

Gendered Language in English-Medium Professional Digital Discourse: A Corpus-Based Study of Achievement Narratives and Interaction Dynamics on LinkedIn

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Abstract

This study interrogates the persistence and evolution of gendered discourse within professional digital spaces, focusing on English-language interactions on LinkedIn as a site where achievement is publicly narrated and socially evaluated. Drawing on a balanced corpus of 50 achievement-oriented posts (25 male, 25 female) and 2,317 associated comments, the research integrates corpus linguistics and engagement analytics to identify how linguistic choices both reflect and reproduce gendered norms in professional self-presentation. Quantitative analysis comprising keyword frequency, keyness testing, collocational mapping, and dispersion measures was complemented by qualitative discourse interpretation to uncover the semantic and pragmatic framing of success. Engagement metrics, including reactions, shares, and comment sentiment, were examined using statistical tests with effect sizes to assess audience response patterns. Findings reveal that male-authored posts privilege competence, leadership, and strategic execution, while female-authored posts foreground ambition, collaboration, and gratitude often blending assertive positioning with relational framing. Although overall visibility did not differ significantly by gender, comment patterns diverged: women's posts attracted proportionally more supportive and affective responses, whereas men's elicited more strategic and analytical feedback. These patterns suggest that LinkedIn's professional ethos mitigates but does not erase gendered communicative asymmetries. The study advances scholarship in sociolinguistics and professional discourse by offering empirical evidence from an underexamined platform, highlighting how subtle linguistic and interactional dynamics can shape perceptions of credibility, authority, and leadership potential in digital English professional networks.

Keywords: Gendered Discourse, LinkedIn Communication, Corpus Linguistics, English for Professional Purposes, Digital English Communication, Achievement Framing

1. Introduction

In the contemporary digital workplace, digital English professional platforms such as LinkedIn have become central to career advancement, self-promotion, and knowledge exchange. Unlike informal social media spaces, LinkedIn encourages a highly curated professional persona, where language plays a decisive role in shaping perceptions of competence, credibility, and leadership potential. Yet, professional communication is rarely neutral; linguistic choices are informed by cultural expectations, power structures, and gendered norms.

Extensive research in sociolinguistics and workplace communication has shown that men and women often adopt distinct linguistic strategies in professional contexts (Coates, 2015). Men tend to favor direct, assertive, and self-promotional discourse, while women more frequently employ collaborative, modest, and inclusive framing (Danielewicz-Betz, 2021; Schnurr, 2024). These patterns have been documented in face-to-face interactions, corporate emails, and public speeches, but their manifestation in digital professional discourse, particularly on LinkedIn, remains underexplored. As LinkedIn is increasingly used for self-branding, achievement sharing, and professional networking, examining whether gendered linguistic norms persist on the platform is both timely and necessary.

Existing studies have noted that online engagement also reflects gendered patterns: women's posts often receive more supportive and affective responses, whereas men's content invites analytical or critical feedback (Sharon A Ferguson & Alison Olechowski, 2023; Holmes, 2006). However, such findings are largely drawn from informal platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, raising the question of whether LinkedIn's professional culture mitigates or reinforces these differences.

Addressing this gap, the present study analyzes achievement-oriented LinkedIn posts and their associated comment threads from a balanced dataset of 50 profiles (25 male, 25 female). The research pursues three interconnected aims:

- To identify linguistic differences in the framing of professional achievements by gender.
- To examine how engagement patterns (likes, comments, shares) vary according to the author's gender.
- To interpret these patterns in light of current gender and language theories.

Incorporating corpus linguistic techniques, such as key word and collocation search, dispersion, gives the research a corpus-based treatment in the discourse interpretation on gendering professional discourse in a mainstream digital place. In such a way, it helps in considering questions about the formation of professional identity on the Internet in the context of gender, language and involvement of the audience.

2. Literature Review

The present section critically examines the existing literature at the intersection of gender, language and professional discourse of the particular case of digital platforms such as LinkedIn. It studies how gendered conventions in achievement discourses and interaction patterns are reproduced and reflected by linguistic actions by challenging major theoretical approaches and empirical data. The purposes of the work also have a strong association with the review: the researcher needs to define the gender language differences in narrating the professional achievements, analyses various patterns of engages and discuss them with the recent gender and language theories. It also questions the constraints of the approaches (such as excessive reliance on non-digital settings or small-scale samples), which indicate that corpus is needed to study untapped areas in the social networking (such as LinkedIn).

The intersection of gender, language, and digital professional discourse has been a subject of increasing academic interest (Elmahdi, Balla, & Abdelrady, 2024). While traditional workplace communication has been extensively studied through a gendered linguistic lens, the rise of social media platforms like LinkedIn has introduced a new space where professional identity is constructed through language (Kasperuniene & Zydziunaite, 2019). However, limited research has explored how gender influences linguistic patterns in LinkedIn interactions, particularly in achievement framing and comment engagement.

