

NAMING THE THIRD GENDER: A FEMINIST CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF CISGENDER DISCOURSE ON TRANSGENDER PUBLIC FIGURES IN PAKISTAN

Humayun Babar Kiani

Scholar, PhD English (Linguistics), Foundation University Islamabad

Dr. Mehwish Zahoor

Assistant Professor (Linguistics), Foundation University Islamabad

Abstract

Transgender individuals have faced centuries of marginalization and stigma, including social exclusion, violence, and deprivation of basic rights. However, despite these challenges, some transgender individuals in Pakistan have achieved professional success and gained recognition on social media. The primary aim of this study is to explore how cisgender individuals perceive transgender public figures in Pakistan who have gained limelight on social media due to their achievements in various notable professions. Specifically, the research seeks to determine whether the social status attained by these transgender individuals has improved cisgender stereotypical perceptions of them. To achieve this, the study will analyze comments made by cisgender users on the transgender public figures' social media posts. The research adopts Sara Mills' Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis model (1995) as its analytical framework, specifically examining the use of generic nouns and pronouns. The sample selected for the study included the top 18 transgender public figures in Pakistan, selected based on the number of followers/subscribers on their public social media accounts across various platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The findings of the study indicate that cisgender individual's choice of generic nouns and pronouns for transgender public figures in their online comments reflects patriarchal ideologies and cisnormative attitudes, as well as, traditional feminine roles typically associated with common transgender individuals in Pakistani society. Additionally, cisgender individuals tend to use depersonalizing and neutral terms that convey detachment and a sense of otherness toward transgender public figures. The analysis ascertains the role of language in social exclusion and inclusion, supporting Mills' assertion that linguistic choices reproduce ideological processes. The study concludes that while transgender public figures may achieve social recognition through their societal accomplishments, this does not ensure them acceptance from the cisgender community, and advocates using mindful and respectful language practices.

Keywords: *Cisgender, Transgender, Linguistic choices, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, Social exclusion/inclusion*

Introduction and Theoretical Background

Transgender individuals are known as a third gender in society, where their gender identity is considered different from that of the traditional identities of male and female. The concept of transgenderism is not new; it has existed across various civilizations throughout history. In ancient times, such individuals were often revered for their wisdom and spiritual insight. The American Psychological Association (2023) defines transgender individuals as those whose gender identity or expression differs from their sex assigned at birth. The term encompasses not only transgender men and women, but also non-binary and genderqueer individuals (Davidson, 2007; Valentine, 2007; Palmer & Clegg, 2020).

Historically, many societies acknowledged and even honored transgender individuals. For instance, in early civilizations across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, male-to-female (MTF) priestesses held positions of power. However, with the rise of patriarchal and capitalist systems, transgender people began to face exclusion and marginalization, particularly in economic and social spheres. In South Asia, the transgender community, specifically the Khwaja-seras, once held prestigious positions during the Mughal era, serving in royal courts and making significant contributions to cultural life. This changed drastically under British colonial rule. It is a harsh

reality of today's world wherein legislation is carried out to stigmatize and criminalize transgender individuals through specific laws such as Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (1860) and the Criminal Tribes Act (1871). Similarly, eunuchs are targeted and subjected to discrimination and marginalization (Singh & Bhatti, 2019). Consequently, some reactionary responses from feminists emerged and evolved. However, second-wave feminists were also against the rights of transgender community, and not ready to even embrace their identity. Later on, contemporary feminists and third-wave feminists supported them in their pursuit of rights and accepted their identity as transgender individuals by including them in mainstream society (Meyerowitz, 2002; Chakrapani et al., 2017; Poteat et al., 2015).

