic empowerment, and cultural enrichment. Within the context of language, education employs a profound influence, shaping linguistic expressions, attitudes, and perceptions. Identity denotes the processes by which people and groups define themselves in their interactions with other individuals and groups. Social identity refers to the characteristics of an individual that are defined by their affiliation with particular communities. It serves as a lens through which individuals perceive, interpret, and navigate interaction. Deaux (2001) had pointed out five distinct types of social identity: ethnicity and religion, political affiliation, vocations and avocations, relationships, and stigmatized identities.

Languages use us as much as we utilize words. Our ideas about things in the actual world also affect how we express ourselves about those things, in the same way, that the ideas we want to

communicate affect the forms of expression that we choose to use (Balamurali et al., 2023). Researchers are increasingly interested in the communication patterns of both males and women. In some contexts, men and women use language differently while women may use different languages due to their empowerment and education that impact their social identity. The relationship between language and women is also contested within feminist discourse (Malinowska, 2020). Women are formidable contenders in contemporary society, excelling across several domains and demonstrating that gender is only a reflection of their origin. Following a protracted period of struggle, a significant number of women have begun to fight for their fundamental requirements (Swirsky & Angelone, 2020). These may manifest as variations in language and non-verbal communication. Consequently, this research aims to provide linguistic evidence for a specific kind of inequality said to exist in our society: the disparity of language use in terms of education and empowerment. Can linguistic inequality be used to solve social inequality? This question is being asked in order to determine what language usage can tell us about the nature and severity of any disparity, as well as whether or not there is anything that can be done to address the linguistic aspect of the problem. Women experience linguistic inequality in two distinct contexts: their language training and how others communicate with them.

Education has a significant influence on the empowerment of women and the development of social status. It encourages minimizing gender inequality and make women more confident and self-reliant that reflected in their language use. That is why education, social identity and empowerment are interconnected. Focusing on educated working women at the University of Chittagong, this study aims to explore the interrelation between education, empowerment, social identity and language use.

Literature Review

Empowerment is the process of development and growth for the betterment of individuals or society. In the era of rapid globalization, the acceptance of empowerment has increased. It fosters power in people for their own lives, communities, and society by addressing important issues (Page & Czuba, 1999). Empowerment encompasses various components, such as women's empowerment and employee empowerment. Women's empowerment is a dynamic and symbolic concept. Globalization has significantly increased awareness and acceptance of empowerment.

Women's empowerment is a process that expands women's agency and choices, affecting their welfare (Siddaraju, 2019; Muberekwa & Nkomo, 2016). Research in India has focused on understanding factors affecting women's empowerment, particularly in a patriarchal nation like India. It involves women recognizing their inherent worth and participating on equal terms with men, aiming to dismantle patriarchy and promote social and economic development. However, empowerment is not solely determined by gender recognition.

Women's empowerment is a complex concept that empowers women to achieve self-worth and self-contentment, recognizing their abilities and rights. It is not about equal rights, but about social conditions and relationships that foster mutual cooperation and reach full potential (Siddaraju, 2019; Odigwe et al., 2017). Women's empowerment is the process of gaining visibility, autonomy, and recognition in society by challenging societal norms and culture, influenced by various factors (Agarwal et al., 2016).

Language is characterized as a semiotic instrument that conveys knowledge and values (Malinowska, 2020). Language is essential for fostering social contact in everyday life (Alvanoudi, 2018; Streufert, 2020). Lydia and Vighnarajah (2021) examine the function of the English language as a catalyst for the advancement

of women's empowerment. Language is a powerful tool for communication, knowledge transfer, and interaction, with English being the lingua franca. It is used by people from various ethnic and geographical backgrounds for communication and information delegation. Language can shape an individual's perception and thought processes, as it is not only a form but also influences their ideological thinking. The Linguistic Relativity principle, also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Whorf, 1956; Sapir, 1949), suggests that differences in cultural concepts and categories in different languages affect cognitive understanding of the practical world, leading to different thoughts and behaviours among speakers. These differences govern how people perceive and think about the world around them.