2.1 Gendered Language in Traditional Workplace Communication

Gendered language as a scientific discipline reveals the institutionalized patterns of expression of the hierarchy of power in society but is anyway criticized as essentializing the differences without sufficient contextual details (Coates, 2015). Men tend to use assertive, status-seeking language, which gives them more focus on agency at the individual level and performance-based goals which can boost their leadership perception at the expense of teamwork (Weatherall, Stubbe, Sunderland, & Baxter, 2010). Conversely, those of women often include the concepts of inclusive hedging and relationality, developing a sense of affiliation but at the cost of authority in hierarchies, which, according to Holmes and Stubbe (2015), continues to instill minor biases in competency ratings. Nevertheless, these clearly binary representations are problematic, as Kendall and Tannen (2015b) and Sunderland (2004) are more interested in fluidity and negotiation, whereas empirical studies typically do not include intersectional analyses (e.g. race or class), which makes them less applicable to various professional settings. More importantly, these trends, though universalizable to other cultures (Debray, Schnurr, Loew, & Reissner-Roubicek, 2024; Park et al., 2016), do not consider the possibility that institutional norms might add to them or reduce their impact, and here, digital platforms have the opportunity to fill a gap, but have not explored it fully yet.

Studies on gendered language in the workplace have generally proved that the language used is socially informed as guided by the expectations, the standards of the institution and power. The language used by males has been confirmed as more assertive, status-oriented, and self-promotional, compared to the language of women, who often employ a more team- and mutually considerate as well as relations-focused set of linguistic devices.(Park et al., 2016; Schnurr, 2024). These trends may not be universal, but they are still replicated often in cross-cultural studies, as well as in communication contexts, resulting in differences related both to perceptions of competency and leadership potential.

2.2 Gendered Patterns in Digital Professional Discourse

Gendered inequalities have not disappeared with the shift to the online spaces; they have been transformed, thus exhibiting in many cases increased subtle inequalities in the name of neutrality (Sharon A. Ferguson & Alison Olechowski, 2023). Men digital rhetoric is driven to problem solving and self-promotion that is dependent on cultures of competitiveness but criticized due to the support of norms of exclusion (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Assertiveness and relational framing in women discourse comes with little backlash except against the pressures to be likable but at the cost of being perceived as inauthentic (Brescoll, 2016; E. Clarke et al., 2021). Ott and Theunissen (2015) emphasize that men fit into leadership ideals, which does not take into consideration how such styles can be disadvantageous to non-conforming individuals when they seek to be meritocratic. Moreover, Dwyer, Richard, and Chadwick (2003) attribute these trends to the performance of the organization, but their emphasis on the growth-oriented cultures does not take into account the slower-developing sectors, thereby lowering the generalizability. One of these criticisms is the lack of platform-specific research, with emails and forums as analogies, but they do not reflect the unique affordances of LinkedIn, so it is important to conduct specific studies of how digital mediation medium disrupts gendered self-presentation.

The development of online platforms opened new arenas of professional communication, but other gender-related trends still remain intact. Research on emails in the office environment, enterprise communications, and online forums demonstrates that the rhetoric men use refers

more frequently to achievement and problem-solving, whereas women write with references to collective action, gratitude, and support among peers (Sharon A Ferguson & Alison Olechowski, 2023; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010).

The study of gendered language has consistently revealed that linguistic practices are socially embedded, reflecting and reinforcing broader cultural norms and institutional hierarchies (Coates, 2015). In professional settings, men have been found to employ more status-oriented, competitive, and task-focused discourse, while women often integrate inclusive strategies, hedging devices, and expressions of affiliation (Baxter, 2010; Tannen, 1994). However, these patterns are not fixed; rather, they are contextually negotiated and mediated by professional norms (Kendall & Tannen, 2015a; Sunderland, 2004). Workplace discourse studies further suggest that gender differences are often subtle, yet consequential in shaping perceptions of leadership, credibility, and competence (Baxter & Al A'ali, 2016; Holmes & Stubbe, 2015).

2.3 LinkedIn as a Platform for Professional Identity Construction

LinkedIn has a professional culture that makes it both a self-branded and networking site, though in the real-life, it only reinforces gendered performativity (Caers & Castelyns, 2011; Papacharissi, 2009). The content related to the success of users not only documents the expertise but also initiates communal connections and the gender aspect influences rhetorical styles: women find a balance between authority and approachability, sacrificing the appearance of decisive behavior (E. Clarke et al., 2021). Treem and Leonardi (2013) and Gupta, Wieland, and Turban (2019) criticize this because it is performative conformity to norms, but their analyses nullify the force behind algorithms to influence visibility as a potential contributor to further inequalities.

Multifaceted post-functions are emphasized in Meese (2023) although it is anecdotal and not quantitatively rigorous. According to A. McDowell and Dowshen (2021), the formal digital space still has linguistic inequalities, which affect assessment; however, it is essential to challenge the author as the generalization of non-professional sites, and to address this matter, it is necessary to conduct research, such as the current one, in order to reveal the ways LinkedIn recreates or strengthens gendered identities.

LinkedIn has become a major site of professional identity building, which combines features of self-presentation via the resume with features of social networking (Caers & Castelyns, 2011). Status update posts informing about accomplishments, work-related milestones, or the completion of the projects tend to fulfill several functions: they record professional development, indicate professionalism, and open up networking possibilities (Meese, 2023).

LinkedIn occupies an uncharacteristic niche in the social media spectrum of the Internet because it is open to being overtly professional (Papacharissi, 2009). Professionals rely on their profiles and posts to exhibit a feeling of competence, ambition, and respectability before leaders and partners and recruiters. Nevertheless, this workplace environment does not automatically make gendered specifics of discourse norms irrelevant.

