

Language Policy and Planning for Bangla in the Current Context of Bangladesh: Possibilities and Constraints

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Abstract: Language is a resource and like all other resources it needs planning with a view to deriving the maximum profit and pleasure through its optimum utilization. Since the very beginning of human civilization language has had a vital role in the life of its speakers as they, of necessity, use it to interact among themselves while living in society. Language planning is interlinked with the development of a nation since language, nation and country have become almost synonymous. Bangla language plays a key role in the life of the Bangladeshis as it has a glorious history of language movement which culminated in the liberation of the country ultimately serving in 1971 as an identity for the nation. The paper deals with the existing language planning and policy of Bangladesh to examine whether it is appropriate or not visavis the current condition of the Bangla language with the constraints it is faced with. The article considers the perceptions or attitudes of speakers of the language towards the language policy. The paper focuses on some of the limitations or constraints in the use of language in different spheres of national life. Investigation is also carried out to diagnose whether the practice of other languages is baneful to our mother tongue. The paper concludes by offering some suggestions as to how to implement the existing language policy properly and how to raise the status of Bangla in different spheres of national life and in the international arena at large.

Keywords: Language policy, language planning, lingua franca, national language, official language.

Introduction

A resource as language is, it is necessary to plan it as all resources call for planning for their optimum utilization to the all-round benefit of the stake-holders. In addition, language stands for the identity of a nation and it is more so for Bangladeshis as language acted as the greatest stimuli in our liberation movement. In 1952, we had to launch the Language Movement which accompanied by waves of popular demands and aspirations culminated into a nine month long Liberation War in 1971 earning for Bangladesh the sovereign status of an independent country. Though considered a monolingual country in

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which more than 98% of the population speak Bangla, there are, however, more than ten languages in a small country like Bangladesh – Monipuri, Urdu, Chakma, Santali, Garo, Rakhain, Tipra, etc. And because of globalisation and socio-geographical situation people often mix languages, e.g. English, Hindi with Bangla consciously or unconsciously for the purpose of communication not only in daily life but also in media, advertisements, newspapers, books and so on. English also has gained special status in the country, notwithstanding the Government formulated Bangla Procholon Ain, 1987. The policy enunciated in the Bangla Implementation Act (**Bangla Procholon Ain**) needs evaluation with regard to its performance which involves an examination of the current status of Bangla language that has both **constraints and possibilities** and calls for efforts to find out ways that will pave for improvement.

Background of the Study: Glorious Movement for Bangla language

Beginning ostensibly in 1948 Language Movement climaxed in the killing of Bangla language Martyr on 21 February 1952, and consummated in the adoption of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan in 1956. The question as to what would be the state language of Pakistan may be said to be twin born in the very year of its creation in 1947. The central leaders and the Urdu-speaking intellectuals of Pakistan declared that Urdu would be the state language of Pakistan just as Hindi became the state language of India. Pitted against it were the students and intellectuals of the then East Pakistan, who demanded that Bangla must be accorded the status of one of the state languages of Pakistan. The first Rastrabhasha Sangram Parishad (State Language Action Committee) was constituted towards the end of December with Professor Nurul Huq Bhuyian of Dhaka University as its convener. On 11 March, 1948 a country wide general strike was observed in East Pakistan in protest against the exclusion of Bangla from the the languages of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. Strikes were extended upto 15 March.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder and Governor General of Pakistan, came to visit East Pakistan on 19 March. In the two meetings he addressed in Dhaka he voiced his strong refutation against the popular demand for Bangla. He reiterated that Urdu alone

would be the state language of Pakistan. The declaration encountered instant protest, consequently spreading the Language Movement throughout the length and breadth of East Pakistan. The Dhaka University Language Action Committee came into being on 11 March 1950 with Abdul Matin as its convener. Their movement gained unabated momentum and by the beginning of 1952, the matter came to a head. Both Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan had been in their graves – Jinnah on 11th of September, 1948 and Liaquat Ali Khan (killed) on 16 October, 1951. Khwaja Nazimuddin had succeeded Liaquat Ali Khan as Prime Minister of Pakistan. With the political crisis ceaselessly aggravating, the economic condition in East Pakistan also deteriorated. A sense of deprivation and exploitation intensified in East Pakistan and there grew a realization that Pakistani colonialism and cultural invasion were going to replace British imperialism. The Language Movement received an added momentum on 27 January 1952 when addressing a meeting at Paltan Maidan, Khwaja Nazimuddin declared that the people of East Pakistan might choose the language for their province, but only Urdu would be the state language of Pakistan. Instantaneous, strong and refuting came the response with the slogan, 'Rastrobhasha Bangla Chai' (we want Bangla as the state language) from the audience.

