Grammatical gender as the basis to create gender metaphors in Indian political discourse

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Abstract

This paper is based on a study that explores the role of grammatical gender in the personification of abstract concepts in contemporary Indian political discourse where Hindi is the predominantly used language. Hindi has a two-gender system and the mapping of bio-logical sex and grammatical gender is strengthened by highly inflected sentence-structure which reinforces gender-marking all through the sentence and discourse. The present paper analyses the construction of three particular concepts (in Hindi) from contemporary Indian socio-political discourse – *mehengaai* ('inflation'; fem.), *vikaas* ('development'; masc.) and *bhaasha* ('language'; fem.) – in 10 texts, to study the role played by grammatical gender in the metaphorical construction of these concepts. The analysis shows how the cultural frame of patriarchy and 'grammatical gender-biological sex' mapping interact to create these gender metaphors. The larger cultural frame provides access to culture-specific mental models of man-woman relations, which is mapped on to masculine and feminine nouns to produce gender-based personification metaphors.

Dieser Artikel basiert auf einer Studie, welche die Bedeutung des grammatikalischen Geschlechts bei der Personifizierung von abstrakten Konzepten im gegenwärtigen indischen politischen Diskurs untersucht, in welchem vorwiegend die Sprache Hindi gebraucht wird. Hindi verfügt über ein Zweigeschlechtersystem und die Zuordnung des biologischen und grammatikalischen Geschlechts wird durch eine hochgradig gebeugte Satzstruktur verstärkt. Die Geschlechtskennzeichnung wird durch Satz und Diskurs bekräftigt. Der vorliegende Artikel analysiert die Konstruktion dreier spezifischer Konzepte (der Sprache Hindi) im gegenwärtigen indischen gesellschaftspolitischen Diskurs – *mehengaai* (Inflation; fem.), *vikaas* (Entwicklung; mask.) und *bhaasha* (Sprache; fem.) – in zehn Texten, um die Bedeutung des grammatikalischen Geschlechts in der metaphorischen Konstruktion dieser Konzepte zu untersuchen. Die Analyse zeigt, wie der kulturelle Rahmen des Patriarchats und die Verknüpfung des biologischen mit dem grammatikalischen Geschlecht bei der Erschaffung dieser Geschlechtermetaphern zusammenspielen. Der größere kulturelle Rahmen bietet Zugang zu kulturspezifischen mentalen Modellen eines Mann-Frau-Vergleichs, welcher maskulinen und femininen Substantiven zugeordnet ist, um geschlechtsbasierte personifizierte Metaphern zu bilden.

Introduction

Metaphorical language and thought have been explored in the domain of gender from various dimensions. Text and discourse analysis in literary criticism has brought out substantial discussion on gender-based metaphorisation while feminist literature has also focused on this aspect from several perspectives (e.g.

Garcia-Fernandez 2017; Charteris-Black 2012). Furthermore, the interaction of grammatical gender with cognition has been studied across many languages (e.g. Sera and others 2002; Boroditsky/Philips/Schmidt 2003; Pavlidou/Alvanoudi 2013). However, metaphor grounded in grammatical gender-based categorisation of nouns has so far not been explored except in some studies as an offshoot of the discussion on other concepts like categorisation. One of the seminal works that addressed this linkage was Lakoff's discussion of Dyirbal noun classification (studied originally by Dixon in 1967 and published in 1972) in *Women, Fire and Dangerous things* (1987), where most of the dangerous or harmful things are located in the same category of nominals as women. A more nuanced discussion of the grammatical gender of nouns playing a role in their metaphorical conception as male or female, was carried out by Romaine (1998). Romaine shows how cities and countries, often found to be grammatically feminine in Indo-European languages, are portrayed as females, even in a language like English which supposedly has a 'natural gender' system in its modern form. In a somewhat different vein Drzazga/Stroinska (2012) show how the grammatical gender of 'death' in different languages affects the way it is personified in translations. Sarangi (2009) brings out the *feminization of languages* in India's post-independence discourse by Hindi and Urdu literary writers in comparing the social status of the two languages. Some studies delve into the interaction of lexical choices with gender metaphors. Moreover, Montashery (2013) shows how common processes of using nicknames and sexual evaluation of women are based on metaphors grounded in the conception of women as weak, vulnerable 'objects'. Rezanova/Nekrasova/Shilyaev's (2014) study demonstrates the effect of grammatical gender of objects on the referential choice of metaphorical names to male and female humans. On the other hand, there have also been numerous studies analyzing metaphor in political discourse. Musolff (2014, 2017) and Perrez/Reuchamp (2014) among others have discussed at length the nature and strands of metaphors in political discourse. This ranges from the role of 'body-politic' in political metaphors to other cultural dimensions in interpreting political metaphors. Nevertheless, none of these works so far has tapped on the process of metaphorisation of nouns based on their grammatical gender in political discourse. Hence, this paper attempts to do so by analyzing the

construction of three nouns that are commonly used in the contemporary Indian political discourse- *mehengaai* ('inflation'; fem.), *bhaasha* ('language'; fem.) and *vikaas* ('development'; masc.).

The paper is generally divided into four sections. The first section sets up the cultural-historical and political context of the Indian society in which the socio-logical dimensions of gender interact with specific aspects of the contemporary Indian political discourse. The second section gives a theoretical background comprising the role of grammatical gender in cognition, manifestation of grammatical gender in Hindi and in the literature on personification metaphor. The third section discusses the method applied and data studied while the last section puts forth the analysis and discussion of the chosen texts, linking them back to theoretical constructs developed, followed by a conclusion.

1. The Context of the study

1.1 Rising symbolism, Hindi domination and its implications

In the last few decades and very rapidly in the last few years, the political discourse in India has increasingly turned to symbolism and metaphors. The symbols employed in the political discourse range in their historicity from ancient to contemporary times. Ancient mythological texts provide reference to various deities and demons like *Ram, Siita, Taadka, Raavan* etc. Though India is known to be a country of great diversity ranging from languages to food or ethnicities, the center of political power has been the Northern region which happens to be the Hindi[1] belt of the country as also containing the region with some of the most populated states. Consequently, the political discourse is usually dominated by Hindi, even if a number of contemporary political leaders belong to other regions. Additionally, India is a predominantly Hindu society, with 80.5% Hindu population (India census 2011). Thus, most mythological

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[1] 'Hindi' here refers to the 'standard' variety which is spoken in Delhi, and parts of the Northern states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. The Hindi belt though is constituted by numerous languages that are syntactically similar to and mutually comprehensible with Hindi but have their own speech communities.

