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Linguistic Strategies of Persuasion in Bangladeshi Social Media Influencer Discourse

by

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Modern Languages in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English Language Teaching

Department of English and Modern Languages

Independent University, Bangladesh

May, 2026

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Independent University, Bangladesh.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The thesis/project titled "Exploring Bangladeshi University Students' Challenges in Academic Writing in an AI-Supported Learning Environment" submitted by

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ETHICS STATEMENT

This study follows standard ethical guidelines for research using publicly available online data. The data is collected from social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, where influencer content is openly accessible. As the study does not involve direct interaction with participants, informed consent is not required.

However, ethical responsibility is maintained by respecting individuals' privacy and dignity . The data is used solely for academic purposes and is not manipulated or misrepresented.

Additionally, proper acknowledgment of sources is ensured, and the analysis is conducted objectively without bias. The study aims to examine language use critically without causing harm, misinterpretation, or reputational damage to any individual or group.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the linguistic strategies of persuasion used by Bangladeshi social media influencers. With the rapid growth of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, influencers play a key role in shaping audience attitudes, consumer behavior, and social perceptions through everyday language. Unlike traditional advertising, their communication appears informal and relatable, making persuasion more subtle yet powerful. Adopting a qualitative discourse analysis approach, this study analyzes selected influencer content to identify key persuasive strategies, including personal pronouns, evaluative language, storytelling, emotional appeals, and Bangla-English code-mixing. The study is guided by Aristotle's rhetorical framework (ethos, pathos, logos) and Critical Discourse Analysis to explore how credibility, trust, and engagement are constructed. It also considers how socio-cultural context influences language use. The findings aim to contribute to applied linguistics and media discourse studies by providing insights into digital persuasion in the Bangladeshi context.

Keywords

Linguistic persuasion; social media influencers; discourse analysis; code-mixing; Bangladeshi context; rhetorical strategies

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Social media has significantly changed how people communicate, share ideas, and make everyday decisions. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube now function as powerful spaces where users are exposed to opinions, lifestyles, and consumer products. In Bangladesh, the rapid growth of these platforms has led to the rise of social media influencers, who play an important role in shaping audience preferences and behaviors.

Influencers communicate in a way that is often informal, personal, and relatable. Unlike traditional advertising, their content blends everyday interaction with promotion, making persuasion less direct but more effective. Through captions, videos, and stories, they use language strategically to build trust and maintain a close relationship with their audience. This suggests that persuasion in influencer discourse is not only about what is said but also about how it is said.

At the linguistic level, influencers rely on specific micro-discursive features such as personal pronouns, emotional expressions, storytelling, evaluative language, and code-mixing between Bangla and English. These features help create engagement, signal identity, and shape audience interpretation. In particular, code-mixing reflects local communicative practices while also carrying social meaning related to modernity and status.

However, despite the growing importance of influencer discourse, there remains a clear disciplinary gap in existing research. Many studies focus primarily on outcomes such as engagement, credibility, or marketing effectiveness (e.g., Lou & Yuan, 2019; De Veirman et al., 2017; Hudders et al., 2021), with comparatively less attention given to close analysis of language at the micro level. In addition, rhetorical approaches and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are often used separately, with relatively limited attempts to integrate micro-discourse analysis, rhetorical strategies, and CDA in explaining how persuasion is constructed in real data.

Furthermore, most existing studies are based on Western contexts, which do not fully reflect the socio-cultural and linguistic realities of countries like Bangladesh. As a result, perspectives from the Global South remain underrepresented, especially in discourse-based studies of social media. This is important because local practices such as bilingual language use, cultural norms, and identity construction may shape persuasion differently in this context.

Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by examining how persuasion is constructed in Bangladeshi influencer discourse through an integrated approach that combines micro-level linguistic analysis, rhetorical theory, and Critical Discourse Analysis. In doing so, it contributes to a more context-sensitive understanding of digital communication from a Global South perspective.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although social media influencers play an increasingly important role in shaping digital communication in Bangladesh, there is still limited research that closely examines how their persuasive messages are constructed through language.

Most existing studies tend to focus on measurable outcomes such as audience engagement, marketing performance, or psychological impact. While these studies provide useful insights, they often overlook the linguistic processes through which persuasion is constructed in everyday communication.

In particular, there is a lack of detailed analysis of micro-level linguistic features such as personal pronouns, evaluative expressions, emotional language, and storytelling patterns, which are central to influencer communication. Without examining these features, it remains unclear how influencers build trust, create relatability, and influence audience perception through language.

Another important gap lies in the limited attention given to Bangla–English code-mixing as a persuasive resource. Although code-mixing is a common feature of digital communication in Bangladesh, it has not been sufficiently explored in terms of how it contributes to identity construction and persuasive meaning.

Therefore, there is a need for a focused discourse-based study that examines how linguistic choices function in influencer communication to produce persuasive effects. This study

addresses this gap by analyzing persuasion as a language-driven and interactional process in the Bangladeshi social media context.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine how Bangladeshi social media influencers use language to persuade and influence their audiences.

The specific objectives are:

- To identify the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in Bangladeshi influencer discourse.
- To analyze how ethos, pathos, and logos are constructed through language.
- To examine the role of Bangla–English code-mixing in persuasive communication.
- To explore how the socio-cultural context shapes persuasive language use.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it contributes to the fields of applied linguistics and discourse analysis by examining persuasive language in contemporary digital communication. With the increasing influence of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, communication has shifted toward more informal, interactive, and audience-centered forms. In this context, understanding how language functions as a tool of persuasion is essential. This study addresses that need by focusing on how influencers construct persuasive messages through specific linguistic strategies rather than merely examining audience reactions or engagement outcomes.

The study is also important for academic purposes, as it provides insights into how persuasive discourse operates at the linguistic level. By analyzing features such as emotional appeal, storytelling, evaluative expressions, and Bangla–English code-mixing, this research enhances understanding of how language shapes audience perception and influences behavior. It further supports the development of critical discourse awareness among students and researchers, enabling them to identify and interpret persuasive techniques used in social media communication.

Another key significance of this study lies in its contextual contribution. Much of the existing research on influencer discourse is based on Western or other non-local contexts, which do not fully reflect the sociolinguistic realities of Bangladesh. By focusing on Bangladeshi social media influencers, this research fills an important gap in the literature and provides a culturally and linguistically grounded analysis. It highlights how local communication styles, bilingual practices, and cultural norms influence the construction of persuasive discourse in digital environments.

Finally, this study has practical implications beyond academia. The findings may be useful for educators in promoting critical literacy and helping students become more aware of persuasive language use in online spaces. In addition, marketers and content creators can benefit from understanding effective linguistic strategies that resonate with audiences in the Bangladeshi context. Therefore, this research not only contributes to theoretical knowledge but also offers practical value for improving communication practices in digital media.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This study examines the linguistic strategies used by Bangladeshi social media influencers to construct persuasion in digital communication. The data is drawn from widely used platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, focusing on textual elements including captions, written posts, and transcriptions of video content. The analysis explores how features such as emotional expression, personal narrative, evaluative language, and Bangla–English code-mixing contribute to persuasive discourse.