Despite these significant historical transformations, transgender individuals have been facing long-standing discrimination and marginalization, societal exclusion, and extreme violence. Language plays a pivotal role in shaping people's perceptions within society, reinforcing prejudices and maintaining power dynamics (Hill & Irvine, 1993; Habermas, 1977; Cameron, 2012). Various transgender people in Pakistan have been continuously facing and experiencing stigmatization, societal exclusion, and rejection. However, certain transgender people have gained fame, visibility, and social status due to their extreme struggle, successful positions in different fields of life, and social media presence. Using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, this study investigates how cisgender individuals in Pakistan perceive transgender public figures who have gained recognition on social media due to their professional achievements. It explores whether the social status attained by these transgender individuals has influenced cisgender attitudes toward them.

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) examines how language constructs and resists power and dominance in society, particularly in relation to gendered social practices. FCDA combines both micro-level and macro-level linguistic analysis for enhanced contextual understanding (van Dijk, 1991; Lazar, 2005). Some prominent theorists, including Judith Butler, Sara Mills, and Michelle Lazar, have made significant contributions to the field of feminist cultural studies. Butler considers gender to be constructed and performative. In contrast, Lazar builds her idea on the four core principles of FCDA, which hold that gender is ideological, socially constructed, performed through language, a site of resistance, and a focus for social change. However, Mills emphasizes Foucault's concepts of power and social positioning.

Sara Mills' feminist critical model (1995) has been found suitable for the scope of the present study. Although initially developed to explore how language marginalizes women, the model is being adapted here to study the marginalization of transgender individuals, due to the absence of a specific framework addressing cisgender discourse toward the third gender. Since many transgender individuals identify with the feminine gender, the use of a feminist model also allows the study to compare whether the language used against them mirrors that used against women or follows distinct patterns to marginalize transgender individuals. By considering Sara Mills' feminist critical model, numerous studies have been conducted to analyze the marginalization of transgender people, which are discussed here to understand their rights in various societies worldwide. Furthermore, the term "transgender" was first used by John F. Oliven in 1965, who believed "transsexual" was a misnomer as transgender identity is not solely focused on sexuality. Transgender individuals typically identify as either male-to-female (M2F) or female-to-male (F2M), expressing discomfort with their assigned sex at birth (Lev, 2004). Increasing academic interest in transgender issues spans fields such as linguistics, gender studies, CDA, psychology, and media studies. Many studies have been conducted regarding the issues and challenges faced by transgender individuals in society. Some of them are presented below to provide a clear picture of their current situation.

McLaren, Bryant, and Brown (2013) examined TV shows like *Orange Is the New Black* and *The Fosters*, finding that transgender characters are often portrayed in stereotypical and negative ways. However, there have been some improvements in representation. Similarly, Roehr (2018), through FCDA of U.S. print media, concluded that news discourse often marginalizes and stigmatizes transgender individuals.

Russell et al. (2018) used a social-ecological framework to study the challenges faced by transgender youth in the U.S., such as limited access to healthcare, education, and employment, along with experiences of bullying and violence. Akerlund (2019), analyzing Swedish newspapers, found that transgender individuals were frequently represented in ways that reinforced heteronormative views and binary gender norms, negatively impacting public perception.

Shahid (2019) applied Fairclough's CDA to U.S. online news coverage and found that media often sensationalize and pathologize transgender experiences by focusing on negative themes like violence and mental health issues. McCann (2022), using Sara Mills' FCDA, analyzed British newspapers and found varied portrayals: *The Guardian* generally humanized transgender individuals, while *The Times* and *The Telegraph* often framed them with themes of otherness and dehumanization.

Dr. Qurat-ul-Ain Malik, Dr. Anika Ali, and Ms. Sumbal Fahad (2022) investigated transgender representation in print media in their research titled "Newspaper Representation of Transgender in Pakistan: A Multimodal Analysis". The researchers applied multimodal analysis of the two leading newspapers of Pakistan to analyze the photographs of transgender individuals in the said newspapers. The finding of the study reveals a significant anomaly that manifests in the absolute exclusion of female-to-male transgender individuals.