characters extracted from Hindu mythological texts present a natural choice according to this dispersion in creating a metaphorical discourse. Some such instances include equating a political leader to a deity or opposition leaders to demons or invoking a Hindu identity using the virtuous images of female characters. Another class of symbols has arisen from the time of independence of the country from colonial rule. These are related to metaphors conceptualising ideas of nation or country, patriotism, national language etc. which gave rise to metaphors like **Bhaarat-mata** ('mother' India), **maatri-bhaasha** (literally 'mother language') and soldiers as 'sons' of the 'mother-land'. The third category includes the relatively recent symbols arising from more recent socio-political contexts like development, economy and foreign policies. Of late, the taglines and predominant agendas in political parties' manifestos too have become stand-alone symbols. Contemporary political discourse thus uses symbolic resources from various eras of the country's cultural-historical past, and this time-frame is fluid. Any political metaphor can invoke cultural-historical frames and symbolisms from different eras. For instance, Sarangi (2009) discusses the metaphorical conceptualisation of languages as 'women' in the texts of Hindi and Urdu writers between 1880 and 1940. The personification of these languages (referred to as 'language women' by Sarangi) is rooted in the culture of (female) courtesans from 16th–18th century Mughal rule over India. The texts that Sarangi analyses treat the two languages – Hindi (representing Hindus) and Urdu (representing Muslims) – as courtesans who are trying to woo clients (Hindu and Muslim populations). In such contexts, it is understandable that Hindi lexicon and grammatical structure shape the form taken by Indian political discourse in a considerable way.

1.2 Gender as one of the foundational concepts in the Indian society

Given the hierarchical structure of the Indian society in terms of caste, class and gender, most discourse genres reflect these categories. Indian society and politics thrive on caste but gender figures in the discourse more subtly, particularly when used metaphorically. Gender forms a much deeper division among humans than any other parameter (like caste, class, ethnicity) in all societies, resulting in an expansive network of cultural frames based on gender in the Indian society. This

network is historically and socially rooted in religion and mythology and permeates – in complex ways – creating caste, class and gender hierarchies. Across India, but more rigidly in the northern states though (Dyson/Moore 1983), female sex is considered secondary, inferior and fit to be dictated and governed by male sex. The manifestation of this larger frame comes in various forms including the unwanted status of the girl-child, justifying the abuse and violence against women based on the subservient and relativized status of women in family structures. Man is considered as the default human and therefore the default agent of the actions and events taking place in the human world. Women become the 'other', the 'object' or the 'dehumanized' being. Dehumanization of women occurs via a range of means and processes. One such example is presented by Tipler and Ruscher (2017). They describe how women are perceived in sexual terms using a metaphorical 'predator/prey' framework: the strong, independent and aggressive women who are conceived as 'uncontrollable' are located on the 'predator' end of the scale while those who are seen as gullible and controllable are located on the 'prey' end. However, both are dehumanized. In this paper, I propose a similar approach to look at the construction of gendered bodies of women (and men by contrast) via moral-ethical codes of conduct arising from of the cultural-historical context of the Indian society. On this scale, women are sacrificing, subservient, tradition-bound and powerless on one end and free-spirited, independent, dominant, un-controllable on the other end. An important dimension here, as in Tipler and Ruscher's (2017) analysis, is the physicality and sexuality of the female. A woman is constantly assessed by her looks and physical dimensions. Assuming this scale to have a 'positive' (desirable in society) and a 'negative' (not desirable in society) end, women who conform to the expected values are framed as belonging to the positive end of the scale and those who falter on any assessment criteria, on the negative end. Thus, in this assessment scale, there is hardly any scope for inter-mediary positions. Males, however, are not subjected to moral-ethical scales in terms of sexuality, physicality and relativized identities. Dusche (2014: 233) discusses how this hierarchical code of moral conduct can be traced back to the religious discourse of Ancient India which more often than not treats women as properties of men with whom they are related by blood or marriage. Although

the construction of 'masculinity' has its own scale in terms of power and control, it is not as pervasive as that applicable to women in everyday and cultural contexts.

Against this background of the Indian politics and the place of gender in Indian society, it is interesting to see how the linguistic structure of Hindi plays out in this complex interplay. Linguistic structure reflects socio-cultural norms in the marking of gender (but usually not caste or class) in some way or the other in all languages. In languages with grammatical gender, the gender-based category-sation of humans is extended to animals and inanimate entities. Personification of inanimate nouns in most literary genres of Hindi including political discourse shows a substantial correspondence with the grammatical gender of these nouns (Mishra 2018a). Thus, the underlying norms and principles of human gender politics may well be mapped on to this extended categorisation (of non-humans) based on gender, and the construction of nouns based on grammatical gender is expected to follow this rationale. In brief, the paper investigates the way this metaphorical mapping works linguistically.

2.   Theoretical background

2.1 Grammatical gender across world's languages and in Hindi

Nouns form the most versatile grammatical category since it denotes living beings/things/objects/ideas in the world. Grammatical gender is one of the three main features (phi features) of nouns. Languages can have 'natural' gender systems where nouns carry the same gender corresponding to the biological sex. Inanimate objects carry neuter gender by default. The other major type of gender system is grammatical, wherein all nouns are assigned a gender category but the assignment is not based on the natural gender of the noun, even though humans are mostly assigned the grammatical gender corresponding to their biological sex. According to Corbett, "gender systems may have sex as a component, as in languages with masculine and feminine genders; but, equally, sex may be irrelevant" (1991: 749). There are languages with more than 20 gender types but most languages with grammatical gender manifest either two (masculine and feminine) or three (masculine, feminine and neuter) genders.

When a language has only masculine and feminine grammatical gender, inanimate objects are also attributed one of these genders. Hindi is such a language. All nouns in Hindi are either masculine or feminine, and other sentential components like adjective, verb, intensifier, possessive etc. are marked for gender in agreement with the gender of the subject noun. However, if there is a postposition with the subject, the next noun in the sentence commands the agreement on a syntactic level. If all nouns in a sentence are followed by postpositions, the verb manifests default masculine singular form.

2.1.1 General phonological pattern in masculine and feminine nouns in Hindi

Although gender is arbitrarily assigned to nouns in Hindi, some typical phonological patterns are found. These basic patterns in the grammatical gender-based categorisation of nouns are as follows (Agnihotri 2007 and Kachru 2006):

a. Most 'ii'-ending nouns are grammatically feminine,

b. Most consonant-ending and 'u/uu'-ending nouns are masculine,

c. 'aa'-ending nouns are more often masculine than feminine.

There are exceptions in all these patterns. For instance, *paanii* (water) is a masculine noun with 'ii'-ending, *bahu* (daughter-in-law) is a feminine noun with 'u'-ending, *bhaasha* (language) is a feminine noun with 'aa'-ending. Noun pairs with feminine and masculine counterpart can be either lexical, as in *bhaai* (brother) and *behen* (sister) or they can exist in phonologically-marked pairs where consonantal or 'aa' ending marks the masculine form while 'ii' or 'nii'-ending marks the feminine form (examples discussed in section 2.1.2).