However, the study has several limitations. The dataset is relatively small and limited to a select group of influencers, which may not fully represent the diversity of influencer content in Bangladesh. In addition, the analysis focuses primarily on textual data and does not examine non-verbal elements such as visuals, tone, or gestures, which are also important in digital persuasion. As a qualitative study, the interpretation of discourse may also involve a degree of subjectivity.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into how language functions as a persuasive tool in Bangladeshi social media contexts, highlighting the strategic use of linguistic resources to shape audience perception and influence behavior.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Persuasive language in social media discourse has emerged as a significant and rapidly expanding area of research, as digital platforms increasingly shape public opinion, consumer behavior, and everyday patterns of communication. Persuasion, however, can be understood in multiple ways. From a cognitive perspective, persuasion refers to the process of influencing an individual's beliefs, attitudes, or decision-making. From a rhetorical perspective, it involves the strategic use of appeals such as ethos, pathos, and logos to convince an audience. In contrast, this study adopts a discursive perspective, where persuasion is viewed as something constructed through language, interaction, and social context rather than simply an internal psychological process.

Within this evolving digital landscape, social media influencers occupy a central role in shaping audience attitudes and preferences through informal, experience-based, and highly engaging forms of communication. Unlike traditional forms of advertising, influencer discourse tends to blur the boundaries between personal expression and promotional intent, making persuasion less explicit and more naturally embedded in everyday language use. This hybrid nature of communication allows influencers to appear authentic, relatable, and trustworthy while simultaneously promoting products, ideas, or lifestyles. Consequently, researchers from fields such as linguistics, media studies, communication studies, and applied discourse analysis have increasingly focused on how persuasive meanings are constructed through language in online environments. These studies emphasize that influencer communication is not merely informational, but deeply social and strategic, involving the careful use of linguistic resources to build relationships, negotiate identity, and influence audience interpretation. Understanding these discursive practices is therefore essential for critically examining the broader social, cultural, and ideological impact of digital communication in contemporary society.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The concept of persuasion originates from the classical rhetorical framework developed by Aristotle (2007), who identified three fundamental persuasive appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos refers to the establishment of credibility and trust, pathos involves emotional engagement, and logos is associated with logical reasoning and argumentation. This model provides a foundational lens for understanding persuasive discourse, particularly at the level of linguistic expression.

However, in the context of digital and social media communication, persuasion is not only textual but also interactional and multimodal. To capture this complexity, this study incorporates Hyland's (2005) framework of stance and engagement, which explains how writers/speakers construct interpersonal relationships through markers of attitude, certainty, and reader involvement. From this perspective, features such as personal pronouns, evaluative expressions, and engagement markers (e.g., "trust me," "guys," "honestly") are not neutral but strategic tools for positioning the audience and building relational closeness in influencer discourse.

In addition, this study adopts Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model, which examines discourse at three levels: textual analysis (linguistic features), discursive practice (production and consumption of texts), and social practice (broader socio-cultural and ideological structures). This model allows for a more systematic interpretation of how influencer discourse operates within digital capitalism, consumer culture, and identity construction in Bangladesh.

Furthermore, influencer communication often involves multimodal elements such as images, gestures, layout, and video presentation. Therefore, this study acknowledges Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal discourse perspective, which explains that meaning can be created through both language and visual resources. However, due to the scope of the present research, the detailed analysis focuses primarily on linguistic and textual features rather than full multimodal analysis.

By combining these theories, the study develops a broader understanding of persuasion in influencer discourse. Together, they help explain how language is used to build trust, create

emotion, engage audiences, express identity, and reflect social and cultural meanings in Bangladeshi digital contexts.

2.3 Emotional and Narrative Strategies in Influencer Discourse

A substantial body of research emphasizes the centrality of emotional and narrative strategies in influencer communication. Morton-Standish (2014) demonstrates that personal storytelling enhances audience engagement and increases the persuasive effectiveness of texts by making them more relatable and meaningful. Although this study is situated within educational contexts, its findings are still applicable to digital influencer communication, where narrative forms are widely used to sustain attention and influence interpretation. Similarly, Nasaruddin, Aziz, and Yatim (2023) highlight that influencers frequently rely on personal experiences and storytelling techniques to promote products and maintain continuous audience engagement. Their findings indicate that narrative-based persuasion plays a key role in constructing authenticity and fostering relatability. Supporting this, Lou and Yuan (2019) further demonstrate that emotionally rich and experience-based content significantly enhances consumer trust and purchase intention. However, despite these contributions, existing studies tend to prioritize audience responses rather than examining how such narratives are linguistically and discursively constructed, thereby creating a need for more discourse-analytic investigations.

2.4 Credibility and Relational Communication

Credibility construction remains a central concern in research on influencer discourse. Nova (2023) argues that influencers shape consumer behavior by establishing trust through interactive, personal, and conversational communication styles on social media platforms. This relational approach enables influencers to present themselves as authentic, approachable, and socially relatable figures. Similarly, Ithnin et al. (2020) identify key persuasive strategies such as evaluative language, direct address, and engagement-oriented expressions, all of which contribute to the construction of credibility and sustained audience attention. These linguistic features help create a sense of immediacy and reduce social distance between influencers and their audiences. Furthermore, Prudencio et al. (2023) highlight the frequent use of informal language, expressive vocabulary, and stance-taking as important discourse features in

influencer communication. Nevertheless, although these studies provide valuable descriptive insights, they often fail to fully explain the underlying discursive mechanisms through which credibility is systematically produced and maintained.

2.5 Critical Perspectives: Ideology, Power, and Persuasion

From a critical standpoint, persuasive discourse should be understood not only as a set of linguistic techniques but also as a practice embedded within broader structures of power, ideology, and social inequality. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) argues that language is never neutral; rather, it actively shapes beliefs, identities, and social relations. For example, Younes (2023), using a CDA approach, demonstrates how emotional and rhetorical strategies in YouTube advertisements targeting children influence audience perceptions and reinforce persuasive power, raising ethical concerns regarding vulnerability and manipulation in digital environments. Similarly, influencer discourse can be linked to the commodification of identity, where personal experiences, emotions, and everyday life are transformed into marketable content. Influencers do not simply share opinions; they package their personality, lifestyle, and authenticity as persuasive resources for commercial gain. This connects to the concept of neoliberal self-branding (Marwick, 2013; Abidin, 2016), in which individuals continuously manage and promote themselves as entrepreneurial brands through strategic self-presentation. In this process, linguistic features such as storytelling, emotional expressions, and direct audience engagement become tools of self-promotion. Furthermore, language choice itself reflects social hierarchy and class mobility. In many postcolonial contexts such as Bangladesh, the use of English, especially in code-mixed discourse, often indexes education, prestige, and global modernity. As a result, Bangla–English code-mixing may function not only as a persuasive strategy but also as a marker of symbolic capital and aspirational identity. Therefore, from a CDA perspective, persuasive discourse does more than influence consumer behavior; it also reproduces broader values such as consumerism, status competition, and linguistic hierarchy, making persuasion a socially situated practice shaped by power and ideology.

2.6 Authenticity and Commercialization in Influencer Discourse

A major debate in influencer studies concerns whether influencer communication reflects genuine self-expression or strategically constructed commercial practice. While influencers often project an image of authenticity by sharing personal experiences and everyday life,

research suggests that this authenticity is frequently a carefully managed performance. Abidin (2016) introduces the concept of "calibrated authenticity," in which influencers strategically regulate self-presentation to maintain audience trust while achieving commercial goals. Similarly, Marwick (2013) conceptualizes influencer activity as "self-branding," in which intimacy, relatability, and personal identity are deliberately constructed as part of a monetized online presence. These perspectives indicate that authenticity in digital influencer discourse is not spontaneous but actively produced through communicative strategies. Consequently, linguistic features such as personal narratives, evaluative expressions, direct address, and stance markers serve a dual purpose: they create emotional connection and credibility while also functioning as tools for promotion and persuasion. This dual functionality highlights the inherently strategic and commodified nature of influencer communication in social media environments.