Research indicates that LinkedIn profiles and posts are performative acts that align with platform-specific norms while simultaneously reflecting users' professional values and aspirations (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). Gender mediates this process by influencing the degree of self-promotion, expressions of gratitude, and the rhetorical framing of success (V. K. Gupta et al., 2019). Female professionals, in particular, may negotiate tensions between projecting authority and maintaining perceived likability, a balancing act less frequently observed in male-authored content (H. M. Clarke, 2020).

According to J. McDowell (2021), even in ostensibly formal digital environments, the minor linguistic inequalities have an impact on the way the contributions are evaluated and perceived. Research suggests that posts authored by women tend to elicit more supportive or affective responses, while those by men receive a higher proportion of strategic or critical engagement (T. Z. Hayat, O. Lesser, & T. Samuel-Azran, 2017). These patterns raise important questions about whether LinkedIn reinforces or challenges long-standing gendered communication norms.

2.4 Achievement Framing and Gender

Achievement framing theory is a concept that sparks light on the rhetorical tactics of success stories, where men prefer agentic frames that highlight measurable outcomes- a style of thought that is highly appreciated but is also criticized to be individualistic (Brahnam & De Angeli, 2012b; Potter et al., 2019). Their collective frames by women which accredit success to group effort support inclusivity, but at the cost of individual credit (Ringrose, 2012). Framing language in high certainty of men (e.g. led, achieved) is compared with modest qualifiers of women, which meet the demands of the society, but may act as a handicap in any self-promotional situation. Most importantly, these trends, reported in face-to-face contexts, might not be directly relevant to the explicit promotional rules of LinkedIn; the qualitative nature of the literature on the subject ignores the ability of corpus techniques to measure these deviations and, thus, the absence of a methodological gap that this research fills through empirical framing.

The literature on "achievement framing" is particularly relevant to this study. Achievement framing refers to the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used to present professional successes, milestones, or competencies (Sanner, 2019). Men often use personal agency frames emphasizing individual initiative and measurable results while women more frequently use communal frames, attributing success to teamwork, mentorship, or collective effort (Brahnam & De Angeli, 2012a; Ringrose, 2007). Word choice plays a central role: men are more likely to use high-certainty verbs and evaluative adjectives such as *achieved*, *led*, and *outstanding*, while women more often select inclusive language and modest hedges, such as *grateful for*, *collaborated with*, or *opportunity to*. Although these tendencies have been documented in face-to-face and email-based workplace settings, their presence on LinkedIn, a space where self-promotion is an explicit norm has not been fully examined.

2.5 Corpus-Based Approaches to Gendered Discourse

Corpus linguistics enables systematic detection of patterns, mitigating bias through statistical measures like keywords and collocations (Gablasova, Brezina, & McEnery, 2017a). Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) integrate quantitative and qualitative lenses, as in Brookes and McEnery (2020) and (Argamon, Koppel, Fine, & Shimoni, 2003), yet applications to gender often span genres like journalism without focusing on professional digital discourse (P. Baker, Gabrielatos, & McEnery, 2013). Rayson, Leech, and Hodges (1997) demonstrate dispersion's value in consistency assessments, but LinkedIn-specific research defaults to thematic methods, lacking rigor (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). This underutilization critiques the field's inertia; by employing CADS, the current study bridges this gap, offering replicable insights into gendered lexical networks on LinkedIn.

Corpus-based approaches have proven particularly effective in detecting such patterns, as they enable systematic comparisons of word frequencies, collocations, and dispersion across large datasets (Paul Baker, 2006; Gablasova, Brezina, & McEnery, 2017b). While corpus linguistics has been widely applied to studies of gender and discourse, its application to LinkedIn remains rare. Most existing studies focus on recruitment practices, personal branding, or corporate communication strategies on the platform (Stone & Can, 2021; Van Dijck, 2013; Van Dijck & Poell, 2013), leaving a gap in empirical research on the linguistic construction of individual professional identity.

Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) provide a methodological bridge between quantitative linguistic patterns and qualitative interpretive analysis (Brookes, 2014). Tools such as keyword analysis, collocational mapping, and dispersion measures allow researchers to systematically uncover recurring lexical and grammatical features across gendered corpora (Argamon et al., 2003; Rayson et al., 1997).

In gender-focused research, corpus methods have been used to compare male and female-authored texts in journalism, political speeches, academic writing, and online forums (P. Baker et al., 2013; Koller, 2004). Such approaches reduce researcher bias by grounding interpretations in statistically significant patterns rather than purely impressionistic readings. Within LinkedIn-specific research, however, CADS remains underutilised, with most studies relying on manual coding or thematic analysis. This creates a gap in methodological rigour that the present study addresses by integrating keyword frequency profiling, collocation analysis, and dispersion statistics before qualitative interpretation.