Bhat (2015) asserts that education is crucial for women's empowerment in India, since it transforms their life by equipping them to address issues and challenge established norms. It is a potent instrument that may alter their status throughout society. This contributes to the reduction of inequalities and the enhancement of social status within society by breaking down stereotypical thinking. In addition, Engida (2021) said that education is essential for human progress. It impacts the whole development of the social economy. He also said that it plays a significant part in empowering women. It promotes women's understanding of gender equality, fosters self-confidence, enhances decision-making authority, and stimulates the pursuit of gender equality in all aspects of their lives. Nawaz et.al. (2017) found that higher education significantly impacts women's social status in Lahore. Data from 120 women studying and teaching at the National College of Business Administration and Economics revealed that highly educated women are more socially empowered and participate in decision-making and other familial activities, indicating a significant impact of education on women's social status.

The aforementioned studies serve as a motivating element to investigate the effects of education, social identity, and

empowerment on women's voices. Young women are increasingly interested in establishing professional careers and achieving financial stability by pursuing rising possibilities in the job market. This study focuses on three factors determining and promoting women's empowerment: education, knowledge, and values, which enable women to gain visibility, autonomy, and recognition in society, ultimately improving their well-being. Linguistic analysis of the interview and focus group discussion data will enable the examination of vocabulary choice, sentence structure and verb use to elucidate the activities, roles, and perspectives of women within society. The use of appropriate vocabulary and verbs may clarify the relationship between agency and passivity, exposing both the explicit and nuanced factors that affect women's empowerment and social status. Eventually, an understanding of verb use, and sentence structure offers essential insights into the construction of women's social identity and the possibilities for empowerment via language. This study will highlight the significance of verb forms, asserting that language serves as a transforming instrument, and calls for a more nuanced and equal portrayal of women's experiences in literature and daily conversation. This inquiry seeks to enhance the discourse on gender, language, and identity by challenging current paradigms and proposing a more inclusive framework for debate and expression.

This study addresses the following research questions-

RQ: How do educated women show empowerment through their language use?

RQ: How does such language use and empowerment have an impact on social identity?

Theoretical Discussion

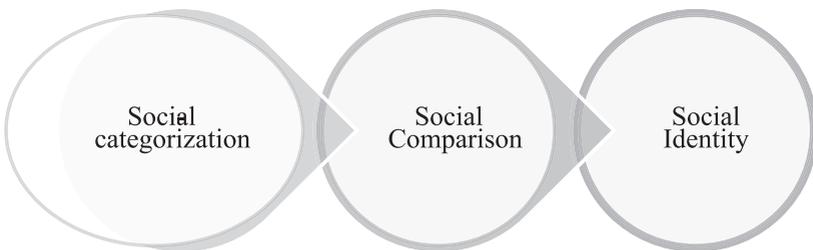
Social Identity

Identity is a significant factor that plays a significant part in defining how we view ourselves and how others view us. Identity encompasses our sense of self, integrating individual characteristics, values, beliefs, and experiences. Conversely,

social identity refers to the components of an individual's identity that emerge from belonging to social groups, such as nationality, ethnicity, religion, or professional ties (Deaux, 2001). Social Identity Theory, proposed by Tajfel and Turner in the 1970s, suggests that individuals' sense of self is influenced by their social group membership, focusing on cognitive processes and social conditions influencing intergroup behaviors.

Social identity theory defines an individual's identity as their membership in a particular social category or group (Burke, 2016). This social group comprises individuals who have a shared social identity and perceive themselves as members of the same group. These groups might include their family, social class, football team and so on. In 1979, Tajfel and Turner suggested that the groups to which individuals belonged were significant sources of confidence, a sense of belonging and pride. Social identity can offer shared goals, provide direction, boost self-esteem, and provide a framework for understanding oneself within a larger community. They also help define one's identity based on shared attributes, values, or goals.