2.7 Code-Mixing and Symbolic Capital in Multilingual Contexts

Code-mixing represents a significant sociolinguistic feature of digital communication in multilingual societies, functioning beyond mere language alternation to reflect identity construction and social meaning. Blommaert (2010) conceptualizes language in globalized contexts as a set of mobile semiotic resources that individuals use to construct identity, authority, and social value. From this perspective, code-mixing can be understood as a form of symbolic capital that indexes modernity, education, and global connectivity. Similarly, Gardner-Chloros (2009) emphasizes that code-switching and code-mixing are meaningful and context-dependent communicative practices shaped by identity, interactional goals, and social relationships rather than random linguistic behavior. In the Bangladeshi context, Bangla–English code-mixing thus serves a dual function: it enhances accessibility and relatability while simultaneously projecting a cosmopolitan and socially elevated identity. However, existing research has largely focused on Western and English-dominant environments, leaving a significant gap in understanding how such practices operate within South Asian digital and persuasive discourse.

2.8 Cultural Context and Linguistic Variation in Persuasion

It is widely recognized that persuasive language is shaped by cultural context. Research shows that in collectivist cultures, inclusive pronouns and group-oriented expressions are often used to create solidarity and alignment between speakers and audiences (Scollon & Scollon, 2001;

Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). Similarly, cultural expectations regarding hierarchy influence how authority is expressed through modality, politeness strategies, and forms of address.

In addition, studies in intercultural pragmatics show that features such as humor, evaluative language, and politeness are interpreted differently across cultures depending on social norms and expectations of interaction (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). This suggests that persuasion is not only based on linguistic form but also on culturally shaped interpretation.

To make cultural variation more analytically useful, discourse studies often focus on linguistic indicators. For example, solidarity is commonly linked with pronoun use and address terms, while authority is reflected through modality and directive expressions. Similarly, stance-taking, hedging, and evaluative language are frequently used to examine politeness and relational positioning (Hyland, 2005). These studies show that cultural meaning is usually expressed through repeated linguistic patterns rather than abstract cultural descriptions.

Overall, the literature suggests that persuasion is closely connected to cultural norms, but most studies treat cultural and linguistic aspects separately. There is limited research that integrates both systematically, especially in digital multilingual contexts such as Bangladesh, where persuasion is shaped through hybrid language use and informal online communication.

2.9 Research Gap

Overall, the existing literature on social media discourse has mainly focused on areas such as marketing effectiveness, audience engagement, and political communication. While these studies provide useful insights, they often focus on outcomes rather than explaining how persuasion is constructed through language in digital contexts.

More specifically, studies on influencer communication highlight several persuasive features such as storytelling, emotional appeal, credibility building, evaluative language, and code-mixing. However, these elements are usually discussed separately and not analyzed as an integrated system of persuasion. As a result, there is limited understanding of how different linguistic strategies work together in influencer discourse.

In addition, most existing studies are based on Western or non-local contexts. This creates a gap in understanding how persuasion operates in Bangladesh, where language use is highly contextual, culturally influenced, and often involves Bangla–English code-mixing in everyday communication.

Finally, although Aristotelian rhetoric and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are widely used frameworks in discourse studies, very few studies combine them to analyze influencer discourse in a systematic way. This indicates a clear theoretical gap.

Overall, the literature shows a need for a study that brings together linguistic, rhetorical, and critical perspectives to analyze how persuasion is constructed in Bangladeshi social media influencer discourse.

2.10 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following main question:

RQ1: What linguistic and rhetorical strategies do Bangladeshi social media influencers use to construct persuasion?

Sub-questions:

RQ1a: How are ethos, pathos, and logos realized in their discourse?

RQ1b: How does Bangla–English code-mixing function as a persuasive strategy?

RQ2: How does the Bangladeshi socio-cultural context influence persuasive language use on social media?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in discourse analysis to examine how persuasion is constructed in Bangladeshi social media influencer discourse. The study is positioned within an interpretive paradigm, focusing on how meaning is produced through language use rather than measuring numerical patterns or audience statistics. In this sense, persuasion is treated as a socially constructed and context-dependent phenomenon emerging through linguistic, interactional, and cultural processes.

The analytical framework integrates three complementary theoretical perspectives: Aristotle's rhetorical theory (ethos, pathos, and logos), Hyland's (2005) stance and engagement model, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework. Aristotle's model provides a foundational understanding of persuasive appeals, while Hyland's framework explains how interpersonal meanings are constructed through linguistic choices such as pronouns, evaluative language, and engagement markers. CDA, in turn, situates these linguistic practices within broader socio-cultural and ideological contexts. In addition, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal discourse theory is incorporated to acknowledge that persuasion in social media is not purely linguistic but also constructed through visual and semiotic resources such as images, layout, and video elements.

Fairclough's model is used in three levels. At the textual level, the study looks at language features such as pronouns, evaluative words, stance markers, code-mixing, rhetorical questions, and storytelling patterns. At the discursive practice level, it examines how influencer posts are created, shared, and understood on social media platforms, including how they interact with audiences. At the social practice level, it explores how these texts reflect wider social ideas in Bangladesh, such as consumer culture, identity, trust, and the impact of globalization.

Overall, this framework helps to study persuasion as a process that works through language, interaction, and social meaning in digital communication.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Selection of Influencers

The data for this study were collected from publicly available posts of ten Bangladeshi social media influencers using a purposive sampling technique. The selection was guided by the objective of analyzing persuasive discourse in active and visible digital communication contexts rather than constructing a statistically representative sample.

The influencers were selected based on clearly defined criteria: (i) an approximate minimum of 50,000 followers to ensure audience reach and visibility, (ii) consistent engagement in terms of likes, comments, and shares, and (iii) active content production within the last six months. In addition, influencers were chosen from diverse content domains such as lifestyle, fashion, education, food, and product promotion in order to capture variation in persuasive discourse practices across different communicative contexts.

These criteria ensured that the selected data reflect active influencer communication practices within the Bangladeshi digital environment, rather than inactive or occasional social media users.

3.2.2 Corpus Size and Time Frame

The corpus for this study consisted of 50 social media posts produced by 10 Bangladeshi influencers, with five posts selected from each influencer. The dataset was limited to content published within the last six months to ensure relevance to current digital communication practices.

The overall dataset comprises approximately 4,000-6,000 words, which is considered sufficient for an in-depth qualitative discourse analysis. However, the aim of this study is not to provide a statistically representative account of all Bangladeshi influencer discourse, but rather to offer a focused and detailed exploration of recurring linguistic and persuasive patterns within a small, purposively selected dataset.

The distribution of the dataset across different social media platforms is presented below to provide a clear overview of the corpus composition.

Table 1: Distribution of Dataset by Platform

Platform	**Number of Posts**	**Percentage (%)**
Facebook	25	50%
Instagram	20	40%
Tiktok	5	10%
Total	**50**	**100%**

3.2.3 Nature of the Data

The dataset includes two main types of linguistic data: written captions and transcribed spoken content from short-form videos. Video-based content was manually transcribed into written form to ensure consistency in textual analysis.