2.1.2 Sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic manifestations of grammatical gender in Hindi

Besides general phonological patterns, the gender-based nominal categorisation in Hindi has socio and psycho-linguistic dimensions such as indicated in the following examples:

a. In pairs of masculine and feminine form, the '*aa*'-ending or consonant-ending form is mostly masculine while the '*ii*'-ending form is feminine. In such cases, the

feminine form coincides with the diminutive form. Examples of such noun pairs (Kellogg 1876 and Guru 1920) are depicted in the following table:

S. No.	Noun (English)	Masc. form	Fem. and Diminutive form
1.	Drain	*naal-aa* ('big drain')	*naal-ii* ('small drain')
2.	Pile	*dher* ('big pile')	*dher-ii* ('small pile')
3.	Stick	*dand-aa* ('thick stick')	*dand-ii* ('thin stick')
4.	Rope	*rass-aa* ('thick rope')	*rass-ii* ('thin rope')

Table 1: Examples of Hindi nouns with masculine and feminine forms

As seen in table 1, the masculine counterpart is bigger or stronger than the feminine counterpart. None of such pairs manifests the opposite semantic associations. This observation has been made by several scholars of Hindi. For instance, Kelogg (1969: 82) observes that one of the classes of nouns that are considered masculine in Hindi is "[n]ames of large, or coarse and roughly made objects, as contrasted with small, or more finely made objects of the same kind". He then goes on to give examples of the kind shown in the above table. Guru (1920: 255) makes a similar observation with regard to size/strength related properties of objects giving rise to feminine or masculine endings. Jurafsky (1996: 536) describes how denoting the female gender is one of the many semantic functions that diminutives serve in many languages including Hindi. He also elaborates (ibid.: 546) how the use of diminutives for female gender leads to the formation of the conceptual metaphor WOMEN ARE CHILDREN/SMALL THINGS which leads to the concept SMALL THINGS ARE WOMEN in some languages.

b. **Proper names of male and female humans** are often borrowed from grammatically masculine and feminine nouns for certain semantic classes of nouns like natural elements, some emotions and sweets. Some such examples are:

Tulsii ('holy basil'; fem.)

Shaurya ('courage'; masc.)

Imartii ('an Indian sweet'; fem.)

Suuraj ('sun'; masc.)

These socio and psycho-linguistic patterns associated with the occurrence of masculine and feminine nouns show that there is an underlying mapping of the grammatical gender and biological sex that, moreover, guide native speakers regarding the associations they form with nouns across domains of language use.

2.2 Experimental studies showing grammatical gender effects on cognition

Most studies exploring grammatical gender effects on cognition have reported positive results. This includes tasks like voice attribution, adjective assignment, triad matching etc. One of the first detailed studies in this domain was conducted by Sera, Berge and del Castillo (1994) in which they found that speakers of languages with grammatical gender rated objects as masculine or feminine in correspondence with their grammatical gender. Another study by Sera et al. (2002) found this effect with voice attribution too. Konishi (1993) found gender effects by way of association of masculine nouns with higher potency. Borodisky, Schmidt and Philips (2003) conducted a test with bilingual Spanish, German and English speakers. The task involved remembering proper names, half of which were assigned in accordance with grammatical gender of the objects and the other half opposite to the grammatical gender. They found a higher performance on names consistent with grammatical gender. Saalbach, Imai and Schalk (2012) conducted a study with very young German and Japanese children. German is a language with grammatical gender while Japanese does not have grammatical gender. They found that German children made inferences about features of animals (using toy animal) based on the grammatical gender while Japanese children based their inferences on general properties of animal (species). For example, the experimenters told the children that all 'Daddy' animals had a BROMA (imagined substance) inside. Then they showed them the (toy) animals and asked which of them had a BROMA inside. German children tended to generalize this property to all animals (toys) that had grammatically masculine

names in German but not to those with grammatically feminine names. Japanese children did not show any such bias.

These studies show that grammatical gender is not a naïve morphological feature of nouns that manifests itself only by way of agreement-markers on other sentential components. Rather, for the speakers of languages that have grammatical gender, it seems that the categorisation of nouns and hence of the corresponding objects bear an impact on the conception of animate and inanimate objects.

2.3 Studies showing grammatical gender effects in Hindi

The only published study exploring grammatical gender effects in Hindi is by Mukherjee (2018). The study explores the effect of grammatical gender in first/ second language on the other language learnt. Hindi as first language is seen to influence a second language without grammatical gender. As observed in the introduction, there have not been many studies exploring grammatical gender effects at discourse level, much less so in Hindi. Sarangi (2009) brings out a detailed diachronic analysis of the feminization of languages (Hindi and Urdu) but without engaging with the dimension of grammatical gender-based categorisation in this personification. Mishra (2018b) observes that personified characters of animals in Hindi texts from various genres including children's literature in school texts (NCERT 2005) are constructed based on their grammatical gender. This is executed via the use of constructional frames grounded in stereotypical roles assigned to men and women in different socio-political domains like division of labor, decision-making, power and control. The grammatical gender-biological sex mapping is so deeply entrenched that in one of these texts (grade III, pg. 62–68) with personified characters of a monkey (grammatically masculine in Hindi) and cats (grammatically feminine), instructions for teachers clearly state assigning the role of monkey to a boy and that of the cats to the girls, for role-play. In another text (grade II, pg. 19–22), cat and lion are personified as sister and brother living together. The brother (lion) just orders, eats and sleeps while the sister (cat) does all household work and is often hungry as nothing is left for her. Mishra (2018a) brings out how cultural frames that ground the man-woman discourse and relation are employed to

create humor based on pairs of grammatically masculine and feminine objects and animals (species). For instance, one of the jokes is based on the 'marriage' of a potato (grammatically masculine in Hindi) and a cabbage (grammatically feminine in Hindi). The cultural frame used is 'first night'.

From these studies, it seems that the 'culture-specific frames' used to map grammatical gender and biological sex without explicitly stating so, it becomes easy to use them metaphorically. Thus, these studies hint to the need to identify the culture-specific frames which ground this mapping in different discourse genres and grammatical gender-based metaphors which this paper explores.

2.4   Personification metaphor, culture and politics

Hamilton (2002) traces back the first documented discussion of the term "personification" in rhetorical tradition by Erasmus of Rotterdam who used the terms "prosopopoeia" and "prosopographia" – the latter for attributing human qualities to understand abstract concepts like justice. Most allegories found in the literary works of 16th–18th century can be seen as instances of personification. In cognitive linguistic tradition, personification has been treated as one of the basic ontological metaphors by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Lakoff and Turner (1989) discuss at length the personification of 'Death' as the reaper, devourer, coachman etc. using what they call a 'single unified general process'. Lakoff and Johnson, for example, use the example of "Inflation has robbed me of my savings" (1980: 33) to emphasise that in this case, "inflation" is not just a person but a specific kind of person – a devourer, a thief. Although it is one of the most widely used metaphorical tools across discourse genres, it has not been treated at par with the other conceptual metaphors. Commonplace concepts like 'Life', 'Death' and 'Time' are frequently personified in everyday and literary discourse but not really treated as such. MacKay (1986) emphasised that personification may be seen as the 'prototypical' metaphor which, in addition to its usually recognized instances, can also occur as disguised in the form of metonymy and spatial metaphors. Of particular relevance to this study is MacKay's observation about personification based on nominal gender categorisation: "In short, if nominal

gender-marking is another instance of personification in disguise, it may help to pass on a set of culture-specific sex-role attitudes" (MacKay 1986: 102).