Social identification is a process that can be described as-

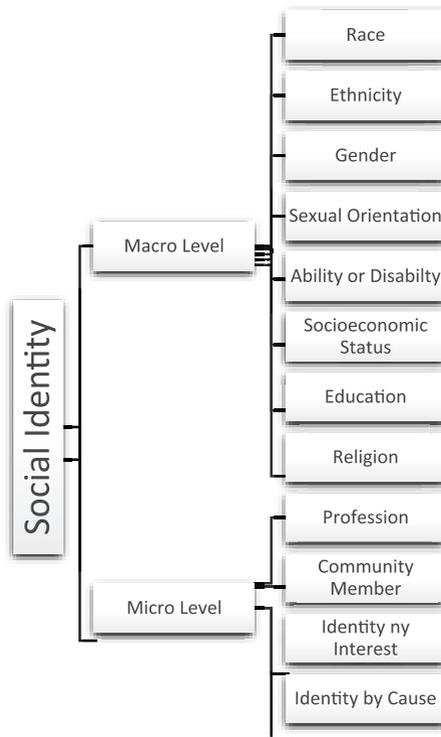


Social-categorization: Categorization is the tendency to classify individuals and objects based on attributes like race, gender, nationality, or religion. It helps simplify the social environment but can lead to stereotyping. Individuals can find out about themselves by knowing their social groups, and defining appropriate behaviour based on group norms. However, individuals can belong to many different groups, leading to distorted behaviour.

Social Identity: Individuals adopt the identity of a group by accepting its characteristics, norms, values, and behaviours. This can create an emotional connection with group membership, affecting self-esteem and the way individuals perceive themselves in relation to the group.

Social Comparison: Upon categorization and identification with a group, people engage in comparative analysis with other groups. This comparison often exhibits bias towards one's own group, resulting in in-group partiality. However positive inter-group comparisons often contribute to individuals gaining a positive social identity.

According to Ralston, social identity can be identified in different categories:



Social identity theory at the macro level categorizes people based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-

economic status, ability or disability, education, and religion. Race refers to physical characteristics, ethnicity refers to social or cultural backgrounds, gender is sexual identity, sexual orientation refers to emotional attraction, socio-economic status is lifestyle, disability is physical or mental limitations, education broadens thinking power, and religion includes different religious communities like Muslim, Hindu, Christian, and Buddhist. These levels help build social identity and contribute to a person's overall identity. On the other hand, the micro level of social identity theory identifies individuals based on their profession, community membership, interest in their work, and their identity based on causes like climate change, social justice, or cancer survivors.

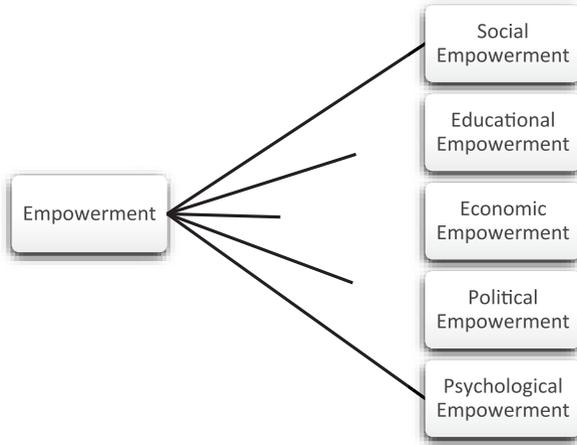
The aforementioned social identity types are distinguished from one another by a few distinctive or distinctive characteristics. Certain social identities may be broadly characterized as belonging to a common category, such as an occupational group, where professional identities are collectively shared and selected by individuals as an accomplished status. Conversely, some social identities, such as race or gender, are ascribed from birth.(Deaux, 2001)

Tajfel and Turner (1979) define social identity as aspects of an individual's self-image derived from their social categories. Each person belongs to various groups, such as social, family, sport, musical, and religious, which contribute to their understanding of themselves. Personal identity is formed based on individual goals and achievements, while social identity is shaped by the goals and achievements of these groups.