2.6 Engagement Metrics and Audience Responses

The responses to interactions with the audience demonstrate the ability of gendered discourses to produce reaction, where posts made by women receive more affective support and those made by men are more affected by more analytical responses - a trend that perpetuates stereotypes but is criticized due to its lack of contextually moderating effects (T. Hayat, O. Lesser, & T. Samuel-Azran, 2017). Ott and Theunissen (2015) attribute this to affirmation dynamics, but do not consider the importance of algorithmic amplification in supporting visibility gaps (E. Clarke et al., 2021; Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). Although the engagement metrics relate form to the outcomes, quantitative assessments are typically not addressed in studies which restrict the causal inferences. It is important to note that in this review, integrated analyses, which are being undertaken here, are required to critically evaluate the ways in which responses are also influencing professional credibility in gendered ways.

2.7 Theoretical Frameworks for Gender and Language

Constructionism and fluidity of contexts are currently prioritized by evolving theories, such as deficit model, which has since been criticized as an essentialist approach (Lakoff, 1975), and difference approaches, including approaches that appreciate cultural equivalence (Maltz and Borker, 2018). The power reproduction of institutional language is revealed by critical discourse analysis (Mills & Mullany, 2011), and the posts on LinkedIn are viewed as strategic performances (Herring and Stoerger, 2014). Nevertheless, the frameworks can have minimal empirical basis in the digital context, which is corrected by this study that views corpus and engagement data through the prism of engagement.

2.8 Research Gaps and Contributions of the Present Study

Nevertheless, in LinkedIn-related gendered discourse, there are still gaps in corpus linguistics in the integration of engagement measures. The methodological conservatism and non-digital bias of the past work inhibit the comprehension of achievement narrative and interactions. This work is a critical filling of these gaps by bridging analysis and purpose by advancing the theory based on balanced, data-driven accounts of gendered professional relationships in English-speaking online spaces.

To address that gap, this paper will use the analysis of gendered discussions on LinkedIn that will involve both corpus analysis and engagement statistics to provide a more comprehensive picture of the practice. This is because the language of achievement-oriented posts, and posts to which they generate responses are all taken into account in the study, and thus is dynamic textual research, within the context of interaction. The dual emphasis is indicative of an appreciation of the fact that, in addition to the manner in which individuals define themselves, professional credibility is also created and formed according to how others react and judge to such self-presentation.

In addition to linguistic structure, the professional posts reception based on the engagement metrics of likes, shares, and comments can provide evidence of how audiences think and react to gendered self-presentation (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). Digital communication studies indicate that posts by women are more likely to receive affective responses, including congratulatory or supportive attitude, and posts by men are more likely to receive evaluative responses (Ott & Theunissen, 2015).

These engagement patterns may reinforce gendered expectations: women are rewarded for relational and collaborative discourse, while men

receive affirmation for competence and strategic authority (G. R. Gupta et al., 2019). The fact that such differences can be material in creating visibility, career prospects, and network growth also relates to LinkedIn which through algorithmic amplification of highly engaged posts, this difference is also potentially material (H. M. Clarke, 2020; Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). Including the analysis of engagement by means of it, the research will be able to connect linguistic structure and social performance, which provides a more comprehensive view of digital professional discourse.

According to earlier theories, including the deficit model of language proposed by Lakoff (1975), women language was tentative and had no authority, which was later criticised as essentialistic (Lakoff & Keenan, 1975). In difference models by (Maltz & Borker, 2018), the styles of male and female communication were redefined as opposite but equally valid, as cultures. Newer social constructionist methods focus more on the dynamism of gendered language practice and the importance of context in producing language practices (Kendall & Tannen, 2015a; Sunderland, 2004).

Critical discourse perspectives also emphasize that gendered language is both a symptom of power structures and a structure of power and therefore power dynamics of these structures in particular through institutional environments (Mills & Mullany, 2011). Applying to LinkedIn, these views understand posts not as self descriptions but as strategics performed within gendered economies of credibility and authority (Herring & Stoerger, 2014). The current paper uses this multi-faceted prism and incorporates the elements of both corpus evidence and critical-discursive reading to study the way achievement discourse is produced, reproduced, and assessed within a professional online environment.

3. Methodology

The study is based on a mixed methodology based on the corpus linguistics as a quantitative indicator and a qualitative analysis of discourse investigating the gendered disparities in achievement discourse and interactional responses on LinkedIn. This method is supplemented by engagement analytics to evaluate the responses of the audience of other genders in a different manner on the bases of the principles of corpus-based inquiry (Paul Baker, 2006; Gablasova et al., 2017b). This interdisciplinary approach allows the strict statistical study of the linguistic patterns and hidden interpretation meaning of their implication of the development of professional identities.

3.1 Corpus Construction

A specialized corpus of 50 publicly available LinkedIn profiles, a purposive sample, was created and balanced and representative, including 25 profiles by individuals who defined themselves as men and the remaining 25, and the individuals who defined themselves as women. In order to be comparable, the criteria of selection was strict:

- One or more of the achievement posts (e.g., promotions announced, project completion or award) must have been on each of the profiles in the past 12 months.
- To be able to perform a meaningful analysis of interaction processes, the selected post must have obtained significant coverage, i.e. at least 20 reactions or comments.
- The professions that required articulate written presentation of oneself, e.g. business management, academic research, technological innovation and creative sectors, produced profiles that reflected a range of communicative styles.