The cultural dimension of metaphor is a subject taken up seriously only in recent research. Since Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is conceived to be grounded in universal processes of cognition, it relegates cultural context to a peripheral position in the discourse on metaphor. But Kövecses (2005) and Musolff (2017), among others, have emphasized the culture-specific interpretation of conceptual metaphor. Musolff (2014) conducted an elaborate cross-linguistic (also cross-national) study exploring the body-politic metaphor as applied by participants to define their own countries. The study showed clearly different conceptual structures used by participants from different regions of the world (hence different cultures).

In the Indian culture, particularly the North-Indian Hindi-speaking culture, both genders have been employed for personifications, for instance, the Earth as the 'mother', most of the heavenly bodies as 'male Gods', 'death' as both male (in the form of 'Death God') and female (the actual event of death). A vast majority of these personifications are in accordance with grammatical gender, as is also the case for animal characters and inanimate objects. A specific case is the anthropomorphised animal characters acquiring male/female sex in accordance with the default species gender, in children's literature among other literary genres (Mishra 2018b).

In the contemporary use of metaphor, social media appear to play a major role. The use of social media including internet memes, improvisation of film songs and dialogues is now commonplace in creating sarcasm and satire which are the predominant literary genres in the political discourse in India (Kulkarni 2017). It is common for one political party or leader to take on the other party or leader mostly targeting the negative aspects. This often involves invoking metaphors grounded in the cultural-historical context, to strike a chord with the masses and sway them in their favor. In this process, often a range of metaphors including personifications are employed by both political leaders, the press and the common masses.

3.   Method and data

3.1 Choosing personified nouns

For the present study, a 3-step procedure was followed, as discussed below. The third step had three sub-steps of filtration.

I. A list of issues and themes highlighted in the manifestos of the two major political parties – Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and Indian National Congress (INC, popularly known as Congress) – taken from the last parliamentary election (held in 2014) were listed after consulting the official websites of the political parties and some of the leading news sources that follow socio-political news: The Indian Express, Times of India and The Economic Times. While The Indian Express and Times of India are popular Indian newspapers with the latter available in both Hindi and English, The Economic Times is an Indian newspaper with a focus on economic news also reporting inter alia political news. Additionally, main events of each year from 2014-2018 were followed from the same websites and The Wire, which is an online news source. This time-period was taken because the use of social media in generating and fueling political discourse has grown multifold during this time, one plausible reason being the impetus on digitization by the present regime that came in power in 2014. According to a study by Wani and Alone (2015) on the impact of social media on elections, there was an increase of 28% in the number of internet users in India from June 2013 to June 2014.

Four broad areas along with major sub-themes were deduced from the party manifestos and the major political news of each year.

A. Constitutional values including secularism, social justice (in terms of caste, class and gender), minority rights.

B. Growth and development. This includes both social and economic development. Social development covers basic services for the masses like health, education, electricity and water supply in rural areas, construction of roads, dams etc. Economic development includes employment generation, inflation control, foreign policy, GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth.

C. National security and patriotism. This includes all matters related to defense (with a special focus on foreign policy towards Pakistan). The second part

'patriotism' is an explicit agenda of one of the parties (BJP) which also comprises the creation of a Hindu state and advancing the *Hindutva* ideology with all its paraphernalia like Ram temple, cow-protection, Hindi as national language etc.

D. Some miscellaneous themes that cropped up intermittently raised by any of the political parties and caught up on social media to gain the status of a metaphor overnight. For instance, one implicit agenda for both the parties is a counterattack on the policies of the other and presenting itself as 'clean'. The topmost sub-theme in this category is corruption, thus highlighting the fraud that each of the two parties has been associated with.

II. From these four areas, a list of nouns was prepared representing themes and issues that became the catchwords. For instance, social equity gave rise to *aarakshan* ('reservation') for the socially backward castes. RTI (Right to Information) became the buzzword under the agenda to fight corruption in offices. The final list consisted of 20 nouns (see appendix 1).

III. This list of 22 nouns was subjected to a three-step filtration process. First, only those nouns were considered that were native to Hindi ('Hindustani' to be more precise). This was done because the grammatical gender of the nouns borrowed from English does not manifest consistently in Hindi. This step filtered out 5 nouns. In the second step, those nouns were considered that were explicitly personified i.e. attributed human properties in any kind of text on the internet including memes, jokes and cartoons. This was done by typing each word from the list in the search bar and looking for web results including images. This reduced the number of items to 9. In the third step, it was checked whether the personification was gendered and if it was, whether there were at least three instances of gendered personification for each item. This last step ensured that the attribution of gender was not random.

Finally, only three nouns were found which were personified and gendered in more than two instances each, one grammatically masculine and two grammatically feminine. As the internet is a very dynamic and vast space where material is added every day, the texts were chosen in order of their appearance in the search results, subject to the basic requirement of gendered personification. For *vikaas* and *bhaasha*, more personifications were obtained than *mehengaai*, so 4 texts each

were taken for these two nouns. But on closer examination, one of the texts for *bhaasha* was found to have a very feeble case of personification and was therefore dropped. So, 4 texts with the personification of *vikaas* and 3 each with the personification of *bhaasha* and *mehengaai* were obtained. Texts in this study refer to both visuals and the written language. The texts were analysed to explore the interplay between grammatical gender of the nouns and their construction as gendered entities via personification on one hand and the role of cultural-historical frames providing the textual construction on the other. This gave a total of 10 texts containing these three nouns. Although this corpus may not be enough to infer substantial generalisations about the pattern of gendered cognition based on the grammatical gender of nouns, it nevertheless serves well to explore some relevant dimensions of the interplay between social and grammatical gender in specific cultural-historical and political contexts of a speech community.