In another study, Dickson and Sanders (2014) conducted research on the constitutional discourses concerning the sexual orientation of transgender people in three countries: India, Nepal, and Pakistan. By employing a qualitative methodology and historical approach, the researchers identified the legal issues affecting the transgender community.

In another study, researchers Maryam Zakriya, Mustabshera Quddus, and Dr. Hilal Fatima conducted research in 2023 under the topic "Role of Media in Empowerment of Transgenders in Pakistan." The study further highlights the issues faced by transgender individuals and creates awareness amongst the masses regarding their challenges and adversities. The research findings highlight the important factors of the media that can bring about positive mental change regarding transgender individuals and discuss the elements of empowerment, including the rights they are entitled to, by motivating the country's relevant departments. The study concludes that transgender individuals are also making progress in their personal and professional lives, and due to the lack of publicity, they do not receive the due protocol in different institutions of the state.

Similarly, another study was conducted by Asma Iqbal, Farah Iqbal, and Mohammad Naveed Arshad (2021) titled "Dehumanization of Trans-Queers on Media: A Visual Analysis", wherein they examine the visuals of the transgender individuals of Pakistan. The research incorporates Kress and Leeuwen's model, which is considered an appropriate tool for analyzing images. The findings of the study reveal that the cisgender always maltreats transgender people and also marginalizes them in terms of financial growth in society. People dehumanize them badly and abuse them, and are never ready to give them a respectful place in society.

Hafsa Ahsan and Zainab Najam Minhas (2023) explore the linguistic expressions of transgender individuals in their article, "A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Linguistic Experiences of the Transgender in Lahore, Pakistan." They applied the Speech-Act Theory of Austin and Searle, as well as social structural theories. They collected data from five transgender

individuals in Lahore through interviews, employing a qualitative approach. The researchers reveal the findings of the research that all five transgender people encounter the lexical items like 'she-male', 'khawaja sira', 'hijra', and 'khusra' in their everyday life and strongly dislike these negative connotative words as these words demean them in society and create an imbalance in their emotional and psychological well-being.

Kai Jacobsen, Aaron Devor, and Edwin Hodge (2022) explore how transgender people exchange knowledge and perspectives on the Internet and social media platforms to build their communities in their research work titled "Who Counts as Trans? A Critical Discourse Analysis of Trans Tumblr Posts." The researchers have applied Critical Discourse Analysis to Tumblr posts and conclude that the online transgender community mainly discusses the hegemonic narratives of cisgender and disrupts the dominant discourses and ideologies of cisgender.

These studies collectively show that while there has been some progress in media representation of transgender people, misrepresentation and marginalization persist. However, limited attention has been given to how cisgender individuals perceive transgender public figures who have gained visibility through social or professional success. The majority of the previous research on transgender individuals has focused on the electronic and print media discourse on common transgender issues to generally highlight the challenges that they face in society, such as bullying, harassment, stigmatization, and violence. However, research focusing on transgender public figures to examine if attaining a social status has made any difference in the stereotypical perception of transgender individuals among the cisgender is lacking. The present study intends to fill this research gap.

Research Questions

1. How do cisgender individuals use generic nouns and pronouns when referring to transgender public figures in Pakistan on their social media posts, and what do these choices reveal about their perception of the transgender public figures?
2. Do the generic nouns and pronouns used by cisgender individuals for the transgender public figures in Pakistan reflect patterns of marginalization similar to those used by the male gender to marginalize females, as outlined in Sara Mills' feminist critical discourse analysis model?

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative/descriptive research design, which, as Harwell (2011) notes, utilizes an inductive approach to develop insights and explain patterns found in the data. The research aims to understand how cisgender individuals perceive transgender public figures in Pakistan, who have gained recognition and social status through their professional achievements and social media presence. The study sample included the top 18 transgender public figures in Pakistan, selected based on the number of followers/subscribers they have on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. These figures include individuals such as Dr. Mehrub Moiz, Nayyab Ali, Shyara Roy, Marvia Malik, and others who are notable for their achievements in diverse fields like activism, politics, media, and the arts. A complete list of the selected transgender public figures is given below in Table 1. The research prioritized transgender public figures and social media platforms with the highest public engagement to enable a systematic and focused word-level analysis, particularly of pronouns and generic nouns, within the feminist critical framework of Sara Mills.