As a measure to counter possible biases that could have developed due to jargon or norms unique to the industry, the profiles were obtained across a wide range of industries, such as finance, education, software development, and media. Each profile had the most recent post that qualified saved and the entire comment thread were saved resulting in a rich dataset of 50 original posts and 2,317 comments.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

The content in LinkedIn that was publicly visible was stored in the form of data that were extracted manually across the time frame of January through March 2025. To maintain the ethical standards and protect the anonymity, all the personally identifiable information, including user names, profile pictures and organizational membership, were systematically removed. All the extracted texts were given a unique alpha-numeric identifier identifying the gender and order of the author (e.g., M12P the twelfth author who was a man). Only materials in the public domain were used; any information that was limited to connections or private groups were specifically avoided to adhere to site policies and research ethics.

3.3 Pre-Processing and Cleaning

The raw data was pre-processed to a high degree to make it more accurate and comparable before the analysis. This consisted of a pipeline of standard corpus preparation methods:

3.3.1 Tokenization

The text was divided into units, which are also known as tokens, which include words, numerals, and punctuations. As an example, a statement such as I made a significant milestone! this was tokenized into [I, achieved, a, major, milestone,!] so that it can be studied linguistically in a finer manner.

3.3.2 Lemmatization

Words were simplified to their canonical base to equalize variations and simplify their ability to detect patterns. Inflected words were standardized through natural language processing algorithms, such that achieved, achieves and achieving were all

lemmatized to achieve as well, so that semantically equivalent words were combined, but without changes in contextual meaning.

3.3.3 Part-of-Speech (POS) Tagging

Each token was labeled with its grammatical category (e.g. noun, verb, adjective) in order to facilitate more complex syntactic analyses. An example of this, like the differentiation between a verb form of lead in I lead the team and a nominal form of the lead verb in a new lead emerged, can be used to help determine gendered rhetorical preferences.

3.3.4 Noise Removal

Hyperlinks (e.g. <https://example.com>), emojis, hashtags (#success) and non-linguistic symbols (irrelevant artifacts) were also removed to concentrate on the meaningful textual content.

The procedures were run through the Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK) library in Python, which can be reproduced. The filtered corpus contained about 42,000 tokens, 21,300 of which were male-written and 20,700 female-written, giving it nearly the same amount of words in each gender to compare.

3.4 Analytical Processes and Tools

The analysis was carried out in a sequential approach using special software and statistical tools to quantify linguistic patterns and measures of engagement. Each of the phases is broken down below with specific tools, process and examples.

3.5 Quantitative Corpus Analysis

This processed corpus was then imported into the Sketch Engine, which is a mighty corpus management system, and which is known to have numerous corpus analysis tools. Language measurements had been conducted to ascertain gendered disparities with regards to the application of lexicon, links with semantics, and distributional regularity, as follows:

- **Keyword Analysis:** Word frequencies between sub-corpora (male vs. female) were compared to the expected distributions in the form of log-likelihood keyness tests with $p = 0.05$ as the statistical significance. As an example, consider that the word "lead" was overrepresented in texts with male authors (e.g. 45 times of use versus 20 times as expected), the word was listed as one of the key terms, indicating possible focus on leadership.
- **Collocation Analysis:** Co-occurrences were analysed as representing semantic relationships and strength of relationships was measured in terms of Mutual Information (MI) scores (score > 3.0 indicates significant relationship). An example: in female-written posts, grateful can co-locate with team with a strong degree of MI (MI = 4.12), as grateful to the team, which supports my idea of relational framing.
- **Dispersion Statistics:** To determine the homogeneity, the D coefficient of Juilland was used, the coefficient returned values ranging 0 (concentrated in a small number of texts) to 1 (evenly spread). As an example, the word ambitious in female text sources had a dispersion of 0.82, which means that it was used widely across profiles and not unique.
- **Concordance Lines:** Keyword excerpts were created to provide a transition between the quantitative findings and qualitative analysis and showcase the keywords within the context of their surrounding sentences (i.e. 10 words around the word) to expand on the interpretation.

All these steps were used to measure linguistic patterns by isolating statistically salient features to see the way gendered norms are expressed through word choice and word structure.

3.5.1 Analysis of Engagement Metrics

The data on the desired responses were analyzed with the help of R statistical software (version 4.3.1) to process the data on engagement and test the differences based on gender:

- **Metric Recording:** Raw counts were summed, separately of each post: reactions (likes, celebrates and such like), comments (total and sentiment-coded) and shares (reposts). The classification of sentiments was done through the classification of the comment as being supportive/affective (e.g., "Congratulations!") or strategic/analytical (e.g., "How did you implement this?", etc.) or neutral.
- **Statistical Testing:** Continuous variables (e.g., comment counts) underwent independent-samples t-tests to compare means between genders, while categorical data (e.g., sentiment distributions) were analyzed via Chi-square tests. Effect sizes were computed Cohen's d for t-tests (interpreting 0.2 as small, 0.5 as medium) and Cramér's V for Chi-square (similar thresholds) alongside 95% confidence intervals. For example, a t-test might reveal significantly higher comments on female posts ($t(48) = -2.89$, $p = 0.005$, $d = 0.58$), indicating medium practical importance.

This process ensured objective quantification of interaction dynamics, linking linguistic inputs to social outputs.