3.2 A morphological sketch of the nouns under study and socio-political context of the concepts they represent

All three nouns (*bhaasha, mehengaai* and *vikaas*) have their origin in Pali-Prakrit languages (Turner 1969) that were predominant among the general masses from 3rd century BC–10th century AD in large parts of North India.

a. *bhaasha* ('language'; fem.): *bhaasha* means 'speech' or 'language' (Turner 1969: 540). The root-word *bhaasha* is seldom used alone in the Indian socio-political discourse. It is mostly used in the context of *rashtra-bhaasha* ('national language') or *maatri-bhaasha* ('mother tongue'). As India is home to more than 1369 mother tongues according to the latest census (2011) conducted by the Indian government, language as a marker of social and political identity has been the bone of contention since the conception of independent India. The division of the Indian territory into states after India's independence was carried out on a linguistic basis in 1956 (Sengupta 2014). But the major conflict was grounded in the two major religious communities – Hindus and Muslims. Languages symbolizing the two religions (Hindi and Urdu respectively) played a semiotic mediation in this divide, particularly in North India. Alongside, the adoption of English as the language of social advancement also began during this time. This situation gave rise to metaphorical comparisons between languages. In the decades following

independence, the comparison was intensified between Hindi (symbolizing Hindu identity) and Urdu (symbolizing Muslim identity). Comparison of Hindi and English has gained prominence in the last three-four decades, with the rise of English as the medium of instruction and official work. The texts chosen focus on the latter comparison but use *bhaasha* as an abstraction from its various forms.

b. *mehengaai* ('inflation'/'dearness'; fem.): The noun *mehengai* has been derived from the adjective *mahanga* i.e. 'expensive' which in turn has evolved from *mahargha* in Sharyaseni Prakrit variety. *Mahargha* is formed from *maha* ('big/high') + *argha* ('value/cost') (Turner 1969: 572). For the last two decades, inflation has been a major factor for the downfall of governments led by any political party. Whether it is a hike in prices of everyday consumption products like milk, vegetables etc. or that of petrol and diesel, 'inflation' has become a topic of everyday discourse of the masses, resulting in an opportunity for the opposition (political) party to attack the ruling regime. Thus, for both politicians and the common people, *mehengaai* is something to be scared of.

c. *vikaas* ('development'; masc.): *vikaas* was originally used to mean expanding, flowering or growth (Turner: 578). The word is used in many contexts like physical and mental growth of human beings and of the development of spaces in more economic and infrastructural terms. Although development of the country as a whole and of the various sectors like education, health and infrastructure has always been an implicit agenda of all the political parties, it was adopted as one of the most popular catchwords of the present political leadership in their 2014 election campaign and a major parameter of the constant evaluation of governance thereafter. This resulted in *vikaas* becoming a popular topic of political satire.

3.3 Details of the texts analysed

The analysed texts are mostly visual along with written text. All the texts present political satire, where the gendered personification of the noun represents a basic ingredient in the satire.

The details of these texts are provided in the following table:

S. No.	Noun	Grammatical Gender	Mode (Visual/ Textual/Both)	Description of the texts
1.	*bhaasha* ('language')	Feminine	a. Both	1. Hindi as the 'typical Indian woman' (wife or girlfriend) and English as an 'enchanting young girl' the man is attracted to.
			b. Both, but predominantly visual	2. Hindi as an 'old-fashioned, loyal Indian wife/fiancée' and English as the 'smart, modern girlfriend' the man is flirting with.
			c. Both	3. Hindi as the 'neglect-ted, poor mother' and English as the 'modern aunt'.
2.	*mehengaai* ('inflation')	Feminine	a. Both	4. Inflation as the 'flirta-tious woman' running after the present head of the state (male) while the previous head of the state (male) enjoys watching.
			b. Both	5. Inflation as the 'inde-cently dressed voluptuous woman' flaunting her power.
			c. Textual	6. Inflation referred to as a 'witch'.

3.	*vikaas* ('development')	Masculine	a. Textual	7. Development referred to as the 'desired son', in whose waiting two undesired daughters (GST- Goods and Services Tax, and demonetization) were born.
			b. Both	8. A woman asking a political leader when 'development', the 'long-awaited desired son' will be born, in whose wait a daughter has taken birth.
			c. Both	9. US president Obama consoling India's Prime Minister and calling out his 'lost son' (development) to return.
			d. Both	10. Development as the 'lost son', being requested to return home by all family members (members of the ruling party).

Table 2: Overview of the texts based on personifications of the three nouns popularly used in contemporary Indian political discourse.

4.   Analysis and Discussion

This section first presents a detailed analysis of the personification of each noun and then a summary. The texts have been analysed in terms of the cultural-cognitive frames and they are grounded in the specific gender-associated features mapped on to the personifications by way of grammatical gender-biological sex mapping. For all the three nouns, each text is separately discussed followed by a discussion of the pattern of personification of the specific noun in all the texts.

4.1 Texts personifying the noun *bhaasha* ('language'; fem.)

Text 1

Text 1 consists of the visual (fig. 1) along with the written text which is the first line of a song from a Hindi film.

Fig. 1: Hindi personified as a helpless, traditional Indian woman and English as the confident, modern woman (see Corpus for source).

In text 1, the image (fig. 1) shows Hindi personified as the poor woman who looks on helplessly as her husband/fiancé (personifying the 'system' that uses language for its functioning) goes after 'English' personified by the other woman who looks younger, more modern and confident. The text shows Hindi expressing her sorrow using words borrowed from a Bollywood song.

(1) *gairon   pe   karam, apnon pe sitam,   ae   jaan-e-wafa   ye*
    zulm   na

    strangers on   bliss   own   on torture O   darling,   this
    injustice not

    kar

    do

    "Blissful with strangers and torturing your own, O darling don't
    do this injustice."

The song in the movie depicts the hero cozying up to a beautiful girl whom he
has just met while his fiancée, whom he is ignoring, looks on helplessly and sings
this song where she implores him to not do such injustice that is torturing his
'own' (by ignoring publicly) while pampering and indulging 'others'. The text
uses the cultural frame of the helplessness of a typical Indian woman when her
husband/fiancé ignores her in favor of another woman whom he finds more
attractive. This frame is then mapped on to the language situation of India where
Hindi, the one that is supposedly 'own' is ignored by the system/speakers while
English, the 'other', is valued more as 'she' is more attractive (due to its inter-
national status and value in job market). The central metaphor is the
personifycation of LANGUAGES ARE WOMEN which is grounded in the grammatical
gender of *bhaasha* ('language') being feminine. It creates a culture-specific
metaphor which maps the construction of woman in these two roles (a neglected
wife without agency and a pampered girlfriend with agency) to grammatically
feminine languages.

Text 2

Text 2 (see fig. 2) does not contain much text except labelling the two women as
Hindi and English and the poster with Hindi *Diwas* (Hindi 'day') written on it.

Fig. 2: Hindi personified as a traditional Indian woman and English as the 'modern' woman of 'foreign' origin (see Corpus for source).

Text 2 is similar to text 1 in its overall framing with the man (personifying the 'system' or the 'speakers') getting attracted to the more 'modern' woman even when betrothed/married to the 'traditional' woman.

Text 3

In text 3 (see fig. 3), Hindi is depicted as an old, sick mother in torn clothes who is being brought on to the stage, to be crowned and garlanded on Hindi day. The 'son' (representing the native Hindi speakers) requests 'aunt' English who is crowned and sitting on a throne, to get off the throne for just that one day.

Fig. 3: Hindi personified as the poor, neglected mother and English as the royal, powerful aunt (see Corpus for source).

The visual here once again shows Hindi (personified as the mother) in a tattered, neglected state while English (personified as the 'aunt') is the royal woman, the one holding the (socio-political) power.