An All-Party Central Language Action Committee was formed with Kazi Golam Mahboob as its convener. The Language Action Committee decided to call a hartal and organize demonstration and processions on February 21 throughout East Pakistan. The Government imposed Section 144 in Dhaka, banning assemblies and demonstrations of all descriptions. The students, determined to violate Section 144, held a meeting at 11.00 a.m. on 21 February on the Dhaka University campus, at a location close to the present Dhaka Medical College Hospital, then Arts Faculty of Dhaka University. Thousands of students from different schools and colleges of Dhaka thronged in the university campus while armed police waited outside the gate. The students came out in groups shouting slogans and the police, unable to control the agitated students, fired upon them as they were heading on procession towards the Assembly Hall (at present October House of Jagannath Hall, University of Dhaka). Three young men, Rafiq Uddin Ahmed, Abdul Jabbar and Abdul Barkat, an MA

student of Political Science, were fatally wounded. Many injured persons were admitted to hospital. Among them Abdus Salam, an attendant at the Secretariat, subsequently succumbed to his injury.

Similar to the previous day, 22 February was equally a day of public demonstrations and police reprisals. The people held a janaza (prayer service for the dead) and brought out a mourning procession on which the police and the army jointly launched attacks resulting in several deaths, including that of a young man named Shafiqur Rahman. Many were injured and arrested. On 23 February, a memorial was erected at the spot where students had been killed. This temporary structure was replaced by a concrete memorial, the Shaheed Minar (Martyr's Memorial) in 1963.

The East Bengal Legislative Assembly (the provincial legislature) adopted a resolution recommending for according **Bangla the status of one of the state languages of Pakistan**. The language movement had, however, to continue till 1956 when its final victory came with the Pakistan Constituent Assembly obliged to adopt both Bangla and Urdu as the state languages of Pakistan.

International Mother Language Day

The UNESCO in its resolution at its headquarters in Paris in November 1999 proclaimed that 21st February be observed as International Mother Language Day throughout the world to commemorate the martyrs who sacrificed their lives on this very day in 1952 – surely a profound homage and glowing tribute paid by the international community to the language martyrs of Bangladesh. Following this declaration UN member countries around the world observe 21st February as the International Mother Language Day, thus globalizing the glorious sacrifice of Rafiq, Salam, Jabbar, Barkat and other martyrs as well as of those who suffered torture and repression in the hands of the authoritarian government of Pakistan for championing the cause of their mother tongue.

The Language Policy of Bangladesh

Language planning in Bangladesh is of paramount importance because language is not only a resource but also an emblem of national culture and tradition, solidarity and integrity. This crucial importance of the

Language necessitates careful and conscious planning.

Secession and consequent independence from Pakistan in 1971 generated a wave of nationalism which not only demolished Urdu but also dislodged English, conferring on Bangla (the first language) precedence at all levels of bureaucracy, education, administration and judiciary. The constitution which was written in Bangla declared, "The state language of the Republic is to be Bangla" (Part 1, Article 3). In 1987 the Government passed Bangla Procholon Ain, 1987 (Bangla Implementation Act) – a law to enforce the use of Bangla in all spheres of national life. The law provides that government offices must use Bangla in all their works thereby according Bangla with the status of national-official language of Bangladesh. English will be used as lingua franca in communication with foreign countries. Thus the Government promoted: *The learning use of the mother tongue to give students, people an anchor in their ethnic and cultural traditions, thus avoiding the excesses of westernization and hopefully preventing deculturalisation (Gopinathan 1998: 21).*

Status of English in Bangladesh: Past and Present

Through colonization English which is a native language of England spread over the world and emerged as the single important international language. The Britishers ruled over the Indian subcontinent as their colony for nearly two hundred years and introduced English as the medium of education, administration and commerce. Learning English was tantamount to achieving special social status. English continued to enjoy this status till the partition of India into India and Pakistan. The Language Movement in 1952 not only restored Bangla but also upraised using English virtually in the official activity to avoid language clash. The blood shedding Liberation War of 1971 earned independence for Bangladesh as well as a unique status for Bangla that replaced both Urdu and English. English lost its previous overriding importance. The Bangla Implementation Act, 1987 circumscribed the scope and use of English in socio-cultural domain but at the tertiary level English was allowed to continue parallel with Bangla as the language both of instruction and examinations. Now English is taught in primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary levels.

English is considered as a foreign language in Bangladesh. On the other hand, though officially it is not recognized by the government as a second language, English does serve as a second language for the people pursuing higher education and social status. Even as a foreign language, English takes on a special importance in the national educational policy. Though not officially enjoying the status of an official language for communication, it gradually became single most important language in Bangladesh so far as academic affairs and job placements are concerned, virtually becoming a tool for social advancement and economic development.

The people of Bangladesh who are acquainted with English often mix it with Bangla in their social discourse. Elite Bangladeshis tend to speak English words abruptly in their communication – a significant evidence of use of English along with Bangla through code mixing and code switching, and it has become a part of the socio-cultural milieu in Bangladesh.