The data analyzed for the study encompassed the comments made by cisgender individuals on the content posted by the selected transgender public figures on their social media accounts. A total of 10 posts from every transgender public figure have been selected, and subsequently, 10 comments on each post have been chosen. In this way, 100 comments for each of the selected transgender public figures, posted during June 1, 2023 to May 30, 2024.

Table 1: List of Transgender Public Figures

S. #	Name	Brief Bio
1	Aisha Mughal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Programs at Wajood Society. Former UNDP consultant to the Ministry of Human Rights • Education Ambassador at Government of Punjab, Pakistan • Visiting faculty at FJWU and Quaid-e-Azam University
2	Mehrub Awan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Figure, Medical Doctor • A Global Policy Practitioner • Kijwajasira Activist
3	Shyraa Roy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musician, Author, Singer, Actress • Miss Trans Pakistan • Multi Award Winner
4	Anaya Sheikh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans comedian • Actress
5	Marvia Malik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistan's first transgender news anchor
6	Rimal Ali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actress, model, host, social activist • PTI Political Activist • Coordinator/operation manager at Pakistan international Human Rights Organizations
7	Sara Gill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistan's first transgender doctor • Runs Gender Interactive Alliance – an NGO
8	Nisha Rao	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First transgender to obtain a law degree in <u>Pakistan</u>. • Founded an NGO called the Trans Pride Society
9	Jannat Ali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans artist and activist with an MBA degree • Executive director of Track-T
10	Almas Bobby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistani transgender activist and former television host.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the Shemale Foundation Pakistan. • In July 2018, Almas Bobby declared Rs. 100 million of assets in the tax amnesty scheme
11	Kami Sid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kami Sid is the first Pakistani Trans person to rise to prominence as a fashion model. Sid is also an actor and LGBTQ rights activist. Sid also became a controversial figure after accusations of rape and sexual assault against her
12	Mehak Malik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistani. • Famous Dancer. • She has garnered a substantial following of 12 million on Tiktok
13	Chahat Baloch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgender dancer • Well-known and demanding performer in Pakistan
14	Urwa Khan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistani influencer known mostly through her urwakhn5576 Tiktok page where she has amassed over 2.4 million followers
15	Talash Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actor, dancer
16	Zanaya Chouadhry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgender Activist and Human Rights Defender from Lahore • District Focal Person for Skills Development • Transgender Appointment In Punjab Police
17	Julie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgender woman Activist • “Human rights activist”
18	Naira Khan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgender woman Activist • Medically Transformed Transgender

Analytical Framework

This study employs Sara Mills' Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (1995) as its analytical framework, with a specific focus on word-level analysis, particularly the use of generic nouns and pronouns by cisgender individuals in reference to transgender public figures on their social media profiles. Mills' FCDA is rooted in the idea that language not only reflects gendered assumptions but also actively contributes to the construction and reinforcement of gendered power relations. Mills emphasizes that even small linguistic choices (at the word level), such as the selection of

pronouns or generic nouns, can carry ideological weight and reveal implicit biases.

The current study examined how transgender public figures are referred to by cisgender commenters—whether they are named directly, misgendered, anonymized, or referred to using ambiguous, dehumanizing, or gender-neutral terms. For example, the use of "they," "it," or avoidance of personal pronouns altogether may signal distancing or objectification. Conversely, consistent and accurate gendered pronouns may suggest recognition and respect. By focusing on this linguistic feature, the study provides an in-depth analysis of how cisgender discourse constructs or challenges the identity and social status of transgender public figures, and whether this discourse mirrors patterns observed in the marginalization of common transgender individuals.