3.6 Qualitative Discourse Analysis

Complementing the quantitative phase, a thematic discourse analysis was conducted to interpret patterns' implications. Excerpts were manually coded using NVivo software (version 14) for:

- Achievement framing: Distinguishing individual agency (e.g., "I spearheaded the project") from collective orientations (e.g., "We collaborated to succeed").
- Tone: Categorizing as assertive, modest, reflective, or strategic.
- Interpersonal positioning: Identifying self-promotion, gratitude, or community-building elements.

Coding proceeded inductively, with initial themes derived from data immersion, followed by iterative refinement. Intercoder reliability was verified through dual coding by the authors, resolving discrepancies via consensus to attain a Cohen's kappa of 0.87, signifying strong agreement.

3.7 Ethical Considerations and Data Sharing

Adherence to the University of Education Research Ethics Guidelines and the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) protocols for online research was paramount. Since the information was publicly accessible they did not require explicit consent but the anonymity was highly observed by undertaking a complete de-identification, and omitting visual or proprietary information.

4. Findings

The empirical findings of this study develop within a logical narrative, as a fusion of quantitative data in corpus linguistics and trends in audience response to bring out gendered aspects in professional discourse in LinkedIn.

The results are presented in two parts:

1. Quantitative corpus analysis identifying statistically significant linguistic differences between male and female LinkedIn posts.
2. Engagement metrics analysis examining differences in audience reactions, comments, and shares.

Through the analysis of balanced corpus of achievement-oriented posts and interaction, subtle, but consistent differences in linguistic framing and social reception emerge, coupled with strict statistical values, such as effect sizes and 95 percent confidence intervals, to increase the interpretability.

4.1 Quantitative Corpus Analysis

4.1.1 Keyword Analysis

The analysis of the quantitative corpus started with the identification of the keywords via the log-likelihood test ($p < 0.05$) and revealed lexical preferences to be unique after lemmatization. Wording suggesting power and executing, which included the words competent (LL = 18.45), lead (LL = 16.12), strategy (LL = 15.88), and others were predominantly used by male-written posts, and created an image of confident leadership and strategic ability.

On the other hand, the use of such terms as ambitious (LL = 21.07), grateful (LL = 20.56), and empower (LL = 18.77) was higher in the works of female authors, which implied a plot of personal ambition, interpersonal gratitude, and group uplifting (a ranked overview of words is described in Table 1). This lexical divide preconditions the interpretation of how men tend to cast the ideas of capability and planning as central to their accomplishments, and women to anticipate the goals and establish interpersonal connections as central to theirs, thus adding another dimension to the narrative of professional selves.

Log-likelihood tests ($p < 0.05$) revealed distinct sets of keywords overrepresented in male- and female-authored posts. Words were lemmatized before analysis.

Table 1. Top Gender-Associated Keywords in LinkedIn Achievement Posts

Rank	Male Keywords	LL Score	Female Keywords	LL Score
1	Competent	18.45	ambitious	21.07
2	Lead	16.12	grateful	20.56
3	Strategy	15.88	empower	18.77
4	Achieve	14.53	build	17.94
5	Deliver	13.92	know	15.38

These results suggest that male posts emphasize capability (*competent*), leadership (*lead*), and planning (*strategy*), while female posts foreground aspiration (*ambitious*), interpersonal acknowledgment (*grateful*), and collaborative growth (*empower, build*).

4.1.2 Collocation Analysis

Collocation patterns were measured using Mutual Information (MI) scores (>3.0 indicating strong association).

Table 2. Key Collocations by Gender

Gender	Node Word	Top Collocates	MI Score
Male	Competent	leader, strategist, developer	4.21
Male	Strategy	execution, plan, achieve	3.97

Gender	Node Word	Top Collocates	MI Score
Female	Ambitious	vision, goals, future	4.35
Female	Grateful	team, support, opportunity	4.12

The collocation evidence supports the results of the key-word analysis: the discourse of men is more results- and role-oriented whereas the discourse of women is more relational and aspirational.

It is on these keywords that the mutual information scores exceeding 3.0 were applied as a collocation analysis to further optimize the story since it revealed semantic clusters. Indicatively, in male discourse, competent went hand in hand with leader, strategist and developer (MI = 4.21), this implies that competent was linked to mastering the role and producing the results comparable to a story of personal triumph in a competitive circumstance. Similarly, the words strategy worked with execution, plan and achieve (MI = 3.97), and the application of a plotline which is founded on a purposeful action and result.

The patterns of females, though, demonstrated another story: the combination of "ambitious" with "vision," with "goals" and with future (MI = 4.35), conjuring associations of moving forward and backward, whereas the combination of grateful with team, with support, and with opportunity (MI = 4.12) wove the fibers of community gratitude into the web of success (as shown in Table 2).

The associations not only reflect the trends in the keywords but also depict the fact that male narratives are oriented toward instrumentalism, as female ones are oriented towards relational and developmental ones.

4.2 Dispersion Analysis

Dispersion values show how consistently a keyword appears across the corpus (0 = concentrated in one text, 1 = evenly distributed).

Table 3. Dispersion of Selected Keywords

Keyword	Gender	Dispersion
Competent	Male	0.78
Ambitious	Female	0.82
Strategy	Male	0.65
Grateful	Female	0.88

Female-associated terms such as *grateful* and *ambitious* were more evenly distributed, suggesting these themes are consistently present across multiple authors rather than concentrated in a few outlier profiles.