The State of the Art

Though language planning has been going on for centuries, it has been the subject of intensive study only since the 1960s. Weinrich was first to use the term 'language planning' for a seminar held at Columbia University in 1957 as narrated by Haugen who himself introduced the term, 'language planning' in 1959 to signify a collective effort by Norway in shaping her national language. Haugen (1966:133) defines language planning as *"the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogenous speech community"*. The term language planning was, however, popularized by Rubin and Jernudd (1971) in their book, *Can Language Be Planned?*

Since then the term has been continuously used in literature by scholars like Fishman, Ferguson, Rubin, Das Gupta, Nahir, Kloss, Neustupny, Ruiz, etc. These scholars framed their theoretical formulations on the basis of their cross-national studies of language planning. The fact that more than a dozen of definitions of language planning were advanced after the publication of Haugen's article bears testimony to a lack of consensus or a universally accepted definition of the concept. A few definitions by different scholars are quoted below:

1. *"As I define it, the term Language planning includes the normative work in language academies and committees, all forms of what is commonly known as cultivation.... And all proposals for language reform or standardization". (Haugen, 1959)*
2. *"Language planning is deliberate language change; that is changes in the systems of language code or speaking or both that are planted by organizations that are established for such purpose solving and is characterized by the formulation and evaluation of alternatives for solving language problems to find the best (or optimal, most efficient) decision". (Rubin and Jernudd, 1971: 211)*
3. *"Language planning is an attempt to interfere deliberately with a language or one of its varieties: it is human intervention into natural processes of language change, diffusion, and erosion. That attempt may focus on either its status with regard to some other language or variety or its internal condition with a view to changing that condition, or on both of these since they are not mutually exclusive. The first focus results in status planning; the second results in corpus planning". (Wardaugh, 2010: 379)*
4. *"Language planning refers to a set of deliberate activities systematically designed to organize and develop the language resources of the community in an ordered schedule of time". (Das Gupta, 1973: 157)*
5. *"The term language planning refers to "the organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level". (Fishman, 1974:79)*
6. *Language planning may be defined as "government authorized, long term sustained and conscious effort to alter a language itself or to change a language's functions in a society for the purpose of solving communication problems". (Weinstein, 1983:37)*
7. *Language planning is "a problem solving activity concerned with deliberate language change for specific aims, which may be social, political or educational (or a mixture of all three)". (Kennedy, 1983 cited in Roy-Campbell and Gwete, 1983:208)*
8. *"Language planning is deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional*

allocation of their language orders." (Cooper 1989:45)

Types of Language Planning

There are three types of language planning: Corpus planning, status planning and acquisition planning. Corpus planning and status planning are two interrelated components – they are twin in respect of their origin. Acquisition planning is their 'later born.'

Status Planning

Status planning implies the allocation of functions to a language or languages. Status planning involves assigning specific roles to a language or languages, primarily by the government, and secondarily by other interested institutions and organizations. Status planning mainly focuses on the formulation of language policies, enacting laws or framing rules to give a language or languages their particular official status. Status planning, therefore, deals with the functional allocation of a language as official national language or second language or foreign language.

Official language: *a language that is used for government, business and other formal purposes within a country, Whether this is an international language such as French, English or Portuguese, or an African language like Kiswahili....*
National language: *either (a) an African Language that is also an official language, or (b) a language that has been decreed to be a national language of a country (Mkanganwi, 1992:10 - Mkanganwi dealt with the case of Zimbabwe in Africa).*

It, therefore, follows that the form of planning which includes decisions about declaring one or more languages as official is regarded as status planning. Usually it is the government that makes decisions, implicit and explicit, with regard to status planning. Language policy decisions are actually political decisions that can only be taken by national governments. Thus, status planning is not divorced from overall national planning processes or social policies of the state. Status planning also includes decision as to whether a language is to be used as a regional, local language as in case of the provinces of India or whether it will be the medium of instruction in educational institutions or whether a language would be replaced by

another. It may also relate to the question of revival of a dead language or strengthening of an extinctive one.

We impart knowledge and skills almost exclusively in the Foreign language while the majority of our people, farmers and craftsmen, perform their daily tasks in Yoruba, Hausa, Ga, Igbo, Bambar, Kiswahili, etc... The question is: why not help them to improve their social, economic and political activities via the mother tongue? Why insist on their learning English or French first before modern technology could be introduced to them? In most developing countries, a few towns and cities operate in English, French, etc...while many rural villages and hamlets operate in the mother tongue. (Roy-Campbell and Gwete, 1997:107).

Corpus Planning

Wardaugh (2010) says, "*Corpus planning seeks to develop a variety of a language or a language, usually to standardize it, that is, to provide it with the means for serving every possible language function in society*". Corpus planning involves standardization, lexical modernization, terminology unification, stylistic simplification, purification, reform and graphization. Thus, corpus planning refers to the development of different facets of a language that enfold lexical development, codification and standardization or harmonization of a language, creation and updating of terminology as well as the structure of a language so that it may meet all the typical requirements of a standard language that is used in official domains, in higher education and in philosophical, scientific and technical discourses.

