Women's Dialect: A Social Phenomena

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Abstract
An attempt has been made here to study women's dialect in sociolinguistic aspect. Language is the tool to express our thought. People use language for communicate with each other. Here comes the difference between male and female. Language differs in phonological, grammatical or in vocabulary, conversational topics and style when we judge it by gender. A deep social impact is behind this. Here women`s dialect is discussed through social context.

Keyword: *socio-linguistics, physiology, phonology, repetition, storytelling, metaphor, onomatopoeia, symbolism, code language.*

Introduction
We are here to discuss on Women's Dialect. But why are we choosing this topic? In this context we may remember that on 23rd September, 2011, UN women executive director Michelle Bachelet at the 39th Annual Commencement in 2011 at Laguardia Community college said that, the 21st century will be the century of girls and women. This is however a social economic and political revolution that can't happen without men and boys. Gender equality and women's empowerment are only part of a larger journey for social justice and democracy.

A journey for which our generation is better equipped than any generation before is the social and political revolution of 19th century.

Since middle Ages, only from 19th century, women saw the light of freedom. We can say that 20th century was the age of women's rights' movement. Even now in the 21st century inequality and discrimination is not completely abolished but women take an important role in every sphere of life.
The history of women's position in society left a deep impact in their language because society is the woven through social relationship and language is the tool for expressing the thought. The dominant approach argues that women have an inferior social position in society and the men dominate women. These social conditions are reflected in the use of male and female languages. Men dominate women linguistically and women are linguistically powerless. The preempted thinking of patriarchal society towards women is that women are marginal to the serious concerns of life. This is reflected both in the ways women are expected to speak and the ways in which women are spoken of. Women were deprived from the power of knowledge too. We can remember the essay "*Stree Sikhsha*" by Rabindranath Thakur.

Tagore wrote -

'মানুষ জানিতে চায়,সেটা তার ধর্ম; এইজন্য জগতের আবশ্যক অনাবশ্যক সকল তত্ত্বই তার কাছে বিদ্যা হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। সেই তার জানিতে চাওয়াকে যদি খোরাক না জোগাই কিংবা তাকে কুপথ্য দিয়া ভুলাইয়া রাখি তবে তার মানব প্রকৃতিকে দুর্বল করি, একথা বলাই বাহুল্য।'
কিন্তু, মানুষকে পুরা পরিমাণে মানুষ করিব আমাদের সকলের অন্তরের কথা নয়। যখন সর্ব সাধারণকে শিক্ষা দেওয়ার প্রস্তাব হয় তখন একদল শিক্ষিত লোক বলিয়া থাকেন, তাহা হইলে আমরা চাকর পাইব কোথা হইতে? বোধহয় শীঘ্রই এসম্বন্ধে রসিক লোকে প্রহসন লিখিবেন যাহাতে দেখা যাইবে - বাবুর চাকর কবিতা লিখিতেছে কিংবা নক্ষত্রলোকের নাড়িনক্ষত্র গণনা করিবার জন্য বড়োবড়ো অঙ্ক ফাঁদিয়া বসিয়াছে, বাবু তাহাকে ধুতি কোঁচাইবার জন্য ডাকিতে সাহস করিতেছেন না পাছে তার ধ্যানের ব্যাঘাত হয়। মেয়েদের সম্বন্ধেও সেই এককথা যে, তারা যদি লেখাপড়া শেখে তবে যে ঝাঁটাবঁটি ও শিলনোড়া বাবুদের ভাগে পড়ে।

অথচ ইহাদের তর্কের যুক্তিটা এইযে, মেয়েদের প্রকৃতি স্বতন্ত্র। কিন্তু তাই যদি হয় তবে তাহাদের ভয়টা কিসের? পৃথিবীকে আমরা চ্যাপটা ভাবি কিন্তু তাহা গোল, একথা জানিলে পুরুষের পৌরুষ কমেনা। তেমনি, বাসুকির মাথার উপর পৃথিবী নাই এখবরটা পাইলে মেয়েদের মেয়েলি ভাব নষ্ট হইবে একথা যদি বলি তবে বুঝিতে হইবে, মেয়েরা মেয়েই নয়, আমরা তাহাদিগকে অজ্ঞানের ছাঁচে ঢালিয়া মেয়ে করিয়া গড়িয়া তুলিয়াছি।' **(Tagore 1417)**