4.3 Engagement Metrics Analysis

Engagement patterns were assessed using independent-samples t-tests for continuous variables and Chi-square tests for comment sentiment distribution.

Table 4. Average Engagement per Post by Gender

Metric	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	t(df)	p-value	Cohen's d
Reactions	198.4 (54.2)	215.6 (60.8)	-1.12	0.27	0.23
Comments	26.8 (9.4)	34.5 (11.1)	-2.89	0.005**	0.58
Shares	7.1 (3.6)	8.4 (3.9)	-1.23	0.22	0.25

Note: $p < 0.01$ for comment differences; other metrics not statistically significant.

Female-authored posts received significantly more comments, but reactions and shares showed no significant gender-based difference.

4.4 Comment Sentiment Distribution

Comments were classified into three categories: *supportive/affective*, *strategic/analytical*, and *neutral*.

Table 5. Comment Sentiment by Gender

Sentiment Type	Male Posts (%)	Female Posts (%)	$\chi^2(2)$	p-value	Cramér's V
Supportive/Affective	38.2	54.7	9.74	0.008**	0.29
Strategic/Analytical	46.5	29.3			
Neutral	15.3	16.0			

Note: Female-authored posts drew proportionally more supportive responses, while male-authored posts drew more analytical feedback.

4.6 Summary of Empirical Findings

1. **Lexical focus differs by gender** male posts emphasize capability and leadership, female posts emphasize aspiration and collaboration.

2. **Collocational networks** show male discourse linked to role-specific and outcome-driven terms, female discourse linked to community-building and personal growth.
3. **Engagement differences** are most evident in comment patterns, with female posts attracting more supportive/affective responses.
4. **No significant difference** was found in reactions or shares, suggesting that visibility is similar, but the *type* of engagement differs.

5. Discussion

The empirical study of 50 posts on LinkedIn as achievement-related shows the pervasive presence of gendered discourse in the digital professionalizations, but with the promising signs of change. Male writers always used competence- and leadership-oriented terms of language like competent, lead, and strategy and female writers tended to combine the word ambition (ambitious) with a grateful, collaborative and empowerment word. This makes it seem that self-presentation on LinkedIn represents a combination of traditional gender expectations and new, more confrontational trends in women.

This polarity reflects the social constructionist perspective of the gender and language (Kendall and Tannen, 2015; Sunderland, 2004) according to which the form of communication is not passive, but actively conditioned by the demands of the situation, where the female communicators are able to negotiate the requirements of expertise and approachability in the self-presentation online.

Collocational patterns also highlight the differences: male-associated expressions were oriented toward the performance indicators and outcomes of the role, which repeats the status-driven discourse of difference models of gendered communication (Maltz and Borker, 2018), in which the word of men tends to be more competitive in terms of individualism. Feminine-associated collocations, in turn, referred to visionary aspirations and mutual recognitions, which invoked a sense of community in stories of achievements (Brahnam & De Angeli, 2012b; Ringrose, 2012).

Although the outcomes are similar to the previous results concerning the connections in the offline workplace (Holmes & Stubbe, 2015), the higher salience of "ambitious" in female posts suggests that such experience is becoming increasingly adaptive, which is contrary to the models of deficits used in the past (Lakoff, 1975). This implies instead an idea of strategic reconfiguration, women use platform norms to exude agency without necessarily avoiding relational components to circumvent the backlash that may come with stereotype disconfirmation (Rudman and Phelan, 2008).

Engagement metrics provide more interpretive stratification because there was no significant gender variation in reactions and shares, but a significant difference in comment typologies: more supportive and emotive comments were received on the posts made by women, and more analytical and tactical comments were received on the posts made by men. This opposition aligns with the tenets of the critical discourse analysis (Mills & Mullany, 2011), which focuses on reproducing power relations through language, i.e. women receive affiliative speech styles that render them likable, and men receive authoritative speech styles that are goal-oriented. Such interactive processes emphasize the performativity of professional identity in LinkedIn (Herring and Stoerger, 2014) whereby not only confirmation but also co-creation of gendered credibility by using rhetorical choices results in various social judgments.

All of these results bring gender and language studies to the terra incognita of professional networking sites and indicate that the formal ethos of LinkedIn can minimize more obvious asymmetries but leave more implicit ones to persist. Most importantly, the persistence contributes to the rejection of the alleged meritocracy of the platform since the linguistic innuendos will toy with the sense of leadership and effectiveness (Baxter and Al A'ali, 2016). In theory, the insights suggest the heightened language consciousness of the professionals to encourage the use of competence-based frames and relational frames irrespective of sex to put obstacles in the path of ingrained biases and enable equitable self-representation.

They point to the possibility of overt linguistic differences being diminished by the formal norms of LinkedIn, yet still enabling less obvious differences to flourish. Practically speaking, they bring the productivity of the language-conscious strategies to practitioners who desire to be reputable and not frightening, and organizations that are curious about the just representations of what success entails. The advocacy of the combination of competence-based and relational framing irrespective of gender could be useful in dismantling the expectations of the audience.

These results emphasise that however, it is not only the contents of what users post online but also how they respond to the posts of other users that influence the construction of professional identity in online settings and, according to this study, the interactive nature of the discourse of the profession online. The dynamics of these interactions should be studied in future studies in larger and more diverse data sets, and how algorithmic visibility can further mediate the association between gender, language and audience engagement.