Women Empowerment

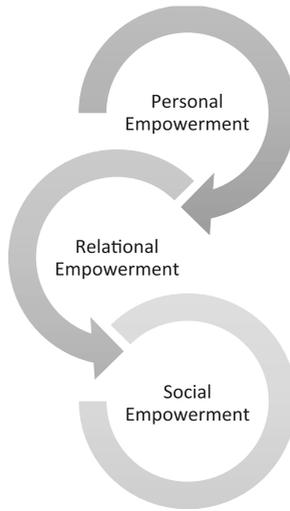
Women empowerment is a holistic approach that addresses gender inequality by integrating social, educational, economic, political, and psychological aspects to achieve overall empowerment.

According to Mandal (2013), there are five types of empowerments:



He stated that social empowerment involves enhancing women's social relations and positions, and addressing social discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. It promotes equal rights, status, and freedom for self-help. Educational empowerment involves higher education, promoting self-confidence and participation in decision-making. Economic empowerment helps achieve economic independence and poverty reduction. Political empowerment encourages women to influence public decisions and promote justice. Psychological empowerment breaks traditional taboos, enhancing self-confidence and adaptability.

Education is a potent instrument that provides women with an alternative social identity and creates transformations in many aspects of life. It facilitates the closure of gaps and access to once unattainable possibilities. Education significantly contributes to women's empowerment by equipping them with knowledge, skills, and confidence. According to Engida (2021), education plays a pivotal role in empowering women across three dimensions propounded by Huis et al. (2017).



Personal Empowerment

Education helps women achieve knowledge, skill and self-confidence that can improve their quality of life. An educated woman can make better decisions in household or social activities. They can make decisions about marriage, family planning, health as well as social, economic and political issues. It encourages women to participate in public or social affairs as well.

Relational Empowerment

Education increases the chances to interact and communicate with the same group members they belong to and the other group members by participating in public and social affairs. It helps women to fit into diverse social settings and make decisions for their better living. An educated mother can make decisions in her children's education, nutrition, and other household decisions.

Social Empowerment

Education increases awareness among women about their rights and encourages them to fight against anti-social activities. It

provides knowledge, skills and wisdom that makes women more confident, self-esteemed and broad thinking. (Engida,2021)

The current study examines the psychological component of the social identity theory to determine how women establish a social identity. To achieve the objective of connecting social identity and empowerment as motivating factors and investigating their impact on language use, this study will necessitate the application of psychological, relational, and social empowerment theories. The complex connection between language and social identity highlights the essential function of linguistic expression in shaping both individual and societal identities. Language acts not just as a mean of communication but also as a medium through which people from different backgrounds express their values, beliefs, and experiences. For women, language may both reflect and contest cultural norms; the verbs used in statements frequently embody purposes and agency, influencing the construction and perception of women's identities within sociocultural settings. Analysing these linguistic selections reveals the power dynamics that shape language use and influence the empowerment or marginalization of certain social groups. Thus, language serves as an empowering tool, allowing women to declare their identities and navigate their roles within many societal contexts. The development of language across time reflects changing paradigms of social identity and empowerment, influencing continuing discussions about gender and language.

This study

This study focuses on the impact of education, empowerment and social identity on the language use of a group of highly educated female academics at the University of Chittagong. These are important topics of sociolinguistics which discuss the connection between language use and variation in terms of various social phenomena namely gender, education, employment and empowerment, social identity and so on. The study is qualitative research and employs focus group discussion

and semi-structured interviews as the primary tools for data collection.

We have gathered data from 20 female educators across different departments of Chittagong University, all of whom had advanced degrees, to examine the influence of empowerment on their voices. We have developed a semi-structured questionnaire seeking information about their educational history, profession selection, decision-making processes, economic contributions, and involvement in social activities. Additionally, we have hosted a focus group discussion with five educators from various disciplines, who discussed the topic of “future plans.” They have shared their plans and perspectives on life. These factors help us to recognize the indicators that demonstrate the empowerment of their voices. Three indicators have been chosen to measure empowerment in women’s voices: vocabulary choices, sentence structures, and the role of verbs. All interviews and focus group discussions are audio recorded and transcribed. Finally, data has been analysed using three indicators that have been chosen to measure empowerment in women’s voices: vocabulary choices, sentence structures, and the role of verbs.