Since the primary focus of this study is on linguistic features of persuasion, visual and audio elements were not analyzed in detail, although their relevance is acknowledged.

The dataset includes multilingual communication, specifically Bangla, English, and Bangla–English code-mixed discourse. This reflects the natural linguistic practices of Bangladeshi social media users and provides an appropriate basis for analyzing persuasion in context. Non-public materials such as private messages, comments, and stories were excluded to maintain ethical clarity.

To illustrate the nature of the dataset, selected representative excerpts include:

“Honestly, ei serum ta amar absolute favourite.”

“Guys, amar phone ta kintu super durable and water resistant.”

“Kintu guys, do you know keno ami Daraz theke order kortesi?”

“I fell in love with this milk powder.”

“Mayar prottek ta product kintu 100% original.”

“Ami jodi tomaderke boli ekta toothpaste bebohar kore instantly whitening possible.”

“Trust me shower e Meril er milk soap bar ta use korar por skin ta eto soft ar smooth hoye jay.”

“Ebar Eid e jei clutch e… 1500 tk theke start.”

3.3 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a combination of rhetorical analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how persuasion is linguistically constructed in Bangladeshi social media influencer discourse. The analytical procedure followed a structured and iterative multi-stage approach to ensure systematic coding, transparency, and interpretive rigor.

In the first stage, all fifty posts were analyzed using Aristotle’s rhetorical framework of ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos was identified through linguistic markers of credibility such as personal testimony, expressions of trust, and references to lived experience. Pathos was identified through emotional language, storytelling, evaluative expressions, and exaggeration used to create affective engagement. Logos was identified through reasoning patterns such as comparison, cause–effect relations, numerical claims, and problem–solution structures. These categories were applied as initial analytical lenses and were refined through repeated readings of the dataset to ensure consistency and reliability in interpretation.

In the second stage, a micro-linguistic analysis was conducted to identify specific discourse features contributing to persuasion. This included pronoun usage (e.g., “I,” “we,” “you”), direct address (e.g., “guys”), modality, evaluative adjectives, stance markers (e.g., “honestly,” “trust me”), rhetorical questions, repetition, and narrative sequencing. Particular attention was given to Bangla–English code-mixing, which was analyzed as a strategic discourse resource for constructing identity, increasing relatability, and enhancing persuasive effect within a bilingual digital environment.

In the third stage, the coded data were organized into broader thematic categories based on recurring persuasive patterns across the dataset. These included emotional storytelling, credibility construction, product evaluation, logical reasoning, problem–solution framing, price/value emphasis, and convenience-based persuasion. These themes emerged through both theoretical guidance and iterative refinement of the data, allowing both deductive and inductive coding processes to operate simultaneously.

Finally, the findings were interpreted using Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis, consisting of textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. At the textual level, linguistic and rhetorical features were closely examined. At the discursive practice level, attention was given to how influencer content is produced, circulated, and consumed within digital platforms. At the social practice level, the analysis explored how persuasive discourse reflects broader socio-cultural realities in Bangladesh, including consumer culture, trust-based communication, identity construction, and the influence of globalization on language use. This framework enabled a systematic connection between micro-level linguistic choices and macro-level ideological meanings, including the commodification of identity and normalization of consumption.

To ensure transparency and analytical rigor, a sample of the coding process is presented in Appendix B. The complete dataset, coding framework, and analytical trail are also provided in the appendix.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

This study is based entirely on publicly available social media content, and therefore no direct contact with participants was required. As a result, informed consent was not necessary. However, ethical considerations were carefully maintained throughout the research process.

All data used in this study were publicly accessible and were collected solely for academic purposes. No private, sensitive, or confidential information was included in the analysis. The study focuses on linguistic patterns rather than evaluating or judging individuals personally. This ensures that the research remains ethical, respectful, and academically responsible.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodological framework of the study, including the research design, data collection procedures, data characteristics, analytical approach, and ethical considerations. By combining rhetorical analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis, the study provides a structured and comprehensive method for examining persuasive language in Bangladeshi social media discourse. The following chapter presents the findings and analysis derived from this methodology.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the findings derived from a qualitative discourse analysis of 50 social media posts produced by 10 Bangladeshi social media influencers across Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. The primary objective is to examine how persuasive language is constructed in digital influencer discourse through linguistic, rhetorical, and socio-cultural resources.

The analysis is guided by four research questions: (1) what linguistic and rhetorical strategies Bangladeshi influencers use to construct persuasion; (2) how ethos, pathos, and logos are realized in their discourse; (3) how Bangla–English code-mixing functions as a persuasive strategy; and (4) how socio-cultural context shapes persuasive language use in Bangladesh.

The findings are presented through structured tables and integrated discourse analysis. Rather than describing surface-level patterns, the analysis interprets how linguistic choices construct identity, credibility, emotional engagement, and consumer influence.

4.2 Overall Patterns of Persuasive Discourse

A macro-level analysis of the dataset reveals that influencer discourse in Bangladesh is strongly characterized by experiential, affective, and conversational language. Persuasion is rarely achieved through structured argumentation; instead, it emerges through personal storytelling, emotional expression, and relational engagement.

Table 2: Dominant Persuasive Features in the Dataset

Feature Type	**Frequency**	**Discursive Function**
Emotional expressions	Very High	Affective engagement
Personal experience	Very High	Authenticity Construction

Evaluative language	High	Product positioning
Direct address	High	Audience intimacy
Logical reasoning	Low	Supportive justification

The dominance of experiential and emotional features indicates a clear shift from rational persuasion to identity-based and affect-driven communication. Influencers construct themselves not as experts, but as relatable individuals sharing lived experiences.

The findings indicate that influencer discourse is predominantly shaped by experiential and emotional language, reflecting a clear shift from rational persuasion toward identity-based and affect-driven communication. Rather than positioning themselves as authoritative experts, influencers construct a relatable persona by presenting themselves as ordinary users sharing lived experiences.

This pattern is strongly supported by multiple raw excerpts from the dataset. Emotional engagement is evident in expressions such as “I fell in love with this milk powder”, “I was shocked”, and “This has made me fall in love with sunscreen again,” where persuasion is achieved through affective intensity rather than objective evaluation. Similarly, highly expressive reactions like “Never in my life did I think cheese and paratha would taste this good” and “bissash koren onno level” demonstrate the use of exaggeration and emotional amplification to enhance audience engagement.

Personal experience further reinforces authenticity, as seen in statements like “I started with my favourite Eva hair oil” and “ami ageo order korechilam,” where past usage functions as implicit evidence of reliability. These forms of self-referential discourse position the influencer as a credible user rather than a distant promoter.

In addition, evaluative and convenience-based language plays a significant role in product positioning. For example, “Honestly, this makes life so easy” and “No extra cutting, no extra hassle, just open and mix” highlight practicality and ease, framing the product as a solution to everyday problems. Direct address is also widely used to reduce social distance, as seen in expressions such as “Guys…” and “Trust me, you will find your perfect fit here,” which create a conversational and intimate tone.

Overall, these excerpts illustrate that persuasion in this context operates through emotional resonance, personal testimony, and relational closeness rather than through formal logic or objective argumentation. Influencer discourse thus functions as a form of performative authenticity, where lived experience and affective expression serve as the primary drivers of persuasive impact.