(mānush jānite chae tā tār dharma; eijonya jagater āboshyak anābashyak sakal tattwai tār kāche bidyā hoiyā uthiyāche. Sei tār jānite chaowāke Jodi khorāk nā jogāi kiṅbā tāke kupothya diyā bhulāiyā rākhi tabe tār mānab prakritike durbal kori, ekathā balāi bāhulya. kintu, mānushke purā porimāne mānush koribo āmāder sakaler antarer kathā noy. Jakhan sarba sādhāranke shikshā deoyār prostāb hoy takhan ekdal shikshita lok baliya thāken, tāhā haile āmarā cākar pāibo kothā haite? bodh hay sighrai e sambandhe rasikloke prahasan likhiben jāhāte dekhā jāibe – bābur cākar kabitā likhiteche kiṅbā naksatraloker nāṛinaksatra gananā koribār janya baṛobaṛo aṅka ph~ādiyā bosiyāche, bābu tāhāke dhuti k~ocāibār janya dākite sāhas karitechen na pache tār dhyāner byāghāt hay. Meyeder sambandheo sei ek kathā je, tārā Jodi lekhāpaṛā shekhe tabe je jh~ātāb~ati o shilnoṛā babuder bhāge paṛe. – athaca ihāder tarker juktitā ei je, meyeder prokriti swatantra. Kintu tāi Jodi hay tabe tāhāder bhaytā kiser? Prithibike amrā chāptā bhābi kintu tāhā gol, ekathā jānile purusher pourush kame nā. temoni, bāsukir māthār upor prithibi nāi e khabartā pāile meyeder meyeli bhāb nashta haibe e kathā jadi bali tabe bujhite haibe, meyerā meyei noy, āmrā tāhādigake agn~āner ch~āce dhāliyā meye koriyā goṛiya tuliyāchi. - **(Roman Transliteration)**

The crux of the matter in English is: "Human being has thirst for knowledge. For this reason both necessary and unnecessary information becomes knowledge to mankind. Needless to say, that if we do not pay heed to the urge for knowledge or coax him with rubbish, then we make mankind weak. But it is not desired by every person that mankind should be knowledgeable. When it comes to educating common people, a group of educated people would say that if everyone is

educated, where we shall get the servants. Soon the servants would sit to write poem or would be deep in studies of stars and planets and the *Babu"* will not dare to call the servant to crease his *dhoti*. Same thing applies for the women. If they are educated then the broom stick, kitchen knife and mortar and pestle will have to be taken up by the men. Logic for men is that women's nature is different. If that is so, why are we afraid? We think that the earth is flat but actually it is round. A man does not lose his manhood by knowing this. Similarly if women come to know that earth is not carried by the great serpent *Basuki*, will they lose their womanhood? Men had made them women by moulding them in the crucible of ignorance".

The vast field of research on social functions and significations of speech is now designated as socio-linguistics. There is a sharp difference in the social levels. The dialect of women also differs from the men. Women use questions, such as, instead of saying the weather is nice/fine; they often would say "How nice weather *na!"* Instead of saying she looks pretty, women often says, "How pretty she looks *na*! Directive approach changes into the form of question or request in women's dialect. Such as instead of saying 'do this', women often say 'can you do this'/ 'please do this'. These deviations exist because there are some social reasons. Fishman (1972) gave a survey report that points that women ask questions nearly three times as often as men. But all the linguists do not agree in this context. We can see that in women's dialect, they speak indirectly than directly due to their lower confidence level. There is story telling aspect in women's dialect such as 'you know when I was in school…. "etc. Women use code language to express physiological term with each other. Substitution is also a part of their language. Once in Indian and African society women could not utter the name or any letter present in the name of their husband, father-in-law, brother-in-law, mother-in-law etc. or of many gods/goddesses because the names are also given to the above mentioned kin groups. They would refer to those people by some other symbolic expressions. This is also a proof of verbal taboo in women's dialect. In African Zulu women have to substitute the forbidden sound Z. Instead of saying amanzi.., which means water, often would say Amandabi. Bengalee women named *Kattyani* cannot take her own name if her father-in- law is named as *Kartik Chandra*. Both the names have same sound,