Findings of this Research

This section analyses data collected by interviews and focus group discussions. The analysis of the data is discussed here based on three headings: selection of vocabulary, structure of sentence, and function of verbs.

Selection of vocabulary

Research shows that individuals exhibit significant variations in their regular patterns of thought, behaviour, and emotion (Yarkoni, 2010). These distinctions are evident not just in individuals’ thoughts, emotions, and actions but also in their verbal expressions about these aspects. Fundamentally, an individual’s disposition is reflected in their vocabulary choices or the manner in which they employ words. The individual can articulate their thoughts clearly by selecting the

appropriate word, which also demonstrates their confidence. Consequently, this study examines the participants use of discourse during their interviews and focus group discussion to ascertain their social identity, status, and self-assurance. The research highlights the following words that are evident from the individual interviews-

সিদ্ধান্তটি (this decision), নিজেই (self), সর্বোচ্চ স্বাধীনতা (higher independency), ইন্ডিপেন্ডেন্ট (independent), সোসাইটিতে সম্মানজনক অবস্থান (societal position with dignity), আমার নামে (in my name), এস্টাব্লিশড (established), ডিপার্টমেন্ট (department), হাইয়ার স্টাডিজ (higher studies), আমার ফ্যামিলি (my family), আমার পছন্দের (my choice), এরেইঞ্জড (arranged), আইডেন্টিটি বিল্ড (building identity), সুপারভাইজার (supervisor), এব্রোড (abroad), আমার বাচ্চার ফিউচার (my child's future), আমার কন্ট্রিবিউশান (my contribution), স্টুডেন্টদের হেল্প (to help students), রিসার্চ (research), ফোকাস (focus), দেশের জন্য কিছু করা (serve to the country), আমার কলিগ (my colleague), এনজয় (enjoy), ট্রান্সফরমেশান (transformation), আর্টিকেল পাবলিশ (to publish article), ফেলোশিপ (fellowship), আমার হাসব্যান্ড (my husband), সিঙ্গেল মাদার (single mother), আমরা দুজনই (both of us).

As per the findings of this study, their choice of words reflected their social identity and strength. Their use of terms signifies empowerment (নিজেই, সর্বোচ্চ স্বাধীনতা, সোসাইটিতে সম্মানজনক অবস্থান), authority (আমার নামে, আমরা দুজনই), engagement (দেশের জন্য কিছু করো, স্টুডেন্টদের হেল্প), decision-making capability (আমার বাচ্চার ফিউচার, আমার কন্ট্রিবিউশান), and self-assurance (আমার পছন্দের, আর্টিকেল পাবলিশ). They have also used English terminology that reveal their level of proficiency in English and higher education. Language of the participants is a reflection of their unique personality, offering insights into their choice of vocabulary, tone, and empathy. Analysis of discourses from their interview conversation show that their language represents emotional intelligence, self-awareness and personal growth.

Structure of sentence

Research has shown that language is an effective tool for investigating personality, individual differences, and the

lower-level processes that are responsible for such variables (Caplan et al.,2020). It has been established by a number of empirical research that the varied ways in which individuals express themselves via language are constant and consistent within a person regardless of the time or environment in which they experience it. Language can transform our lives if used confidently and powerfully. It can be used for self-empowerment and empowering others. Empowerment can be demonstrated through positive language, active voices, defining one's space and identity, and using open questions when needed.

The findings from the interview and focus group discussion with this group of female academics show their self- onfidence, power, right, or authority to act. For example:

1. আমি এই সিদ্ধান্তটি নিয়েছি (I took this decision).
2. আমি একজন ইন্ডিপেন্ডেন্ট নারী (I am an independent woman).
3. আমি ফ্যামিলিতে কনট্রিবিউট করি (I contribute to the family).
4. বাচ্চাদের পড়ালেখাটা আমিই দেখি (I look after the studies of my children).
5. আমার ব্যক্তিগত এবং পরিবার দুই জায়গায় আমি নিজে খরচ করতে পছন্দ করি (I like to spend money both in my personal expenses or family needs).
6. আমি সিঙ্গেল মাদার কিন্তু বাবার সব দায়িত্ব পালন করি। সন্তানদের কোনোকিছুর অভাব বোধ করতে দেই না (Though I am a single mother I do all the responsibilities of a father. I never let my children feel the absence of their father).
7. স্কলারশিপ নিয়ে পড়তে যাব এন্ড ক্যারিয়ার ডেভেলোপ করব (I wiil go for higher studies with scholarship and will develop my career).
8. আমার ফ্যামিলি আমার ডিসিশানকে ভ্যালু করে, তাই ছোটো ছোটো ব্যাপারগুলোতে আমি আমার মতো ডিসিশান দেই (My family values my decision that's why they ask for my opinion in every single matter).
9. ডিভোর্সের পর অনেক স্ট্রাগলক করতে হয়েছে কিন্তু আমি অভারকাম করেছি

আর এতদূর এসেছি (After my divorce I had struggled a lot but now I recovered and took myself here).

10. অবশ্যই দেশ এবং সমাজের জন্য সার্ভ করব এটাই স্বপ্ন (Obviously I'll serve my country and society).
11. আমি আন্তর্জাতিক লেভেলের রিসার্চার হতে চাই (I want to see myself as an international researcher).
12. আমি আমার বন্ধুকে বিয়ে করেছি (I married my friend).
13. এটা আমার আইডেন্টিটি, অবশ্যই আমি পেশাটা খুব এনজয় করি (This is my identity, and of course I enjoy this occupation).
14. আমার লিডারশিপ ভালো লাগে (I like leadership).
15. স্টুডেন্টদের গাইড করি মোটিভেট করি যেন নলেজকে প্রোপার ইউটিলাইজ করে (I guide and motivate students to utilize their knowledge properly).
16. আমি একটা ল্যাব খুলব ইনশাআলাহ (I will open a lab In Sha Allah).

In this context, the above examples (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 12) suggests a strong personality, active voice, and confidence while others (2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, and 16) exhibit a positive attitude towards family, the job, and life. Their sense of identity and personal space are articulated in examples 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16.

Function of verb

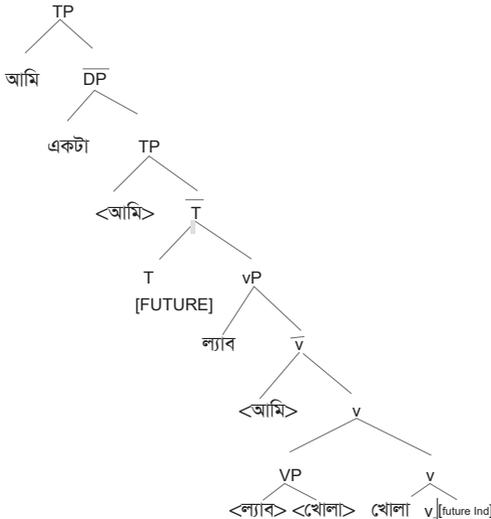
Researchers are exploring women's empowerment through action verbs as indicators of agency, highlighting the importance of their voices in challenging traditional narratives of constraint (Duarti et al. 2023). Verbs are crucial in expressing identity, especially in representing women's social positions and empowerment (Awal, 2023). Analyzing verb usage can reveal societal norms and power dynamics, influencing perceptions of gender equality and reinforcing or dismantling patriarchal structures. The choice of verbs impacts agency and power, with assertive verbs empowering women and passive constructions perpetuating subjugation. Sociolinguistic studies highlight the

transformative potential of verb usage in achieving gender equality, highlighting the role of verbs in elucidating identity and promoting women's empowerment (Emeka-Duru, 2022).

Findings of this study show that most of the time participants used active voice where the speakers played an active role in those sentences and showed their confidence, positivity and position. For example:

1. কন্ট্রিবিউট করি (I contribute).
2. সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছি (I have taken the decision).
3. আমিই দেখি (Only I look after this).
4. ডেভেলপ করব (I will develop this).
5. ল্যাব খুলব (I will open a lab).