4.3 RQ1: Linguistic and Rhetorical Strategies of Persuasion

The analysis identifies multiple interrelated linguistic and rhetorical strategies used by influencers to construct persuasion.

Table 3: Key Persuasive Strategies

Strategy	**Example**	**Persuasive Function**
Giveaway + direct address	"Ami tomader jekono ekjon supporter ke amar sathe Argentina niye jacchi. All you have to do is simply buy this Clear Man bottle."	Reward-based persuasion
Emotional reaction	"Never in my life did I think cheese and paratha would taste this good."	Creates strong positive emotion
Personal recommendation	"I feel like bastilla is a must-try…"	Soft persuasion
Authenticity claim	"100% original… internationally certified."	Builds trust
Demonstration	"pani diye dhuilam, kichu hoynai." (phone test)	Proof of product quality
Problem–solution	"Easy hack… makes life so easy."	Simple solution framing

Emotional endorsement	“I fell in love with this…”	Emotional persuasion
Trust appeal	“trust me… visit fitback”	Builds credibility

A key finding of the analysis is that persuasion in Bangladeshi influencer discourse is primarily constructed through the narrativization of personal experience. Rather than relying on formal reasoning or objective evidence, influencers embed persuasive meaning within short, relatable experiential stories that highlight personal encounters with products or services.

For instance, in statements such as *“Never in my life did I think cheese and paratha would taste this good”* or *“I fell in love with this milk powder”*, persuasion is achieved through effective storytelling rather than logical justification. These expressions do not provide factual proof but instead invite audiences to emotionally participate in the influencer’s experience.

This indicates that influencer discourse operates as a form of performative persuasion, where lived experience is presented as implicit evidence. In this process, authenticity is not argued but enacted through personal narrative, enabling audiences to perceive the message as genuine, relatable, and trustworthy.

4.4 RQ1a: Realization of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos

4.4.1 Ethos: Constructed Credibility

Table 4: Ethos Realization

Strategy	**Example**	**Function**
Sincerity markers	honestly, trust me	Signals authenticity
Personal experience	I used, I tried	Establish credibility
Past reference	ami ageo order korechilam	Establishes reliability through repetition

The findings indicate that ethos in Bangladeshi influencer discourse is primarily constructed through subjective experience and relational trust rather than institutional authority or expert knowledge. Instead of relying on formal credentials, influencers establish credibility by positioning themselves as ordinary users who have personally tested and experienced the products.

Sincerity markers such as *"honestly"* and *"trust me"* function as explicit linguistic signals of authenticity. These expressions do not provide factual evidence but work to reduce perceived distance between influencer and audience, creating a sense of interpersonal reliability.

Similarly, references to personal experience, such as *"I used"* or *"I tried"* construct credibility through lived interaction with the product. This shifts authority from external validation to self-reported experience, where personal use itself becomes proof.

Past references like *"ami ageo order korechilam"* further strengthen ethos by establishing continuity and repeated engagement with the same source or product. This repetition reinforces reliability and suggests consistency in judgment, which enhances trust.

Overall, the data suggests that ethos in this context is performative and experience-based, where credibility is not claimed through expertise but continuously constructed through repeated personal testimony and linguistic markers of sincerity.

4.4.2 Pathos (Emotional Appeal)

Pathos is the most dominant rhetorical strategy in the dataset.

Table 5: Pathos Realization

Feature	**Example**	**Function**
Emotional reaction	"I fell in love with this milk powder"	Creates attachment
Exaggeration	"next level", "best ever"	Intensifies emotion
Surprise/shock	"I was shocked"	Increases engagement
Storytelling	"5 years ago I stopped using	Builds emotional narrative

	sunscreen…”	

Pathos is the dominant persuasive strategy in the dataset. Influencers frequently use emotional language to create effective engagement.

Expressions like “fell in love” and “I was shocked” function as emotional intensifiers, encouraging audience identification. Storytelling further strengthens emotional connection by linking products to personal life experiences.

This shows that persuasion operates through emotional resonance rather than rational evaluation.

4.4.3 Logos: Limited Logical Reasoning

Table 6: Logos Realization

Feature	**Example**	**Function**
Cause–effect	“because it keeps skin hydrated”	Justifies claim
Comparison	“hybrid saves fuel”	Logical evaluation
Benefit claim	“no hidden charges”	Practical reasoning

The findings show that logos is relatively limited in influencer discourse and mainly appears in simplified forms such as brief cause–effect explanations, comparisons, or benefit statements. Rather than developing structured or detailed arguments, influencers tend to include short logical justifications that support already established emotional or experiential claims.

From a broader discourse perspective, this limited presence of logos can be understood in relation to the attention economy of social media platforms. Social media environments such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are designed for fast scrolling, short attention spans, and immediate engagement. In such contexts, extended logical argumentation is less effective because users rarely engage in slow or reflective reading. As a result, persuasive

communication tends to prioritize emotional immediacy and quick relational impact over detailed reasoning.

In addition, platform constraints also shape this pattern. Character limits, short video formats, and algorithm-driven content visibility encourage concise, highly impactful messaging. Logical explanations, which require elaboration and step-by-step reasoning, are often compressed into brief statements or replaced with simpler benefit claims.

Another important factor is audience preference and consumption habits. Social media users in influencer contexts typically engage with content for entertainment, lifestyle inspiration, and product discovery rather than critical evaluation. This means that emotional relatability and personal experience are more persuasive than logical justification. Influencers therefore adapt their communication style to match audience expectations, prioritizing affective appeal over analytical reasoning.

Overall, the limited role of logos does not indicate absence of reasoning, but rather a shift in persuasive logic. In digital influencer discourse, persuasion is primarily affective and relational, while logical elements function only as supporting justification within emotionally driven narratives.

4.5 RQ1b: Code-Mixing as a Persuasive Strategy

The dataset shows extensive use of Bangla–English code-mixing, making it a central persuasive tool.

Table 7: Functions of Code-Mixing

Type	**Example**	**Function**
Sentence mixing	“Kintu guys, do you know keno ami Daraz theke order kortesi? Because Daraz is having the biggest sale of the year.”	Combines relatability with promotional emphasis

Emotional emphasis	"Guys, daal ta eta jokhon dhali bhai bissash koren onno level."	Intensifies emotional appeal
Demonstration + mixing	"pani diye dhuilam, kichu hoynai" + "water resistant"	Combines proof with technical credibility
Hybrid persuasion	"trust me shower e Meril er milk soap bar ta use korar por skin ta eto soft ar smooth hoye jay"	Builds trust + highlights benefits
Storytelling + mixing	"৫ বছর আগে… sunscreen use করা অফ করে দিছিলাম… This has made me fall in love with sunscreen again."	Emotional narrative + transformation
Problem–solution mixing	"হটাৎ মেহমানের আগমন? No tension!"	Cultural situation + instant solution

The analysis indicates that code-mixing is not a random stylistic choice but a discursive strategy that carries social meaning in influencer communication.

Firstly, code-mixing enables influencers to construct a hybrid identity that aligns with both local belonging and global aspiration. From the perspective of Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital, English functions as a form of symbolic resource that carries prestige and social value in digital spaces. Its use in phrases such as "biggest sale of the year" signals participation in global consumer culture, while Bangla maintains cultural proximity and emotional connection. This combination allows influencers to position themselves within a socially valued middle-ground where they appear both relatable and aspirational.