The text in the picture is as follows:

(2) *Aunty ! pleez   utariye !   sirf   aaj   mummy   ko   sinhasan   par   baithana*

Aunt   please   get down   only   today   mother   Dat.   throne   on   make sit

hai... mala   pehnana   hai

be   garland   make wear   be

"Aunty ! Please get down. Only for today, have to seat mother on the throne and garland her."

This text, which is again based on the contrast between Hindi and English, differs from text 1 and text 2 in terms of the roles assigned to the languages. However, the overall frame remains same, in terms of the scale of comparison as well as the gender of the personifications, including the 'agent' (the 'speakers' or the 'state' who sanction the use of language and hence its worth).

As discussed in section 3.2, the socio-political context in which these per-sonifications of language are situated works on the hierarchical status of the two languages. All the three texts personifying the two languages draw from the fact that English, although still seen as the language of 'foreigners', is valued and preferred over Hindi because of its demand in the domain of employment, technology and higher education. It hence 'wins' over the speakers whose native language is Hindi but it is not able to get them a good job, education and money. This results in the neglect of the 'own' (Hindi) and favor to the 'other' (English).

All the three texts use the cultural frame that typifies women in dualities of character, assigned by the male 'agent' (the one who has agency). Here the duality is in terms of the status and power of the two languages, via the status and power the 'male' can achieve through their use. The one that is old-fashioned and traditional is powerless in procuring success, even though it is the one to whom the speakers are expected to be loyal because it is their 'own'. On the other hand we find the 'other', the 'stranger', the 'outsider' who can be used to gain

power in the society. Thus, the mapping of the 'traditional, dependent, powerless' woman and the 'modern, confident, powerful' woman on to grammatically feminine languages gives us the metaphor of 'language women' as Sarangi (2009) calls them.

4.2 Texts personifying the noun *mehengaai* ('inflation'; fem.)

Text 4

Mehengaai is personified as a very negative yet a powerful agent. In text 4 (see fig. 4), 'inflation' is personified as a flirtatious woman who is running after the present head of state (a man) with a rose in *her* hand. The previous head of the state (also a man) who too had been pestered by *her* during his tenure is enjoying the scene, expressing how *she* had been after him too for 10 years.

Fig. 4: *mehengaai* ('inflation') personified as a flirtatious woman (see Corpus for source).

The picture personifies 'inflation' as a 'voluptuous, flirtatious' woman trying to woo men. The exact phrase used by the previous PM (the written text) is as follows:

(3) ***das saal tak mere piichhe padi thii, ab…..***
    ten   years till   me   being   after was, now….
    "She was after me for 10 years, now ……"

Text 5

In text 5 (see fig. 5), *mehengaai* is shown complementing the *onion* for its greatness because it has contributed to *her* (inflation's) grandeur (due to sudden inflation in the price of onion at that time). Here again, *mehengaai* is shown dressed up in somewhat revealing clothes and voluptuous figure.

Fig. 5: 'Inflation' personified as the 'evil' woman (see Corpus for source)

The text used in the figure is as follows:

(4) **badha dii hai   meri   shaan,   pyaaz   tum   ho   bahut   mahaan**
       increased   my   grandeur, onion   you   are   very   great
       "(You) have increased my grandeur, Onion ! you are great."

The text personifies *mehengaai* as a powerful woman with evil intentions. The facial expression is especially conspicuous in communicating the 'evilness' of the character. The evil look exudes the power that *she* has on people's lives, as is also feebly visible in the expression of the man peeping out of the window.

Text 6

Text 6 is a folk song where *mehengaai* is termed as *daayan* ('witch'; fem.) who devours resources, savings and lives. The first sentence goes like:

(5) **sakhi,   saiyaan to khoob kamaat hai,   mehengaai daayan
       khae jaat hai….**

> Friend (fem.), husband   a lot   earns (Sing.), inflation   witch keeps eating
>
> "Friend (female)!, my husband earns a lot but the witch inflation keeps eating up all he earns."

Here a woman is expressing her woes to her female friend, insisting that her husband earns a lot but the witch (i.e. the inflation) keeps eating up all (here, money).

This provides a different negative shade of the 'womanly' persona attributed to inflation. A witch is by default considered to be a female and is known to scare or even kill people, sometimes taking away children. In all these texts, *mehengaai* is personified as a 'negative but powerful' woman who instills fear in people's minds. 'She' even holds the power and control to topple governments. Even heads of the state (supposedly powerful people) are scared of her. The construction frames used are located on the negative end of the moral-ethical scale applied to female characters. Thus, *mehengaai* is an immoral woman, she is a witch, she is openly flirtatious who runs after powerful men (heads of the state) and she dresses and acts indecently.

4.3 Texts personifying the noun *vikaas* ('development'; masc.)

Text 7

Text 7 is a single satirical statement (source – see Appendix 2) with no visual text, presented below:

> (6) **ladka   paida hone   ke   intzaar   me   do   ladkiyaan   paida ho gain,   notbandi**
>
> boy   be born   of   wait   in   two   girls   have taken birth, demonetization
>
> **aur   GST,   par   vikaas   paida na hua**
>
> and   GST,   but   development   not born
>
> "In waiting for a boy to be born, two girls have taken birth – 'demonetisation' and 'GST', but *vikaas* is not born yet."

The statement refers to the policies of the present regime in which development was a key promise that people later felt had not been fulfilled. Instead, the

government brought in demonetization and GST bill both of which were seen to have made a negative impact on the country. In this text, both of these nouns have been treated as feminine, thus personified as girls.

Text 8

In Text 8 (see fig. 6), a political leader is shown making a promise regarding development, to which a common woman is replying.

Fig. 6: 'Development' personified as the 'desired son' in a dialogue between a politician and a common citizen (see Corpus for source).

(7) Politician: ***hamaari   sarkar   aaegi   to   vikaas hoga***

Our   government   will come then   development   will happen

"When our government comes, development will take place."

To the above statement, the woman in the picture (referring to her female child), replies:

Woman: ***pichhlii   baar   bhi   tumne   yahi   kaha tha   magar Pinki   hui thii***

Last   time also   you   same had said   but   Pinki   was born

"Last time also you had said the same thing (that Vikas will be born) but Pinki had taken birth."

The dialogue in text 8 is based on the fact that 'Vikaas' is a proper name for boys and 'Pinki' is a proper name for girls in Hindi. The politician means 'development' when he says 'Vikaas' but it is interpreted as a boy's name in the woman's response, when she says that last time also same promise was made (of the birth of a boy) but a girl was born.

Text 9

Text 9 (see fig. 7) shows US president 'requesting' *Vikaas*, "the lost son" to return back to father (Indian PM).

Fig. 7: The term *Vikaas* ('development') ambiguously used in the context to refer to a male named Vikaas (see Corpus for source).