Data Analysis

Using Sara Mills' Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis—particularly focusing on the use of *generic nouns* and *pronouns* by cisgender individuals for the transgender public figures on their social media posts—this study examined how cisgender individuals linguistically construct the identities of transgender public figures on social media.

Table 2: Thematic Coding of *Generic Nouns* and *Pronouns* used for the Transgender Public Figures by the Cisgender in Pakistan

Sr. No	Themes	Generic Nouns/Pronouns
1	Reduction to Traditional Roles	"princess", "queen" (reducing to gendered symbols of beauty and emotion)
2	Depersonalization and Misgendering	"this kind of person", "beta" (son), "person" (masking gender specificity)
3	Reinforcing Femininity as Aesthetic	"appi" (sister), "queen" (placing into familial and decorative roles)
4	Cisnormative Perceptions	"they", "it", "medically" (reflecting objectivity from gender identity and reducing to biology)
5	Inclusivity and Respect	"baityo" (daughters), "lady", "insaan" (human) (showing inclusivity but questioning legitimacy)

6	Positive Language and Inclusivity	"log" (people), "naik dil" (good-hearted) (favorable terms showing inclusivity)
7	Derogatory Terms and Dehumanization	"khwaja sera", "trans woman", "transgender people are also human" (dehumanizing and marginalizing)
8	Avoidance of Patriarchal Expressions	"mam", "gorgeous", "beauty" (avoiding patriarchal and dehumanizing expressions)
9	Binary Framing and Othering	"dancer", "insaan", "converting boy into girl", "She", "intersex", "other", "normal people" (creating binary opposition and misrepresentation)
10	Entrenched Gender Norms Cisnormative Ideologies	Language reflecting entrenched gender norms and cisnormative ideologies (persistent prejudices and exclusionary norms)
11	Limited Shifts in Perception	Humble and identity-affirming morphological items (notable shifts in perception for some individuals)
12	Dichotomy in Linguistic Patterns	Affirming language vs. misinterpreting and mixing up identities (duality in linguistic patterns)
13	Admiration without Full Awareness	Admiring language without full awareness of identities (recognizing accomplishments but not fully understanding identities)

Reduction to Traditional Roles

Cisgender commenters often use feminine metaphors such as “princess” and “queen,” which, while seemingly positive, reduce transgender public figures to gendered symbols of beauty and emotion rather than intellectual achievement. Generic pronouns like “you” dominate, but gender-specific nouns reinforce traditional roles. The application of phrases like "transgirl" and "mam" reflects and reinforces traditional discrimination against transgender individuals, maintaining isolation and a boundary between cisgender individuals and transgender people. The comments of cisgender people about their description reduce their identity to the transition of medical treatments, distancing them from society and reinforcing and reflecting stigmatization and marginalization.

Depersonalization and Misgendering

Comments refer to transgender public figures with depersonalizing terms like "this kind of person" and culturally misgendered titles like “beta” (son), subtly denying her identity. Neutral nouns such as “person” mask gender specificity, reinforcing otherness rather than recognition. The

comments of cisgender individuals such as "Proud of him", "She is brave", and "make them independent", clearly show misogenderism against them. They show some signs of positive appreciation and acknowledgement, but side by side, portraying the supremacy of patriarchal norms, which ultimately reproduce residual othering. On the other hand, cisgender individuals frequently use equivocal and depersonalizing linguistic items like "this kind of person," "they," "insaan" (human), or "transgender," "transgirl," "shemale," or expressions like "converting a boy into a girl" which serve to distance transgender people from the main stream society, appearing unbiased in usage but implying unfamiliarity, embarrassment, or an indisposition to accept them by integrating them into normative gender categories.