Similarly, Norton's theory of identity and investment helps explain why this linguistic practice is effective. Identity is not fixed but continuously negotiated through language use. In influencer discourse, code-mixing reflects the speaker's investment in being perceived as

modern, credible, and socially relevant. For example, in “Kintu guys… Daraz is having the biggest sale of the year,” the shift between Bangla and English reflects shifting identity positions—moving between intimacy with the audience and alignment with commercial promotion.

Secondly, code-mixing enhances emotional engagement by increasing expressive intensity. Bangla creates familiarity and conversational closeness, while English or English-influenced expressions such as “onno level” intensify evaluation. This layered expression allows influencers to communicate emotion more effectively than a single-language form.

Thirdly, code-mixing strengthens credibility by combining lived experience with technical or product-specific terminology. In examples such as “pani diye dhuilam, kichu hoynai” alongside “water resistant,” Bangla constructs experiential authenticity, while English adds a sense of technical legitimacy. This dual structure makes the message appear both personal and reliable.

Furthermore, code-mixing contributes to narrative persuasion by enabling smoother storytelling across temporal and emotional shifts. In transformation narratives such as “৫ বছর আগে… This has made me fall in love with sunscreen again,” Bangla anchors personal memory while English signals emotional resolution, enhancing the persuasive arc of change.

Finally, in problem–solution framing, code-mixing increases immediacy and clarity. Expressions like “হটাৎ মেহমানের আগমন? No tension!” combine culturally familiar situations with concise English solutions, making the message both relatable and action-oriented.

Overall, the findings suggest that code-mixing operates as a socially meaningful persuasive resource rather than a purely linguistic feature. It reflects identity negotiation, symbolic value, and cultural positioning within a globalized digital marketplace. Through this lens, persuasion is not only about language choice, but also about how speakers position themselves within systems of social meaning and value.

4.6 RQ2: Socio-Cultural Influence on Persuasive Language

Table 8: Cultural Dimensions in Persuasion

Cultural Factor	**Example**	**Influence**
Trust-based communication	"trust me"/"bissash koren"	Builds interpersonal credibility
Price sensitivity	"1500 tk instead of 6000 tk"	Appeals to economic value
Relatability	"Guys…"	Reduces social distance
Demonstration culture	"pani diye dhuilam… kichu hoynai"	Visual proof increases trust
Social validation	"amar skin dekhe ek senior apu bollo…"	Community-based credibility
Urgency culture	"biggest sale of the year"	Encourages immediate action
Problem–solution	"No tension!"	Aligns with practical needs

One of the most dominant socio-cultural influences is the emphasis on trust-based communication. Influencers repeatedly use expressions such as *"trust me"*, *"honestly"*, and *"bissash koren"*, which function as relational trust markers. In the Bangladeshi context, persuasion is more effective when it feels personal and sincere rather than formal or technical. For example, Ishaya Tahsin's *"Trust me… skin ta eto soft ar smooth hoye jay"* relies on interpersonal assurance rather than scientific proof.

Another key factor is price consciousness and value orientation. Ashfi Onadi's comparison*"6000 tk+ but… 1500 tk theke start"* demonstrates how economic reasoning is central to persuasion. Rather than focusing solely on quality, influencers highlight affordability and savings, reflecting the importance of cost-benefit evaluation in consumer decision-making.

Relatability is also crucial. Frequent use of informal address terms such as *"Guys"* (Rafsan, Nodi) creates a conversational tone, positioning the influencer as a peer rather than an authority figure. This aligns with Bangladeshi social media culture, where audiences prefer friendly, accessible communication over formal advertising.

The dataset also highlights the importance of demonstration and visible proof. Nodi Chowdhury's example -washing the phone with water to show durability—reflects a cultural preference for seeing is believing. Such demonstrations function as a substitute for technical evidence, making claims more convincing.

Community influence further strengthens persuasion. Mehejabin's reference to a *"senior apu"* provides social validation, showing that approval from others (especially familiar social roles) enhances credibility. This reflects a collectivist cultural tendency where opinions are shaped by social networks.

Finally, the frequent use of problem–solution structures (e.g., "No tension!", "solution to our real problem") shows that persuasion is oriented toward practical benefits and everyday challenges. Influencers frame products as immediate solutions, aligning with audience needs for convenience and efficiency.

Overall, the findings suggest that persuasive language is deeply embedded in local cultural logic, where trust, affordability, relatability, and practical value are more influential than abstract or technical arguments.

4.7 Integrated Summary of Findings

Table 9: Integrated Model of Persuasion

Component	**Dominant Form**	**Role in Persuasion**
Ethos	Personal experience	Builds trust
Pathos	Emotional reactions	Drives engagement
Logos	Price comparison, cause-effect	Supports claims

Code-mixing	Hybrid Bangla–English discourse	Enhances relatability
Culture	Trust, affordability, demonstration	Shapes effectiveness

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical interpretation of how persuasion is constructed in Bangladeshi influencer discourse. Rather than treating persuasion as a purely linguistic phenomenon, the findings show that it is a multidimensional process shaped by rhetoric, identity, and socio-cultural context. By integrating Aristotelian rhetoric (ethos, pathos, logos) with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this chapter demonstrates that influencer communication reflects broader transformations in how authority, trust, and influence operate in digital environments.

5.2 Persuasive Strategies in Influencer Discourse

The findings indicate that influencer persuasion is fundamentally interactional and experience-driven, rather than informational or institutionally grounded. This finding is consistent with that of Lou and Yuan (2019), who show that personal and narrative communication increases audience engagement.

One of the most significant features is the consistent use of direct address, particularly expressions such as “Guys” and “Kintu guys”. While this may appear simple, it performs an important discursive function: it constructs an imagined community between the influencer and the audience. From a CDA perspective, this reflects how language actively reduces hierarchical distance and creates a sense of peer-level communication, positioning the influencer not as an expert but as a friend or equal. Comparison of these findings with previous studies confirms that conversational language reduces distance and builds relatability (Nova, 2023).

Another highly significant strategy is personal testimony, which dominates the dataset. Statements such as “I fell in love with this milk powder” or “ami ageo order korechilam” show that influencers rely on lived experience as evidence. Another important finding is that personal storytelling becomes a key persuasive tool, which broadly supports the work of other studies

linking narrative with trust and authenticity. This represents a shift from traditional advertising, where credibility is based on expertise or institutional backing.

This also connects to the concept of authenticity, which is central in digital discourse. Audiences are more likely to trust influencers who appear genuine, and personal storytelling helps construct that authenticity. For example, transformation narratives create a before-and-after structure that dramatizes effectiveness.

Another important strategy is demonstration, particularly visible in examples like “pani diye dhuilam, kichu hoynai”. This type of discourse goes beyond verbal persuasion and becomes performative evidence. It reduces skepticism by showing rather than telling.

Furthermore, problem–solution structures (e.g., “No tension!”) show that persuasion is strongly oriented toward everyday practicality. Influencers identify common problems and immediately provide solutions, making the message highly relevant. Finally, price comparisons and value emphasis highlight economic reasoning, even though they are embedded within personal narratives.

5.3 Rhetorical Construction of Persuasion

The findings show that persuasion is constructed through a reconfiguration of ethos, pathos, and logos, where traditional rhetorical hierarchies are significantly altered.