What the lack of corpus planning causes is sadly manifested in the following excerpt:

"...the current state of Bangla pronunciation reflects a very sad picture as heard even in the utterances of educated people. Some of the examples are (a) an age-old practice of mispronouncing Bangla letters and their phonic sounds, e.g., ebong (aebong), kebol (kaebol), shamanno (shamainno), broto (brot), mon (mwan). (b) The latest fad of pronouncing 'chhe' as used in the present perfect tense of verbs as 'saeh' that creates words like bolesaeh, koresaeh, etc., sound most weird particularly when heard on audio and audio-visual media. Such an attempt to modernize Bengali pronunciations is absolutely

ridiculous, ...the present day fashion of using too simple English words like 'so, but, always, again, because, then', etc., in spoken Bengali has rendered the language into a cheap and a hybrid one that can very well be described as pidgin Bengali. Some well-thought people describe such a morbid situation as Bangraji or Banglish. ...qualitative standardization of both spoken and written form of Bengali has to be made mandatory when presented in public forum both orally and in print. We are badly in need of some effective forms of remedial education on Bengali as a whole that in no way will mean discrediting anybody. Or else there is a fear that complacency might set in further so to relegate Bengali to a lesser language in our own country that has been the torch bearer of not only earning Bengali as one of the state languages but also raise everybody's mother tongue to a rank and status of pride across the globe." (The Daily Star, February 21, 2010).

Language cannot remain static; it must be moving with the march of civilization. Technological advancement and modernization demand formulation of new terms to describe new ideas or entities. It also involves the development of registers (level and style of a piece of writing or speech that is appropriate to the situation that it is used in) for specific subjects like journalism, computer science and economics through internationalism, using loanwords, compound words, and even creating new words by coinage, blending, conversion, etc.

Thus language changes and develops consistent with technological and societal developments. Hence, corpus planning is necessary to effect lexical, grammatical and stylistic changes to cope up with emerging vicissitudes of human knowledge and life. There can be no language of technical instruction without technical terminologies. Corpus planning may be summed up in the words of Haugen (1966): *the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar and a dictionary for guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community.* (Haugen, 1966:133)

Status planning without concomitant corpus planning runs into a blind alley. Conversely, corpus planning without status planning is an amusing linguistic game, a futile technical exercise without social consequence. The two are interdependent and mutually supportive, not

exclusive, and thus require to be implemented simultaneously.

Acquisition Planning

Acquisition planning aims at increasing the number of users of a language – speakers, listeners, writers, and readers. Acquisition planning decides whether a language should be a compulsory subject or prerequisite for employment or entry into higher education or making the language as a medium of instruction. This is why, acquisition planning is also known as Language in Education Planning.

Stages of language planning

There are specific stages which reflect the systematic process of language planning. The ideal, model or systematic process of language planning involves four stages, e.g. fact-finding, planning, implementation and evaluation.

Fact-finding

The first step in the development of a language plan consists in carrying out an extensive research to collect attitudinal and demographic information which help planners to deduce, draft and formulate the target language policy. Three types of basic data – attitudinal, demographic and situational – are required in framing a language plan. Designing a feasible, objective and effective language plan calls for complete collection of these data.

Planning

In the second phase comes the actual planning. The planner formulates plans based on his knowledge strengthened by fact-findings regarding possibilities. Planning forms a natural follow-up to fact-finding as it facilitates to determine goals and strategies as well as predict outcomes. Once the goals are determined, appropriate strategies are to be contrived to achieve them. Then comes the final step in the planning stage that involves prediction of the possible outcomes.

Implementation

Implementation is the phase of the language planning process that puts strategies into operation. Language planners and government have to play active role in persuading and motivating the citizens to

accept the proposed language plan. The process of implementation is, undoubtedly, the most challenging and difficult stage because it is where the entire population is involved and it is extremely difficult to preascertain how people will react to the policy. Language planners who predetermine the goals of the language plan have to ensure that the plan will be effectively and successfully implemented by dint of gaining consensus or approximation of consensus of the majority of the population.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the final stage of the language planning process. This is the stage when the planner sees whether the plan has been implemented as conceived and designed and whether the actual outcomes match the predicted ones. This can be regarded as the most important stage as the successes or effectiveness and the limitations of the language plan are assessed here. Both goals and outcomes should be critically weighed and judged so that extents of success and failure could be specifically established.

Literature Review

Since the introduction of the term into literature by Haugen in 1959 numerous studies have been carried out dealing with the issues of language planning nationally and internationally. The present study looks at issues of language policy and planning in Bangladesh. The literature on language and language planning generally forms the background of the study. Haugen (1966) sees language planning as an *"activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community."* (ibid 5)

Rubin & Jernudd (1971) concern themselves with problem solving, evaluation, and formulation of alternatives for solving language problems. Fishman (1973) refers to language planning as the organized pursuit of solutions to language problem at the national level.

Weinstein (1980) looks at it as governmental efforts to alter a language's functions in a society for the purpose of solving communication problem. Kennedy (1983) emphasizes that language

planning is a deliberate change for specific aim, social, political or educational (or a mixture of all three). Cooper (1989) perceives it as deliberate efforts to influence people's behavior with regard to structure, function and acquisition of their language. Wardaugh (2010) views it as human intervention into natural process of language change, diffusion and erosion.