Additionally, the above-mentioned terms are used by cisgender people who consider transgender identities as abnormal or temporary, thus undermining the validity of their mega accomplishments and lived experiences. Cisgender people abuse or swap the pronouns (e.g., "she/he"), which highlight deep-seated biases of the patriarchal society, leading to misperception and refusal to accept the gender identity of transgender individuals. Last but not least, cisgender people apply the appropriate pronoun like "she", but it is contextualized with stigmatization and otherness, confirming stereotypical dynamics of society.

Reinforcing Femininity as Aesthetic

Words like "appi" (sister) and "queen" place transgender public figures into familial and decorative roles. These gendered terms reinforce femininity as aesthetic, and not professional. Absence of neutral or affirming pronouns highlights cisnormative perceptions.

Cisnormative Perceptions

The discourse of cisgender people uses terms like "they", "it", and "medically", which reflect objectivity from the gender identity of transgender public figures and reduce their identity to biology. Despite some respectful and positive comments passed by them, the linguistic elements are used generically by cisgender individuals, which shows persistent prejudices and exclusionary norms.

Inclusivity and Respect

Cisgender people use some robust and respectful comments such as "baityo" (daughters) and "lady," "insaan" (human), which are used only for the conventional roles of females, and they also show inclusivity. However, in a more profound sense, these comments question her legitimacy, reinforcing inequality and injustice.

Positive Language and Inclusivity

Cisgender people use favorable terms like "log" (people), "naik dil" (good-hearted) for one of the transgender public figures which are positive and show a greater shift towards her inclusivity. People are using language about "log" (people), "naik dil" (good-hearted). Their use of gendered pronouns, which are lacking, shows that she has established a good image in public.

Derogatory Terms and Dehumanization

Cisgender people apply specific derogatory terms like "khwaja sera", "trans woman", and "transgender people are also human" which distinguish them from cis women, dehumanizing her and showing persistent marginalization and discrimination. Cisgender individuals use some

derogatory and offensive terms like "fitna" (discord), "log" (people), "she" ", shemale", and "looks like a man" for their representation, which dehumanize their character and consider them a threat to society. The comments passed by the cisgender people clearly show disrespect and othering, which ultimately signals rejection rather than respect and honor. These comments also reinforce sexual objectification and misgendering, rejecting their true character and position despite their accomplishments.

Avoidance of Patriarchal Expressions

The comments of cisgender individuals use feminine language like "mam," "gorgeous," and "beauty", which show that they avoid patriarchal and dehumanizing expressions to give respect and acknowledgement of their identity.

Binary Framing and Othering

Cisgender individuals use generic nouns in their comments like "dancer," "insaan," "converting boy into girl," "She," "intersex," "other," and "normal people", which show a reflection of binary framing as well as othering, creating binary opposition and misrepresentation of their position. Their representation is positive, but the underlying connection of meaning reinforces dehumanization, despite their fame and societal recognition. Cisgender people use the pronouns in their remarks like "She is honest" and "She/he is wonderful" for them, which show hesitation and confusion, highlighting binary discomfort and a cisnormative lens.

Entrenched Gender Norms and Cisnormative Ideologies

Despite the growing visibility, public accomplishments, and social contributions of transgender individuals in Pakistan, the analysis indicates that the language used by cisgender commenters continues to reflect entrenched gender norms and cisnormative ideologies. Across the data, affectionate and seemingly supportive terms like "princess," "queen," "appi," or "baityo" were commonly employed. Cisgender people signal acceptance and recognition for their achievements, but in reality, they follow patriarchal femininity by reducing the roles of transgender women to traditional norms. They prefer using expressions like "beauty," "sweetness," and "kindness," which are considered emotional and aesthetic, over professional, intellectual, and leadership qualities, which clearly shows that they unconsciously reinforce conventional binaries. In conclusion, it is noted that cisgender individuals use admiring and respectful lexicon that is appreciative in tone. However, the fact of the matter is that these linguistic elements contain their actual identity within a narrow framework which suggests that transgender women are always in need of validation and appreciation even to get their fundamental rights and due recognition.