Ethos as Performed Authenticity

Ethos in this context is not based on formal authority but on performed authenticity. Influencers use sincerity markers such as “trust me” and “honestly” as shortcuts to credibility. These do not provide factual proof but simulate honesty.

References to past experience (“ami ageo order korechilam”) create consistency and reliability. From a CDA perspective, this shows how authority is constructed through discourse rather than pre-existing. The findings reported here suggest that credibility is relational and built through interaction and familiarity.

Pathos as the Dominant Force

The most important result was that emotional appeal dominates persuasion in influencer discourse. Emotional expressions such as “onno level”, “I was shocked”, and “I fell in love” actively shape audience perception.

Based on the current results, previous studies have shown that emotional language plays a central role in audience engagement (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

These expressions often involve exaggeration, which increases attention and desire. Storytelling further strengthens emotional engagement by presenting transformation narratives. This reflects a broader shift toward affective persuasion in digital media.

Logos as Embedded and Secondary

Logos is present but functions in a supporting role. Logical reasoning appears in simple forms such as price comparison, cause–effect statements, and functional claims.

However, these logical elements are embedded within emotional and experiential discourse. These findings suggest that logical reasoning reinforces persuasion rather than driving it.

This finding is somewhat surprising given that traditional rhetorical theory places strong emphasis on logical argument. In this context, logos becomes secondary to ethos and pathos.

5.4 Code-Mixing and Identity Construction

Code-mixing is one of the most important findings and functions as a powerful persuasive strategy. It operates at both linguistic and socio-cultural levels.

Bangla creates closeness, emotional connection, and cultural familiarity, while English highlights key persuasive elements. For example, in “Kintu guys… biggest sale of the year,” Bangla creates connection, and English delivers emphasis.

This finding broadly supports the work of Blommaert (2010), who argues that language carries symbolic value related to identity and status.

English functions as symbolic capital, representing modernity, education, and global identity. Bangla maintains cultural closeness. The findings reported here suggest that code-mixing is not random but a strategic tool for balancing local and global identity.

5.5 Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Persuasion

The findings strongly indicate that persuasion is embedded in socio-cultural values.

One major factor is interpersonal trust. Expressions like “trust me” and “bissash koren” reflect communication based on personal credibility. Consistent with the literature, this study found that trust-based communication plays a central role in persuasion.

Economic consciousness is also important. Price comparisons show that audiences are sensitive to cost and value.

Relatability is another key factor. Informal language makes influencers appear approachable, increasing engagement.

Community influence also plays a role. Expressions like “senior apu bollo” show that social validation shapes opinions. This reflects collectivist cultural patterns.

Finally, problem–solution discourse highlights the practical nature of persuasion.

These results corroborate findings from Critical Discourse Analysis, which show that language reflects cultural values and social practices (Fairclough, 1995).

5.6 Overall Interpretation

Taken together, these findings suggest that persuasion in Bangladeshi influencer discourse is a hybrid communicative practice shaped by language, emotion, experience, and culture.

The present study raises the possibility that persuasion is embedded in everyday communication and identity performance. Influencers integrate promotion into personal expression, making persuasion less visible but more effective.

Another key finding is that persuasion operates through identity construction. Influencers present themselves as both authentic individuals and aspirational figures.

These results provide further support for the idea that digital persuasion operates through relatability and authenticity rather than authority.

Unlike traditional advertising, persuasion here is not separate from communication it is part of everyday interaction.

5.7 Conclusion

This study has shown that persuasion in Bangladeshi social media influencer discourse is a complex, dynamic, and culturally embedded phenomenon. The findings indicate a clear shift toward emotion-driven, experience-based, and identity-focused forms of persuasion, where persuasive effectiveness depends more on establishing connection with the audience than on asserting authority or formal expertise. Influencers primarily construct persuasion through personal narratives, emotional engagement, and relational language that fosters trust and relatability.

Overall, the study demonstrates that persuasion is not only about what is said, but also how it is said, who says it, and how it is interpreted within a specific cultural and social context.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of Major Findings

This study explored how Bangladeshi influencers use language to persuade their audiences on social media. The findings show that persuasion in this context is not based on complex or formal argumentation, but rather on a combination of personal experience, emotional appeal, and relatable communication styles. Influencers frequently use strategies such as direct address, storytelling, demonstration, problem–solution framing, and price comparison to engage their audience and make their messages more effective. These strategies help create a conversational and interactive style that feels natural and engaging.

The study also reveals that the three rhetorical appeals—ethos, pathos, and logos—are not equally balanced. Credibility, or ethos, is mainly constructed through personal experience and expressions of sincerity, such as "trust me," rather than through professional expertise. Emotional appeal, or pathos, emerges as the most dominant element, with influencers using expressive and sometimes exaggerated language to create strong emotional engagement. In contrast, logical reasoning, or logos, plays a more limited role and is usually expressed through simple comparisons, such as price differences or basic cause–and–effect relationships.

Another important finding is the significant role of code-mixing between Bangla and English. This linguistic strategy allows influencers to connect with their audience on multiple levels. Bangla creates a sense of familiarity and cultural closeness, while English adds a sense of modernity, emphasis, and professionalism. As a result, code-mixing enhances both the effectiveness and the relatability of persuasive messages.

Finally, the study shows that persuasion is strongly influenced by socio-cultural factors. Trust-based communication, sensitivity to price and value, a preference for informal,relatable language, and the importance of community opinions all play a key role in shaping how persuasive messages are constructed and understood. These findings highlight that persuasion is not only a linguistic process but also a culturally grounded practice.

6.2 Conclusion

Based on these findings, it may be concluded that persuasive discourse in Bangladeshi influencer content is highly dynamic, informal, and deeply connected to cultural context. Unlike traditional forms of advertising that rely on expert authority and structured argumentation, influencer persuasion is built on authenticity, emotional connection, and everyday experience. Influencers succeed by presenting themselves as relatable individuals who share honest opinions, rather than distant experts.

The dominance of emotional appeal indicates that audiences are more influenced by how messages make them feel than by purely logical reasoning. At the same time, credibility is constructed through personal storytelling and repeated interaction, which helps build trust over time. The use of code-mixing further strengthens this process by allowing influencers to balance global and local identities, making their communication both modern and culturally relevant.

Overall, this study demonstrates that persuasion in digital contexts is a complex and flexible process that depends on language, identity, and cultural alignment. It reflects a shift in communication where connection and relatability are more important than authority and formality.

6.3 Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for Applied Linguistics, English Language Teaching (ELT), digital literacy, as well as for influencers and marketers.

For Applied Linguistics and discourse studies, the study shows that persuasion in social media is not only a matter of language structure, but also of identity construction, cultural meaning, and interactional practices. It highlights the importance of analyzing micro-level linguistic features such as stance markers, code-mixing, and evaluative language together with broader social and ideological meanings. This supports a more integrated approach in discourse analysis that combines rhetorical theory, CDA, and real-world digital communication.

For English Language Teaching (ELT), the study has direct pedagogical implications. It shows that learners need to be exposed to authentic digital discourse, including social media language, code-mixing, and informal persuasive communication. Teachers can use influencer discourse

as classroom material to develop students' awareness of how language works in real-life online contexts. This can help learners understand tone, persuasion, and audience engagement beyond traditional textbook English.

The study also contributes to critical literacy development. Since influencer discourse often blends information with promotion, learners need to develop the ability to critically evaluate online content. Understanding how persuasion works through emotional language, credibility markers, and identity construction can help students become more critical consumers of digital information and resist manipulation in online spaces.