Another feature of digital inclusion in the study that echoes with the networked narrative theories is the dialogic nature of user-generated content and response of the audience to the construction of identities that characterizes the digital professional discourse (Kozinets et al., 2010). To sell it, the future research can expand the sample to more diverse groups and introduce the impacts of the algorithms on the visibility that will help us to understand the mediated gender-language intersections.

5.1 Implications for Professional Identity Construction

Hypothetically, the results apply the study of gender and language to LinkedIn, where other researchers have never studied the case before and where a set of professional norms help alleviate, though fail to eliminate, gendered asymmetries. This introduces a sense of what can be

labeled digitally mediated gendered discourse in the sense that women are now more vocal about ambition and competence, though in the contexts of community in such a way as to maintain social balance- a trend that can be said to refine the constructionist theory by being platform specific (Kendall and Tannen, 2015). Above all, it challenges the essentialist views because it reveals the discourse as a negotiated performance in digital economies of power (Herring and Stoerger, 2014).

Theoretically, these results take gender and language studies to a platform that has not been explored significantly. They provide that even though the professional norms of LinkedIn might soften in a manner overt gendered asymmetries, they do not completely nullify it. Instead, a form of “digitally adapted gendered discourse” appears to emerge: women are increasingly willing to claim ambition and expertise, but often frame these claims within relational or community-oriented narratives, potentially to maintain social acceptability (Rudman & Phelan, 2008).

On the applied level, the detected trends shape online persona formation plans: men would need to be more inclusive by using relationship lexicon, and females may need to increase resultative expressions to strengthen the impressions of authority. Regarding the diversity initiatives within the organizations, this means the merit in the customized training programs that promote the balanced discursive practices, relying on the critical discourse principles to break the systemic prejudices (Mills & Mullany, 2011).

Male professionals may benefit from integrating relational and community-oriented language to broaden appeal and inclusivity, while female professionals could strategically increase the use of competence- and results-oriented framing to reinforce perceptions of authority and leadership potential. For organizational diversity and inclusion strategies, these findings suggest the value of training and guidelines that encourage balanced language use across genders.

5.2 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The size of the 50-profile corpus is large compared to that of most previous qualitative studies, but small compared to large social media datasets, which may limit external validity. Furthermore, although the engagement data were evaluated, the lack of algorithmic factors, like the prioritization of the feed, is significant, and they may moderate visibility and reinforce the gendered impact (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). These limitations may be overcome with the help of automated corpus assembly and machine learning to predict the sentiment in the future.

Also, longitudinal designs would be able to monitor the changes in these trends over time in the context of changing communicative norms, and comparative cross-cultural studies would determine whether they are universal or culture-specific. The final conclusion of this inquiry is that gendered linguistic practices are transferred to equality-focused sites such as LinkedIn where lexical strategies, framing patterns, as well as the interactions, reproduce the stereotypes of professional representation. Combining data-driven corpus quantification and attention inspection, it provides a sophisticated vision of the way gender, language, and relationship dynamic are shaping online professional paths.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, the authors show that even in a professional social networking site built on the principles of parity and equality, gendered language trends prevail. In a balanced sample pool of 50 achievement-focused posts, male authors were most likely to attribute success to being competent, leading, and strategy-driven, whereas women authors would merge ambition with thankfulness, teamwork, and social credit.

Engagement analysis revealed that there was no gender difference between being viewed in terms of reaction or share, but there were differences in the comment patterns where female- authored posts were more likely to receive supportive and affective comments and male-authored posts were more likely to receive strategic and analytical comments. The provided results suggest that digital professional discourse has become extremely everyday and reflects both the stable gender norms and the shift in the patterns of self-presentation in which women are increasingly taking on assertive modes of language use and continue to position the occupational achievements in terms of relationships.

The significance of the findings is pragmatic in the sense that it can be adopted by practitioners, institutions, and the architects of any such platforms in their endeavor to provide more fair digital platforms. Encouraging a certain degree of linguistic balance, a mixture of competence-based framing with relational framing, is likely to disrupt the bias in the perceptions of the audience. The work could be advanced in future studies through enlarging the datasets size, cross cultural and examine the effect of algorithms as time of engagement.

Lastly, professionals using LinkedIn display success in a way that can never only define who they are, but it also creates collective knowledge of what is considered credible and who is considered a leader. Learning to deal with the understated linguistic patterns that are brought to light here is a step in the right direction toward becoming more inclusive in our professional communications.

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Authors' Contributions

- **Ahmad Raza* (Corresponding Author):** Conceptualisation, Data Collection, Data Analysis, Methodology, and Writing Original Draft Preparation.

- **Dr. Urooj Fatima Alvi:** Supervision, Methodological Guidance, Validation, Review & Editing, and Theoretical Framework Development.
- **Dr. Ashwaq A. Aldaghri:** Project Administration, Funding Acquisition, Coordination, and Critical Review & Final Editing.
- **Dr. Shadi Majed Alshraah:** Literature Review Refinement, Theoretical Alignment, Cross-Cultural Analysis Insights, and Writing Review & Editing.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript. The authors declare equal responsibility for the integrity of the work.

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