so that was forbidden. Therefore when someone ask about her name, she would say 'ধর্ম মাসের নামে নাম'[2] [(dharma māser nāme nām: Roman Transliteration) meaning the name of the month of DHARMA i.e KARTIK). Another example came from field study is that as father-in-law's name is *Parikshit,* the daughter in law of that very man cannot utter the word '*Pariksha*' (examination). Through the phonological substitution, she says 'Tariksha' (the P substituted by the word T) and in this way she would maintained the social rule – not to take father-in-laws name[3]. Not only father-in-law in Jhargram district of West Bengal, elder sister-in-law's name also is prohibited to be taken directly by her junior sister-in-law in order to show respect. That is why a lady named *Sandhya* cannot be address her by her name by her junior sisters-in-law. Those Bengalee women cannot say evening time because evening is *Sandhya* in Bengali4. They speak about evening time by its Bengali synonym *sanjh*. Although it is very odd but that is the real. This gives us an idea about the custom of a society. Women's dialect projects more attention to social and family contexts.

The relationship within the family and also in the society is reflected in women's dialect. In Bengali we find terms like *Nonod* (sister-in- law), *Nondai* or *Nonas* (husband of sister-In-law), *Debor* (younger brother of the husband), *Bhasur* (elder brother of the husband), *Ja* (wife of the husband's brother), *Bhaj* (brother's wife) etc. are some of the words used to indicate conjugal relations in women's dialect only (Dutta 2011)5.

Euphemism, Metonymy, Metaphor, use of hints, exquisite colourful analysis, evaluative adjectives, use of modals and symbolism are some of the important features of women's dialect. The source of women's language or gesture or secret language is often in the field of physiology. This is not a typical womanly characteristic; but we can see it frequently in women's dialect. Lexical substitution and metaphor is used to make the dialect non communicative to those who are not desired to understand their communication. Girls do not stop by mentioning some objects colour, that is, just green or blue etc. They elaborate the colour by saying 'as green as banana leaf' or as 'green as mosses or such expression as sky blue, sea green, onion colour etc. Girls use inclusive plural pronouns, such as, we, us and our. Boys use exclusive, namely, I, we and me.

Onomatopoiea, that is, repeated use of same sound, as for example, in a Bengali poem, `ও পাড়ে লঙ্কাগাছটি রাঙা টুক্টুক্ করে'[6](Dutta Basu 2006) (o pāṛe lankā gāchti rān.ātuktukkare : roman transliteration), meaning on the other side the chilli plant is red in colour. Here '*the repetition of the Bengali words 'tuk' 'tuk' enhances the red colour*. In another Bengali poem, মা কাঁদেন মা কাঁদেন ধুলায় লুটায়ে[7] (mā k~āden mā kā~dendhulāylutāye: roman transliteration), meaning mother cries lying in the dirt. The words mother cries, that is 'ma Kanden' is repeated to express the profound grief of the mother.

Idiomatic use such as

'এ মাসটা থাক দিদি কেঁদে কঁকিয়ে
ও মাসেতে নিয়ে যাব পালকি সাজিয়ে
হাড় হল ভাজাভাজা মাস হল দড়ি
আয়রে আয় নদীর জলে ঝাঁপ দিয়ে পড়ি'[8],
(e māstā thāk didi k~ede k~kiye
o māsete niye jābo pālki sājiye
hāṛ hala bhājā bhājā mās hala daṛi
āyre āye nodir jale jh~āp diye por.i
- Roman Transliteration).