In the aforementioned instances, speakers have identified themselves as agents using these verbs; here, a tree diagram of one of the phrases has been shown to illustrate the function of the verb. A sentence has been chosen আমি একটা ল্যাব খুলব ইনশাআল্লাহ (I will open a lab In Sha Allah).



The strong power of language is shown in the use of verbs. The speaker aspires to establish her own laboratory, demonstrating

her confidence, experience, expertise, authority, enthusiasm, devotion, and commitment to serving her country and assisting her pupils. The speaker is playing the role of an agent who undertakes the action independently and maintains her social identity. Indeed, these are the distinguishing characteristics of a woman who is both educated and empowered. The study explores how women's speech uses action verbs to express agency and empowerment, highlighting their autonomy in navigating diverse social landscapes. Zekri (2020) states that linguistic analysis of the speech or narratives of women reveals assertive action verbs are linked to stronger self-agency, particularly in educational settings.

According to the data, it is found that participants of this study used English phrases, which indicates that they are bilingual. They also employed a more advanced form of Bangla that is typically employed by intellectuals or educated individuals. During the interview, they discussed their social identity, which confirmed that they all belong to the same community and share the same identity. This includes their gender (female), occupation (academics), and education (completed graduation and post-graduation). If we examine it from a sociolinguistic perspective, it is evident that their language use is varied from others as they are highly educated and occupy a powerful position in society. Their professional expertise and strong voices can serve as a source of motivation, inspiration, and guidance for the newer generation to do productive and effective work for the society. Due to this fact, they are able to be categorized as a group of individuals that possess intellectual capacity. Furthermore, the social identity that they have developed gives them a sense of empowerment, which is reflected in the words that they use. The purpose of this research is to investigate the manner in which women's voices are affected by factors such as social identity, education, and power, particularly when they are in positions of authority within society. The data also reveal that the individuals

in this group have a high level of confidence, control, and expressiveness while speaking.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study analyzed the impact of education, empowerment and social identity on the language use of highly educated working women at the University of Chittagong. Language use has been analysed based on their selection of vocabulary, structure of sentence, and function of verbs. Their data represent their identity and culture through word choice, sentence structure, and language usage. They have used different patterns of language to express themselves as powerful members even though they belong to a patriarchal society. The study explores the selection of vocabulary, sentence structure and role of verb usage in women's social identity and empowerment, highlighting the complex relationship between language and societal perceptions. It highlights the role of verbs in shaping narratives about women's experiences and their agency. Verbs serve not only as linguistic tools but also as catalysts for social change, allowing women to assert their identities in a patriarchal environment. The study also highlights the potential of nuanced verb usage and vocabulary choices to challenge traditional stereotypes and empower marginalized voices, promoting a more inclusive discourse. This research provides valuable insights for understanding women's empowerment and identity formation in contemporary society.

The findings of the Research highlight the importance of education in empowering and developing women's social identities. Throughout the interview and focus group discussion, the data demonstrated that female academics of this study have articulated self-assurance, control, positivity, dedication to their work, contribution to their families, decision-making power, and active participation. These are the results of their education,

which served as a reflection of their identity in society. Education has motivated them to reduce gender inequality and engage in family and social events, as well as to participate in decision-making and exert control. This empowers women and facilitates the development of their identity.

The analysis provided critical insights into the relationship between language uses and the social identities of women, emphasizing that the selection of verbs has a substantial impact on perceptions of empowerment and agency. It is important to note that the prevalence of active versus passive verb forms in narratives pertaining to women demonstrates how language can either reinforce or challenge societal norms. The results indicate that assertive verbs, which are indicative of empowering language, have a positive correlation with the self-perception and societal roles of women. In light of this correlation, it is imperative to promote linguistic reforms that prioritize active voice in both written and spoken narratives about women. As this research focuses solely on female academics from the University of Chittagong, future research can involve participants from different educational institutions i.e. schools, colleges and other universities. Future research should delve deeper into the contextual variables that influence language use and empowerment, particularly in the context of diverse cultural landscapes. To enhance our understanding of female agency and identity within an array of sociolinguistic frameworks, it may be useful to examine themes such as intersectionality, which might illustrate the impact of varying experiences of oppression and empowerment on language use.

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