In addition, the findings support the development of digital discourse pedagogy, which focuses on teaching language through digital communication practices. The study suggests that classroom activities can include analyzing social media posts, identifying persuasive strategies, and exploring code-mixing as a meaningful communicative resource. This approach can make language learning more relevant to students' everyday digital experiences.

For influencers and marketers, the study highlights that persuasion is more effective when it is culturally grounded and linguistically natural. Relatability, emotional engagement, and conversational tone play a key role in audience response. However, this implication is secondary compared to its educational value.

Overall, the study shows that persuasive language in social media is a rich resource for teaching, learning, and critical analysis in modern Applied Linguistics and ELT contexts

6.4 Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the dataset is relatively small and focuses on a limited number of influencers, which may not fully represent the diversity of social media content in Bangladesh. Second, the study primarily analyzes language use and does not include audience responses or engagement data, which could provide a clearer understanding of how persuasive these strategies are in practice. Third, the research is limited to a specific cultural context, which means the findings may not be directly applicable to other countries or regions.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research can extend this study in several important directions. First, studies can include larger, more diverse datasets to better capture the variety of persuasive strategies used by social media influencers. This would help produce more generalizable findings across different types of influencer content.

Second, future research should adopt a multimodal discourse analysis approach. Since social media communication combines language, images, videos, captions, emojis, and visual design, analyzing only text is not enough. A multimodal approach would help researchers understand how meaning and persuasion are created through the interaction of verbal and visual elements.

Third, it is important to explore the role of algorithmic influence in shaping persuasive discourse. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube use algorithms to decide what content is shown to users. Future studies can examine how these algorithms indirectly influence persuasive strategies by encouraging certain types of content, such as short videos, emotional posts, or highly engaging language.

Fourth, emerging technologies such as AI-generated content and virtual influencers should be included in future research. AI tools are increasingly being used to create captions, scripts, and even entire influencer profiles. Studying AI-generated influencer discourse can provide new insights into how persuasion is changing in the digital age and how authenticity is constructed when content is not fully human-produced.

In addition, comparative studies across different social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube) can help identify how persuasive strategies change depending on platform design and audience behavior. Researchers can also explore differences in persuasion based on gender, content type, and audience demographics to better understand variation in communication styles.

Finally, cross-cultural studies would be valuable for understanding how persuasive language operates in different social and cultural contexts. This is especially important in multilingual societies like Bangladesh, where language, identity, and culture interact in complex ways within digital communication.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Full Dataset Used for Analysis



Appendix_A_Full_Data set.xlsx

APPENDIX B

Coding Framework and Analytical Trail

B.1 Overview of Dataset

The dataset consists of 50 social media posts collected from 10 Bangladeshi social media influencers across Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Each influencer contributed five posts. The data were selected purposively to capture naturally occurring persuasive discourse in digital influencer communication.

B.2 Coding Procedure

Coding was conducted in three stages:

1. Rhetorical coding (deductive phase)
   Application of Aristotle's framework (ethos, pathos, logos)
2. Micro-linguistic coding (descriptive phase)
   Identification of discourse features such as pronouns, stance markers, and code-mixing
3. Thematic coding (interpretive phase)
   Grouping recurring persuasive patterns into analytical themes

Coding was iterative, meaning categories were refined through repeated readings of the dataset to ensure accuracy and consistency.

B.3 Coding Framework

Table B1: Rhetorical Categories

Category	Description	Indicators
Ethos	Credibility and trust-building	personal experience, sincerity markers, authority claims
Pathos	Emotional engagement	storytelling, emotional language, exaggeration
Logos	Logical reasoning	comparison, cause–effect, problem–solution

Table B2: Linguistic Features

Feature	Function	Example
Pronouns	Create involvement	I, we, you
Direct address	Engage audience	“guys”, “listen”
Stance markers	Show attitude	honestly, trust me
Evaluative language	Express judgment	best, amazing, soft
Code-mixing	Identity + persuasion	Bangla + English blending
Rhetorical questions	Engagement	“Do you know why…?”

Table B3: Thematic Categories

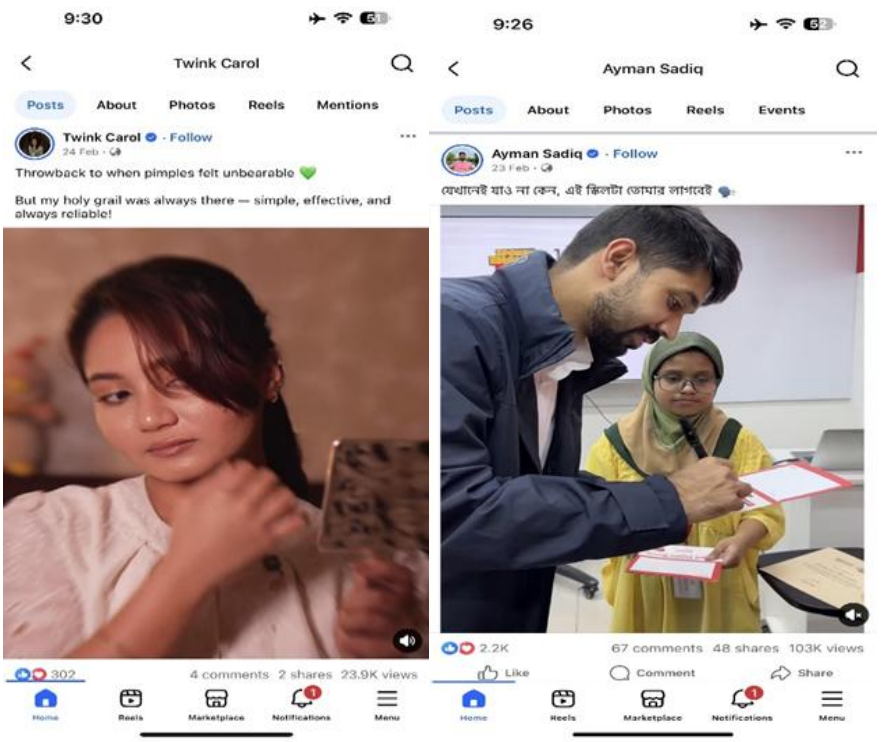
Theme	Description
Emotional storytelling	Personal emotional narratives
Credibility construction	Trust-building through experience
Product evaluation	Assessment of product benefits
Logical reasoning	Comparisons and explanations
Problem–solution framing	Issue followed by solution
Convenience persuasion	Ease and practicality focus

B.4 Sample Coding Extract (Analytical Trail)

Raw Excerpt	Initial Code	Rhetorical Category	Linguistic Features	Theme	Interpretation
“Honestly, ei serum ta amar favourite…”	sincerity + endorsement	Ethos + Pathos	stance marker, code-mixing, evaluative adjectives	credibility + product evaluation	Trust is constructed through personal experience, while emotional language strengthens persuasion

Raw Excerpt	Initial Code	Rhetorical Category	Linguistic Features	Theme	Interpretation
“Kintu guys, do you know…”	engagement hook	Pathos	direct address, rhetorical question	audience engagement	Creates conversational closeness and reduces distance
“Hybrid bike fuel save kore”	comparison	Logos	comparative structure	logical reasoning	Simple contrast is used to justify product benefit

Appendix C: Sample Data Screenshots

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