Methodology

The study employs both primary and secondary research approaches. The primary research approach includes the views and experiences of the users of Bangla language e.g. students, teachers, officials, parents, common people, etc. who are directly concerned with it in their day-to-day activities. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods have been applied.

It uses questionnaires to, and interviews with, students and teachers of colleges and universities, both public and private, personnel of government and private organizations, parents and common people. The questions were prepared to explore the present condition of Bangla. A part of the questionnaire was designed for interview in which the respondents were asked to speak about the language they prefer in their family life and in their professional life. In the questionnaire related to interview the respondents were asked to talk about the existing condition of Bangla and the language policy as well as the ways for its improvement.

Data Collection and Analysis and Findings

The results of the study are obtained by data collection process through questionnaire to which teachers, students, government employees, private employees, parents and common people in Dhaka city are respondents. The data gathered from the respondents of various professions are analysed question by question.

To the question whether they are aware of any language policy of Bangladesh, 62% of the respondents know that Bangladesh has a language policy because it is well circulated that Bangla is the state language of the country. They further say that in the month of February every year they find announcements and programs in different media, though they do not see much progress in its

implementation, they express about the existing state of things. Rueful it may be but the fact remains that 32% of the respondents are not aware of the existence of the state policy of the language implying that there is a great necessity for its wider publicity among the masses; bigger efforts are to be employed.

The data gathered on the question of whether the existing language policy is satisfactory reflect that 34% of the respondents view the language policy as satisfactory while 42% of them consider it unsatisfactory with the rest 24% having confessed that they have lack of knowledge as to the effectiveness and performance of the policy.

The responses reveal that 34% of the respondents consider the Language Policy as satisfactory on the ground that the constitutional provision of Bangla as the state language and the enactment of Bangla Implementation Act, 1987 are recognition of the sacrifice of the language martyrs. It is also satisfactory because Bangla is the language which 98% people of the country use as their means of communication in every day life. Bangla also symbolises the national unity and solidarity. The policy, if implemented, will help improve the level of literacy. The state language Bangla helps to access information and understand the laws and rules of the country. The UNESCO proclamation of the 21st February as the International Mother Language Day further confirms the necessity and right of Bangla as the state language of the people with almost all of them using the language in their daily activities.

People expressing 'unsatisfactory' opinion of the language policy dub it as being confined to paper only. The policy enshrines a supreme position for Bangla language but that policy is not practiced at work, in meetings, offices, courts, etc. The policy serves only as a measure for political expediency. It subscribes to the stereotyped principle of monolingualism. These people suggest that English should be added as an official language. An official language should be one that is globally communicable. We cannot communicate in Bangla while in foreign countries. The sooner we recognize that English is by far the only language we can use effectively across cultural lines in international arena, the greater good will it bring for the country. One official languages is not enough for a country. People should enjoy the

opportunity to speak any language they want to. It is good that "This questionnaire is in English and I can complete it in English". It is good to promote and develop all varieties to the same status like Bangla and allocate more programs on TV.

Is the use of language in offices, educational institutions, TV, etc. consistent with the language policy ? To this 40% of the respondents speak that the language that is being used in the offices, schools, colleges and TV is in conformity with the existing language policy while the equal number tell of its nonconformity and half this number tell of their lack of knowledge about the policy and its contents. People having positive view point out that important documents, information, announcements are rendered in Bangla and as such every citizen can have access . TV programmes are run in Bangla language. People communicate and interact in Bangla language. Students are taught in Bangla in schools and colleges. BTV and private TV channels of Bangladesh conduct programs on how to pronounce correct form of Bangla words. Bangla is used to write rules and laws. Those dissatisfied at the present usage of Bangla complain that many institutions especially private offices and universities do not comply with the language policy of the country since English is used almost exclusively by most of these institutions. English receives preferential treatment and most of the employees are still expected to use English. There are schools where Bangla language is discouraged and almost excluded from the curriculum.

To the question: Is it possible to implement the language policy? data from respondents exhibit that 50% of them consider the language policy as implementable whereas 24% as unimplementable; still 26% of the population show their inability to make answer to the question. The respondents supporting the implementability of the policy suggest that in order to implement the policy, politicians must practice what they preach. They must strive to use Bangla language in Parliament and in political rallies properly. The government and its different organs and departments should get the policy implemented. Not that there are no ways and means for making financial provisions required for the implementation. If the government adopts less investing in arms, jets and foreign tours and adopts corruption prevention

measurers and curtails expenditure on less necessary or unnecessary heads, the money thus saved could be utilized for the development of the language and implementation of the policy.

If the government, inspired by the best intention, appoint adequate number of language practitioners with enough interpreters, translators, educators, and allocate necessary resources and involve all the stakeholders, it could be possible to implement such a policy. National commitment and governmental determination to enforce the policy is an essential prerequisite to implement it.