The verbal text is as follows:

(8) ***Vikas beta kaha ho, Modi papa ro rahe hai.., ghar waapis aa jao***

Vikas son where be Modi father crying home return come

"Son Vikas, where are you? Father (Modi) is crying, please return home."

The interpretation in text 9 again stems from the double meaning generated by the use of the word *Vikaas* as a common noun (meaning 'development') and as a proper noun referring to a boy.

Text 10

Text 10 has no visuals and the text is very similar to text 9. All the party members (of the political party which had 'development' as its agenda) are searching for *Vikaas* (invoking of the double meaning of the word as in text 9) and saying:

(9) ***Vikaas beta ek baar ghar aa jao, tumhe koi kuchh nahi kahega***

Vikaas son one time home come, you anybody anything not say

"Son (Vikaas), please return once, nobody will say anything to you."

In all the texts personifying *vikaas,* it is the 'son', either lost or desired, in effect absent. In texts 7 and 8, *vikaas* is personified as the 'desired son'. This interpretation is rooted in the Indian cultural context where a son is considered as a boon (contrary to a daughter who is considered a burden) in most households. Thus, these two texts in order to personify *vikaas* as the 'desired son', make use of two linguistic ambiguities – first is the use of the verb *ho-na* which usually means 'to happen/take place' but it also means 'to be born'. The other is the term *vikaas* itself, which can either have a nominal meaning (development) or a proper name for a male.

The 'lost son' interpretation is rooted in the political context where the ruling regime had made tall claims and loud promises of development in all domains in its election manifesto. Thus, *vikaas* was much talked-about and eagerly awaited but when the masses could not find it in any of the domains, *he* was assigned the status of a lost son. Metaphorically, everybody began searching for 'him'.

5. Summary and Conclusion

The analysis of the texts personifying the three concepts *mehengaai*, *vikaas* and *bhaasha* gives us some interesting patterns of interaction between the cultural-historical context of language use and the grammatical structure, to provide new grammatical gender-based metaphors.

What is common to the three personifications is that all of these have been personified according to their grammatical gender in all the chosen texts.

However, as discussed in section 1.2, the masculine and feminine personifications are shaped by different parameters. Gender construction of grammatically masculine nouns usually employs more abstract means of personification, as opposed to the more visual means used for personification of feminine nouns. Interestingly, all the texts containing the masculine noun *vikaas* are based on the 'absence' of the object referred. As discussed in section 1.2, the physicality aspect dominates the personification of the feminine nouns. Except in one instance (text 6), all other texts containing the feminine nouns *bhaasha* and *mehengaai* present a visually rich and detailed physical profile of the personified noun.

Both *mehengaai* and *bhaasha* have been visualized as females but *vikaas* is only linguistically conceptualized as a male.

The personified feminine nouns can also be placed on the moral-ethical scale (discussed in section 1.2) in terms of the agency, control, sexuality and relativized identity. But the picture that emerges cannot be explained through a one-dimensional moral-ethical scale. Rather, several dualities of the personality traits of 'woman' emerge from the analysis. In the *bhaasha* texts, the 'traditional, powerless, ignored' woman is located on one end and the 'modern, powerful, attractive' woman is located on the other end of the dual scale. The morality dimension is overshadowed by agency in this contrast, although visually it can be seen in the attire of the contrasting feminine characters, especially in text 1 and 2. In the *mehengaai* texts, however, the negative polarity of the female character can be clearly seen in the attire, facial expression and the setting of the visuals. The non-visual text (text 6) locates the female character on the negative end of moral-ethical scale by the very use of the term *daayan* ('witch').

The role of the masculine personification in all the texts personifying feminine nouns (text 1 to text 6) is especially interesting even though it is not central to the interpretation of the texts. Firstly, in the *bhaasha* texts, whether it is the 'system' or the 'speech community' of the language, the agent who assigns value to the female (by preferring one over the other) is personified as a male, even though the speakers of a language and people in the administrative system consist of both male and female humans. The cultural-historical frame that assigns the male the ultimate agency of assessing and evaluating the female (on the moral scale or

her worth and use for him) can be clearly seen working in the *bhaasha* texts. Thus, the agency that seems to lie with the 'powerful' female i.e. English, is actually with the 'male' who decides which of the two females is of more use to him in the present condition.

In the *mehengaai* texts however, the 'female' is not under control of the men, rather 'she' controls them. In text 4 for instance, the men (state heads) are seen running away from her. In text 5, a scared man is peeping out of the window while in text 6, the 'female' (*mehengaai daayan*) is what everybody is scared of. Hence, *mehengaai* is the 'bad, scary, ominous woman' who is at the extreme end of the moral-ethical scale, a woman who is not under the control of men. This observation is in accordance with Tipler and Ruscher's (2017) 'predator/prey' scale where women who cannot be controlled by men are perceived as 'predators' and therefore bad for the society.

Furthermore, the analysis reveals some important processes underlying grammatical gender-based personification. In Indian political discourse, cultural-historical motivation of the discourses plays a major role in deciding the nature of these personifications. The following proposed model depicts how the interplay of linguistic structure, gender-sex mapping and cultural-historical frame of patriarchy shapes up the personifications:
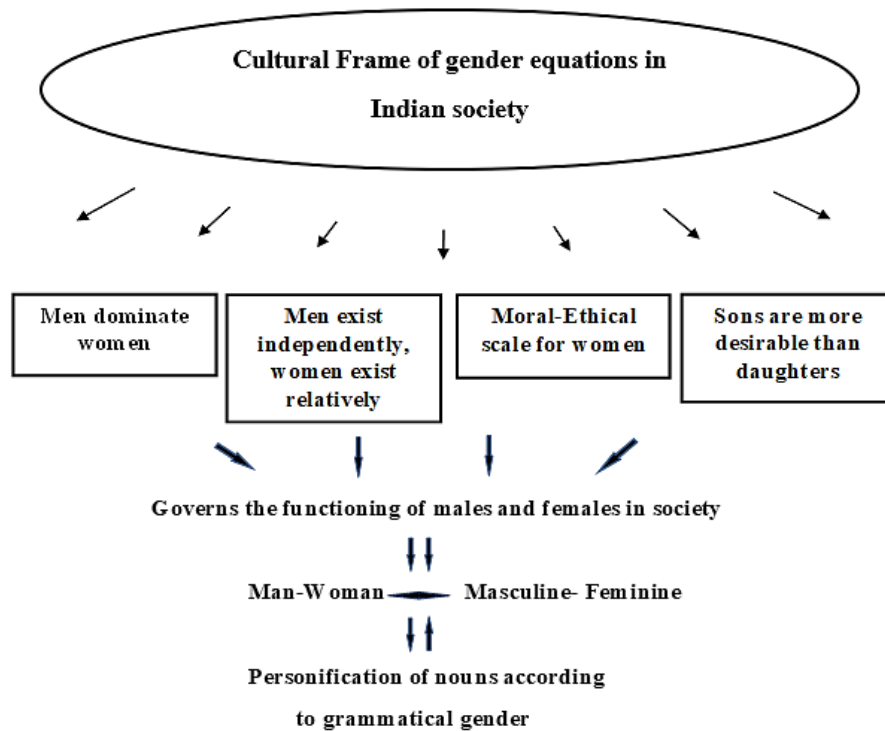
Fig. 8: A working model of the interaction between the culture-specific frames of social gender and the grammatical gender-based categorisation of nouns.