Limited Shifts in Perception

However, the analysis finds limited but notable shifts in the perception of cisgender people about transgender public figures, wherein they mainly employ humble and identity-affirming morphological items, such as "mam," "beautiful soul," or "leader," without resorting to linguistic marginalization. In this context, the analysis reveals that cisgender individuals use positive language about them due to their prolonged visibility, institutional recognition, and consistent public engagement, which further fosters their inclusivity in mainstream society and highlights a respectful understanding among cisgender individuals.

Dichotomy in Linguistic Patterns

The comments of cisgender individuals regarding transgender public figures showcase dichotomy and duality in their linguistic pattern, wherein they, on the one hand, use appropriate language which affirms her identity, whereas, on the other hand, they employ phrases like "intersex people" and "normal people" which suggest that they misinterpret and mix up transgender and intersex identities.

Admiration without Full Awareness and Subtle Marginalization

The analysis shows that cisgender people tend to admire them by recognizing their accomplishments. Still, they are not fully aware of the identities of transgender people, due to which, transgender individuals face and overcome systemic obstacles to even be seen as worthy of respect. In contrast, cisgender individuals do not encounter these challenges in society. The comments of cisgender people incorporate non-specific phrases such as "Sweet" and "Very good", which reflect respect and admiration for them. Cisgender individuals do not use gender specific pronouns, affirming that they are hesitant to acknowledge their true identity and accomplishment in society, maintaining subtle marginalization. Cisgender people overuse the generalized, vague, and affection-oriented terms like "love," "sweet," and "great" which obscure their original identity and minimize their recognition in society. The above-mentioned terms marginalize their gender identity by placing them in an emotional role instead of acknowledging their identity and accomplishments.

Discussion & Conclusion

The analysis shows that cisgender people employ somewhat different nouns and pronouns when referring to transgender public figures compared to those used for common transgender individuals. While common transgender persons are often referred to with overtly derogatory and dehumanizing nouns such as "*khusra*," "*hijra*," and "*shemale*" (Ahsan & Minhas, 2023; Iqbal, Iqbal & Arshad, 2021), public figures are addressed with apparently respectful but still gendered titles such as "*mam*," "*queen*," "*princess*," and "*appi*," which reinforce femininity as aesthetic rather than professional identity. These linguistic choices, though positive in tone, continue to reflect patriarchal norms and residual othering (McCann, 2022; Malik, Ali & Fahad, 2022). This subtle shift in discourse demonstrates a move from explicit marginalization toward implied stereotyping—where admiration coexists with misgendering and binary framing (Roehr, 2018; Akerlund, 2019). Thus, while the nouns and pronouns differ, the underlying ideology remains the same, sustaining the marginalization of transgender individuals through socially acceptable linguistic forms. In the way, this finding highlights that linguistic transformation within cisgender discourse represents only superficial inclusivity; the persistence of androcentric and cisnormative ideologies continues to restrict authentic recognition and equality for transgender individuals in Pakistan.

Conclusively, the analysis of the data revealed that a few transgender public figures are successful in disrupting prevailing biases and earning respect and recognition solely due to their consistent visibility on social media platforms; however, the broader linguistic landscape remains challenging. The analysis concludes that cisgender individuals, consciously or unconsciously, apply language that in one way or another stereotypes, objectifies, or distances transgender people from full societal inclusion. The cisgender persons' choice of generic nouns and pronouns remains embedded in patriarchal and cisnormative ideologies. Thus, the recognition of achievement does not yet equate to full acceptance of identity. Language remains a subtle yet powerful mirror of

societal attitudes, and the analysis affirms Mills' assertion that discourse both reflects and reinforces sexist use of language for the transgender public figures in Pakistan. Without a conscious shift in everyday language, particularly in the way transgender identities are referenced, societal perception will continue to lag behind the progress made by these individuals themselves.

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