The Language Implementation Cell of the government should be well-equipped to implement the language policy by ensuring that public institutions and companies comply with the language policy properly. It should make people aware of the importance of language and arouse up their consciousness about the essence of the language movement. People should be adequately informed and made aware about it so that they can accept it in their own interest.

The opposite view is that Bangladesh does not have adequate resources to implement such a policy. Corporate companies resist change. They feel more comfortable with English. To them English is still the language of prestige superior to other languages. Bangla has gained world wide status with the declaration of the international mother language day, but we can not communicate internationally as we can in English. Even it is not used as a language of workplace all over the country. Bangla has not reached the same level of development as English; there is also lack of vocabulary as a lot of English words do not have synonyms in Bangla.

As almost everyone in Bangladesh can speak and write in Bangla, it is used as a common means of communication. As every employee is not good at English, all of them cannot communicate in English. Bangla is used as lingua franca among the different languages. Most books on different subjects are written in Bangla. Bangla continues as the medium of instruction at schools, colleges and universities. There exist lack of confidence, lack of responsibility and of knowledge of Bangla language. This relegates Bangla to an inferior status. English is the medium of communication for the private organizations. English medium schools have grown like mushrooms in Dhaka and other

cities indicating, among others, that efficiency in English, not Bangla, helps students receive higher education from abroad. Government should make provision for English as another official language, because one language cannot serve the whole nation and all its purposes and domains.

English has assumed the importance of a prerequisite for entry in the job market. Almost everything is done in English. Most companies, institutions, NGOs and employers prefer English. Because we are in the grip of globalization and because of job scarcity at home, people cannot but flock for employment to overseas where they will have to use English.

The present young generation tends to prefer English to their mother tongue. Indoctrination and colonial legacy impel Bangla language speakers to prefer English as a medium of instruction. People presume that by communicating in English they acquire special status. Young people take pride in using English in their communication. English appears to become the first language of a good many English medium school going children. A Bangla language speaker is found to bank on English word when he fails to have the native equivalent and is lethargic to find it out. Using English sometimes makes them appear to be knowledgeable and intelligent.

Guardians are eager to send their children to English medium schools. Even they use English at home. They gradually become far removed from the mother tongue resulting in the up-coming generation turning into foreigners in their own country. Let alone the upper class, the middle class people are also prone to send children to English medium schools. In order to improve their children's communicative skill in English they also speak English at home. Most of the students who have been to English medium school fail to develop Bangla speaking skills; they do not understand many Bangla words; cannot express themselves or communicate with others in Bangla. Bangla language is not properly developed to be capable enough to communicate in the world of information and technology as English is.

A great many scholars are at untiring pains to preserve, develop and strengthen Bangla language. Researchers are carrying out research on Bangla language and explore new Bangla word to replace the existing

English word in mixed use. Bangla Academy has published English to Bangla dictionary that serves as a sure measure for the promotion and development of Bangla. It is the duty of the citizens to use Bangla in every activity and interaction in their professional, educational as well as personal life. Realisation should instill in the people that speaking Bangla language does not mean that one is not educated, rather it testifies the spirit of confidence and sense of pride in the mother tongue. Is it possible for Bangladeshis to imagine life without Bangla language? For example, when we tell jokes in Bangla, it does not have the same impact as when we tell that joke in English. The question of extinction of Bangla is an absolutely unthinkable and untenable proposition rather it is a figment of the perfervid mind. Is it imaginable that Bangladesh will cease to exist? Similarly, Bangla will exist so long as the Bangali nation exists. Bangla is not simply a language, it is part of our very being. Our culture is entwined with our language. Bangla is synonymous and identical with the nation and the country. As long as we continue to observe and maintain its official status in right earnest, its existence is guaranteed. We should make Bangla language compulsory and encourage our kids to speak the language. It is imperative on our part to make them realize how important our language is, how glorious its history is and how precious its resources are.

At present English has been so deeply and widely diffused in our culture that its mixture with Bangla has been a common and constant phenomenon. "Banglish", as popularly termed today, is the use of the English diction inserted randomly in Bangla discourse. This profusion makes conversation in Bangla containing as much as 30% to 40% English words. The use of Banglish has been constantly increasing in popular media, such as in television and private radio channels. Hosts of public events and concerts are often seen speaking Banglish to the amusement of the audience. They think that for globalization English has become a gateway to the world and being able to use English adds a new dimension to one's career and clout.

There is a profuse use of English in private organizations causing therein a rapid decline of Bangla language. Only 28% private organizations use Bangla as their main official language. English is used by 72%.

The voice of disagreement with it, however, asserts that people shed their blood for the prestige of Bangla. So to respect their sacrifice we should not mix up Bangla underscoring that the mixture is an upstart trend that damages the purity of the mother tongue.

Interviews

Interviews were taken from the people who participated in the questionnaire part. But the main focus of the interview was the persons who have professional attachment with educational institutions, long and extensive exposure to the practice of Bangla and expertise in the sociolinguistic field of study as well as teaching languages or and a state of the art knowledge about language planning and related affairs.