This model (see fig. 8) functions as follows: with the evolution of human society, certain cultural frames have taken shape that semantically ground everyday discourses in human communication. These frames govern comprehensively almost every aspect of the way human males and females are framed and act in society. This general framework can be further broken down into sub-frames like 'sons are more desirable than daughters' or 'men exist independently, women exist relatively'. In a language that categorises all nouns as masculine and feminine, features of the prototypical members of gender classes (human males and females) get mapped on to other members that is animals and inanimate objects. Thus, the cultural frames and, as a result, the cultural-cognitive models applicable to human males and females then also govern masculine and feminine nouns in the process of personification giving us the following personification metaphors

BHAASHA, THE WOMAN WITH CONTRARY SHADES (depending on 'her' social position),

MEHENGAAI, THE EVIL WOMAN,

VIKAAS, THE LOST/DESIRED SON.

The study thus concludes that grammatical gender in a language may have a deep impact on how the speakers of that language conceptualise animals and inanimate objects. This conclusion supports the linguistic relativity hypothesis according to which the structure of a language shapes the world-view of its speakers. The effect manifests deeply at higher cognitive levels like metaphorical conceptualisation and particularly personification because it can easily accommodate physical attributes which are commonly exploited in sex/gender-based division. But at the same time, it is not merely a one to one correspondence between grammatical gender and biological sex that results in gender-based personification metaphor. Rather, this relationship is mediated by the larger cultural frame pertaining to male-female equation that decides which personification metaphor is used in the final text and discourse. Although a study based on the personification of three nouns in 10 texts represents a very limited dataset, it refers to a deep interaction between grammatical gender and social construction of gender and the role of the cultural context that grounds this setting. The analysis corroborates the findings of studies in this area as reported in the Introduction. For instance, the findings are very similar to Romaine's (1998) analysis of the feminisation of physical spaces like cities and countries in discourse and Sarangi's (2009) analysis of the feminization of languages in post-independence India. Patterns of metaphorisation similar to the predator/prey metaphor observed in Tipler and Rusche's (2017) study was also found in this study. The fact that a profound gender-based metaphorisation is found in political discourse refers to the possibility of such metaphors in other discourse genres too. Though this framework helps to understand the interaction of linguistic structure and cultural-cognitive processes, it does not imply that all gendered personifications will agree with the grammatical gender of the personified nouns. There may be numerous other factors at play, prototype-like class membership being one of those. In a nutshell, the present study hints at the need for more elaborate research on this topic.

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7. Corpus

Fig. 1:

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Fig. 2:

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Fig. 3:

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Fig. 4:

https://faizanahmad1.blogspot.com/2014/08/blog-post.html (26.03.2020).

Fig. 5:

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Fig. 6:

*https://www.google.com/search?q=jokes+on+vikas&tbm=isch&ved=2ah
UKEwjs3#imgrc=Bgve01aEIk2tEM (Jokes on vikaas) (26.03.2020).

Fig. 7:

https://pinakipratihar.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/10433063_1099012790
155088_1895604294479944122_n.jpg (26.03.2020).

Text 6:

http://www.hindilyrics.net/lyrics/of-
    Mehngai%20Dayain%20Khaye%20Jaat%20Hai.html (26.03.2020).

Text 7:

*https://www.google.com/search?q=jokes+on+vikas&tbm=isch&ved=2ah
UKEwjs3#imgrc=onv-sO3FK3ubdM (Jokes on vikaas) (28.03.2020).

https://geetmanjusha.com/lyrics/923-gairon-pe-karam (27.11.2018).

https://www.inc.in/images/Pages/English%20Manifesto%20for%20Web.pdf
    (07.04.18).

http://cdn.narendramodi.in/wp-
    content/uploads/2014/04/Manifesto2014highlights.pdf (07.04.18).

https://indianexpress.com/article/india/politics/highlights-of-bjp-manifesto-2014/ (06.04.18).

https://indianexpress.com/photos/picture-gallery-others/congress-releases-manifesto-for-election-2014/ (06.04.18).

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/lok-sabha-polls-2014-highlights-of-the-bjp-manifesto-2014/articleshow/33385409.cms (06.04.18)https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/congresss-2014-man**i**festo-focuses-on-economy-growth-farmers-and-universal-healthcare/articleshow/31501299.cms (06.04.18).

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/Lok-Sabha-polls-Congress-releases-2014-peoples-manifesto/articleshow/32717181.cms (06.04.18).

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https://thewire.in/politics/why-bihars-voters-find-it-hard-to-disentangle-Vikaas-from-caste (09.04.2018).

http://censusindia.gov.in/2011Census/C-16_25062018_NEW.pdf (06.05.19)

* Links to these texts/ figures do not direct to a single image but these images/ texts can be separately seen in the side pane. These texts/images have been used by several sites and blogs, where these are embedded in larger contexts. Thus, the link that shows in the main key term search has been provided.

7.   Appendices

Appendix 1: List of nouns (representing popular themes/issues) extracted from party manifestos and news sources for political news in India from 2014-2018

1.   *aarakshan* (reservation; masculine)

2.   *acchhe din* (good days; masculine plural)- This is one of the rare catchword in plural form

3.   *beef ban* (mostly used as masculine but gender not consistent)

4.   *bhaasha* (language; feminine)- This is abstracted from usages like *rashtra-bhaasha* (national language and *matri-bhaasha* (mother tongue)

5.   *bhrashtachaar* (corruption; masculine)

6. *deshbhakti* (patriotism; feminine)

7. digital India (gender not clear, mostly found as a standalone slogan)

8. GST (Goods and Services Tax; borrowed from English, mostly used as masculine but gender not consistent)

9. *gaay* (cow; semantically and morphologically feminine)

10. *Hindutva* (Hinduism; masculine)

11. *jumlaa* (originally 'a sentence/phrase describing a state-of-affairs' but of late being used to satirically mean 'false promises'; masculine)

12. *Kashmiir* (the state of Kashmir; masculine)

13. *mehengaai* (inflation; feminine)

14. *naukrii* (job; feminine)

15. *notbandii* (demonetization; feminine)

16. Rafale (Rafale planes; inconsistent gender)- This refers to the scam related to buying of Rafale planes by India

17. *Ram mandir* (Temple in the name of Lord Ram; masculine)

18. RTI (Right to Information Act; inconsistent gender)

19. *sena* (army; feminine)

20. *swatchhta abhiyaan* (cleanliness drive; masculine)

21. *vikaas* (development; masculine)