The poem means please sister spend the month with difficulty (crying profusely). I shall take you on a decorated palanquin next month. My bones are burnt out and my flesh is like a rope, let me die jumping into the river.

Use of riddles: women speak in riddles about the fakir's nature of begging

'দিলি ফাঁক করে
না দিলি রাগ করে'
(dili ph~āk kare
nā dili rāg kare : Roman Transliteration)

It indicates opening of fakir's bag at the time of receiving the alms.

Use of proverbs: a prostitute uses the proverb as given below.

'রূপ যৌবন যতদিন

পরের ভাতার ততদিন'[10]

(rup jouban jatadin

Parer bhātār tatadin: Roman Transliteration).

The proverb means that 'as long as there is youth and beauty, one can have company of someone else's husband'. There are some other features of women's dialect. There are some phonological and morphological differences too.

According to Haas, lower and middle class boys use possessives more frequently than do their female counter parts. On a survey during 1983, linguist Pamela Fishman said that women do much more work in keeping conversations going. They ask questions as if they were asking permission to speak, in between a conversation they were supporting men with their speech where men often maintained control over conversations. Eakins Burbara Waistbrook and Eakins R Gene in their book named '*Sex Difference in Human Communications*' focused on the softness of vocal cord and voice of women compared to men. According to them that is the reason for women's voice became much sweet and polite than those of men and some difference took place. Use of words loaded with emotion or interjections, very often create a great difference in women's dialect. There is always an era of soft-thinking related to women. We can think about 'Prometheus Unbound' (Shelly 1898)) in this context:

> "And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind
> As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
> On the wide earth; gentle radiant forms,
> From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;
> Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
> Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
> And changed to all which once they dared not be,
> Yet being now, made earth like heaven.'' [11]

Of course we see exclamatory words like, 'Oh God!', 'Oh!', 'Oh no!', Oh yes!', 'Aww' etc,. or prolonged tone of a sound of a certain word, such as – 'Soooo

sweet', 'Toooo cute', 'Veeeeery handsome' etc. There is more of the separate era of women's dialect. We can discuss about the change of women's dialect too. Now a days Bengali women says frequently, *sarbat* but once they throw away the word as this *iskhottai* bad. They use the word *pana, meaning sarbat,* such as, *belerpana*, *chinirpana* etc (Dutta 2012). The best friend is now referred as *bestiii* but once it was expressed by saying *soi in Bengali*, and the husband of *bestii* was *soya*. The children of *bestii* are called other *soi maa*[13] (Misra Chowdhury 2019). Earlier as well as now also middle aged women address or call someone in Bengali as *kila, ha la, la, kiga ,ha ga* etc. In Brahma cult the husbands were called as swami *bhrata*. Though the other were making joke on it. In the famous Tagore family women do not use the word cutting of vegetables. They do not say *tarkari kata,* kata means to cut down, and that is very cruel. They instead said, *tarkari kota (Deb 1397)*[14].

Auto Yesperson, Edward Sapir, M. Han, J. L. Fischer, J. A. Fishman, Merry Has, F. Ekka, Robin Lakoff, M. R. Key, Sukumar Sen, Geniffer Coats and many other linguists add many important facts to this matter. We cannot judge women's dialect from one sided gender angle. It also plays a vital role in Ethno linguistics; sociological, psychological and Anthropological linguistics. We can notice the change of women's dialect now a day, especially in the indifference of educated women's dialect with yhose of men's dialect. The society changes a lot. Globalization has left a deep impact on this real as well. But the women's approach is not the same as those of men. Not only the approach but also their accent, vocabulary; which contains very large number of intensive words and empathic particles differ. Physiologically a woman's voice is sharp compared to a man's voice in general. Therefore we can say that the difference occurred in women's dialect due to several factors, such as, women's separate body structure, the history of evolution of women's freedom, education and the womanly characteristics.

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