These scholars comment that our mother tongue has been adorned with status planning in that it has been conferred the dignity of the state language by the supreme law of the land – the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (Article 3 of the Constitution). As a measure of materializing the constitutional provision enactment of a law under the name and style of 'Bangla Procholon Ain, 1987' (Bangla Implementation Act) has also been made with clear and focused direction that all communication activities of the nation should be carried out through the medium of Bangla. This status has been made all the more singly prominent and dominant in that there is no other language even English which enjoyed a prestigious position in sociolinguistic domain earlier has been accorded any sort of recognition as a second language or a regional language or allowed any function in the affairs of the state save and except in dealing with external or foreign affairs. This crowning of Bangla has, however, remained simply a semblance of its status. The Bangla Procholon Ain has not been able to enjoy the fortune of its being implemented in letter and spirit even in the ministries, let alone in its offices outside the Secretariat, the apex administrative hub. The situation is so much so deplorable that on the 16th of February this year (2014) after as many as 42 long years of constitutional endorsement the Supreme Court had to issue a *Rule Nisi* asking the government to show cause why Bangla has not been implemented in all offices of the government. Paradoxically enough, the first circular that is available

with the Bangla Bhasha Bastabayon Kosh (the Bangla Language Implementation Cell) – the administrative body invested with the responsibility of execution of the government decision of obligatorily using Bangla in all spheres of public life, is in English. The interview gave out that the sincerity of the government functionaries is not as intense as it should be in matters of execution of the policy as is usually evident in other affairs too. Status planning is clearly unequivocally endorsed by the constitution and subsequently made legally binding with implication of being justiciable in the court of law by the enactment of the Bangla Implementation Act, 1987 in case of breach by any employee. In spite of the fact of the offence having been identified as misconduct punishable under the Government Employees Discipline and Appeal Rules, English is in rampant use in most offices – a laxity galore. Dignity conferred upon something requires to be fortified by measures of strengthening its effectiveness and efficacy which are lacking unmistakably in case of Bangla. Corpus planning that makes the language functionable in different domains of necessity has yet to be done even to the minimum necessary level. This aspect of planning that deals with the reinvestment and reinforcement of the characteristics of the language has been neglected or done perfunctorily. For example, expanding vocabulary through the creation and coining of terms and standardization of the current terms, spelling rules, simplification of registers, development of orthographies, prescription of standard pronunciation rules etc. have not been attempted at properly according to what its status (state language) calls for in order to maintain and carry out the purpose, position, prominence and proportion that the constitution has so singly and dedicatedly conferred upon it. Computerization which has now become almost sole mechanism to render every bit of human thought and action into communicable form has not been developed in our country to carry out all the functions a national language is required to perform. The experts rue that budgetary allocations are too straitened to put into practice many things that are within their power to do. It is certainly impossible to develop the language without socio-political, cultural and economic factors co-operating and conducing to it. It is imperative that once language policy is set up, planning is done and aims are fixed up, the

materials and equipment should be made available to perform the functions designated to it. It is where the government should allocate the financial resources adequate for the promotion of the cause of the national language. Language is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture. That is why, indigenous people's languages needs recognition by way of allocating the function of medium of instruction upto the elementary level at the least. The role of the culture of indigenous people may contribute to solving societal problems (political ones including) if an enhancement is made to the status of their languages. (VIRRI: 2003).

Suggestion and Conclusion

The analyses of the data collected from different groups of people including students, teachers, employes, parents and common people unmistakably bear out that the Bangladeshis use English in their day-to-day life beside Bangla. As young generation use Bangla and English they mix-up both the languages by the processes of amalgamation known as code-mixing and code-switching . As a result, Bangla language suffers from distortion. Media like F.M radio, TV channels are virtual agents of making Bangla distorted. This trend is rising alarmingly. They indoctrinate the young people to use this kind of language.

Shakespeare's *King Henry IV* was dissatisfied at the dissolute way of life his son Prince Hall was pursuing in an almost indoctrinated manner influenced by Falstaff and so the king rued and expressed his concern for the future king by warning that "Uneasy lies (should lie) the head that wears a crown" and as such drew attention to the necessary reform, regeneration and restrengthening of the Heir-apparent. The Constitution of the state has crowned the language but the queen (Bangla) to prove herself equal to the task that she is charged with should be reformed, have rejuvenation and re-strengthening in the form of strict application of the Bangla Implementation Act, 1987 by compulsory adherence as well as motivation.

Bangla Implementation Act, 1987 is confined in paper only. There is, however, no serious initiative taken for its implementation through wider circulation in print and electronic media by the government making it unknown or oblivious from public life and memory. For

multifarious reasons and multilateral purposes, we have to communicate with other countries. So government should take proper steps for English for its application in foreign affairs and trade, higher education abroad, etc. In order to promote Bangla in official affairs, it is very important to introduce a new extensive Bangla learning syllabus and teaching for every class upto secondary level. The government should develop and introduce new Bangla format official documents which should be compulsorily followed by every government office at first and private organization must adopt those in a reasonable time period. In this case the government should be rigorous and straight forward about the use of language making a comparative study of the existing language policy in the perspective of the prevalent conditions of our country with those of other countries along with their impacts of implementation.

The following policy measures may be adopted:

1. All people of Bangladesh including the tribal and indigenous should be provided primary education in their mother tongue.
2. Bangla will be the medium of instruction and a second language like English will be taught in the secondary level.
3. At higher secondary level the instruction in subjects like mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and other science related subjects should be carried out in English to impart education comparable to the world standard. Bengali medium may, however, be allowed.
4. English should be the medium of instruction in higher education which should be made research oriented to harness creativity of the learners to prove them equal to the existing and upcoming challenges of life for the vitality of the nation. Bengali medium may continue side by side but appropriate textbooks incorporating the latest development in the relevant field of knowledge should be made available with the award of incentive to the scholars for the task.
5. Pure Bangla (high variety) should be used as official language within the country, but in case of foreign affairs and external trade English will be used as official language.
6. For all varieties of languages a comprehensive plan including

status, corpus and acquisition aspects should be formulated and implemented in letter and spirit according to the specified time schedule.

7. Media-mixing of Bangla with other languages should be banned in order to keep the mother language untainted, unimpaired and undistorted; otherwise the language will not survive as it should with its proper proportions, thereby relegating Bangla to the status of an inferior language in spite of the fact of its not only earning the status of a state language but also contributing to glorifying the right of all the languages of the world through the declaration of the UNESCO.

8. All the formats/documents will be developed in Bangla but for external affairs and foreign trade purpose only English will be allowed.

9. Computerization of the global standard should be in place so that Bangla can derive all the properties and characteristics of the developed languages like English in order to carry out functions in all the existing and emerging domains.

10. Status planning is done by the Article 3 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh but corpus planning has been very insignificantly attended to. So expanding vocabulary through the creation and coining of new terms and standardization of the current terms, framing and adoption of uniform spelling rules, simplification of registers, development of orthographies, prescription of standard pronunciation rules, etc are the measures unavoidably to be adopted without delay in order to meet all the requirements of a standard national language that is used in official domains, in higher education, in philosophical, scientific and technical discourses in particular along with emerging domains.

11. Adequate budgetary allocations by the government are indispensably necessary to carry out the measures proposed above.

Finally, it is not only government's duty to preserve Bangla language but the duty of the citizens to use the language in a proper way to honor the language martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the prestige and dignity of Bangla to establish it in its right place. And if we fail to uphold the prestige of Bangla, we will lose our identity. It is by

putting the above measures in place that we can bridge the gap between appearance and reality – a derivation of Shakespearean world view as propounded in his dramas of unrivalled achievement – that exists in the matter of avowed policy and actual implementation thereof.

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Asian Perspectives on Human Evolution. by A. R. Sankhyan (ed.). pp. 312 + xix, tables, figures, photographs, index, 2009. Serials Publications: New Delhi. Hard cover. Price 995/-

Dr. A. R. Sankhyan organized and chaired an international session on "*Hominoid and Human Evolution with Special Reference to Asia: New Findings & New Interpretations*", at the 16th ICAES held in July 27-31, 2009 at Kunming, China. This volume contains some of the articles presented at Kunming, while the rest of the articles were contributed by Indian scholars which fill the bulk of the present volume. The volume has been sectioned into three parts. They have been titled as, The Hominoid Antecedents (Part I); The Palaeolithic Hominins (Part II); and The Early Modern Humans (Part III). In all there are twenty-four articles in this volume presented by thirty-one scholars. The editor has contributed seven articles, singly two, and jointly five.

Dr. Sankhyan in his article "Which was the last common ancestor?" has not been able to answer specifically his own question, except stating that (pp. 7-8) "Ramapithecushas since been lumped with *Sivapithecus* as its species, *S. punjabicus*. Thus the present debate narrows down to a discussion on *Sivapithecus* as its species as well as the Chinese *Lufengpithecus*. He further discusses on "The Fossils vs Molecules: Conflict or Compromise". But again nothing specific has been concluded. There are articles on '*Gigantopithecus*' by Wang Wei; 'The Oldest Palaeolithic of China' by Hou and Zhao; 'Cranial Embryogeny and Hominion Phylogeny' by Anne D. Malasse; 'Jinniushan Hominin and Modern Human Origins' by Rosenberg and Zune; which are some of the interesting articles presented in this volume.

Dr. Sankhyan has not given an introduction about his thoughts and ideas on Asian perspectives on human evolution while introducing the volume. Instead he straight way gives the brief summary the of the articles presented in this volume.

It would have been interesting if Dr Sankhyan could have hypothesized and presented schematic diagrams of the last common ancestors (LCA), the missing lines, or links, and the evolutionary branching from the common ancestors as visualized by the scholars from recent studies in Asia and Africa on Hominoids. The students of human evolution would have been benefited by that presentation.

However, the students interested on the study of human evolution, Hominoid extinction with particular reference to India and China will find this book of much help. And for those who are interested in Narmada Hominin fossils for them this volume is very much informative.

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