

Development of Bangla among the Students Studying in English Medium Schools

1) Introduction

The thesis deals with the problem or hindrance faced by the native language speakers while using their mother tongue/native language in an academic environment or for some official purpose. This hindrance, if at all caused is due to the interference of another language which is considered for official purposes, like for example - English.

This thesis has been prepared based on a study conducted among 8 native speakers of Bangla, who have studied in English medium schools since childhood and their nature has been introduced as a 2nd language. The speakers though hail from a Bangla speaking background, yet faces certain difficulties in using Bangla for academic or official purposes. After conducting the survey, a major difference was noticed, in how the speaker speaks or interacts with another native speaker and how they express their views in Bangla through writing.

According to Professor JIM CUMMINS, there lies a huge difference in the Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Acquiring Language Proficiency (CALP) which is often faced by the 2nd language users while using the language. To adapt BICS properly one takes around 1-3 years whereas to grasp CALP properly a child takes around 5-7 years as it also involves the child's academic development in that particular language.

While working on this particular topic it has been observed that the development of native Bangla speakers in the academic grounds is quite similar to what JIM CUMMINS proposed. The speakers are quite fluent while speaking in their mother tongue but their writings lack a lot of aspects which require a conscious effort . It was found that the speaker's lacked of creativity ability, with corresponding good writing skill . Simultaneously the showed the presence of poor sentential construction in their writings .

It was even found out that, though the speakers are comfortable in speaking the Bangla language there writing skills are yet to evolve to match up to the level of an actual native language writer.

2)Research Objectives

The aim of the project is to find out the academic proficiency of the Native Language of the speakers of BANGLA while studying in English Medium schools. Since the learner's get exposed to their native language as 2nd language schools, so it would be interesting to observe their development in the language in an academic environment.

The main objective behind Data Collection through worksheet was to find out the Reading, Writing, Speaking and the Comprehending skills of the Speakers. With the help of the questionnaire the study will attempt to find out a detailed background knowledge about the speakers proficiency and inclination towards usage of the Bangla language.

The Format of the Questionnaire has included Quantitative questions on Number of languages known by the speakers, types of languages, period of native language acquisition, the place of initial acquisition etc. The sample questionnaire apart from having Quantitative questions even had questions on language attitude to determine the speakers approach towards its native language.

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3) Literature Review

While the concept of academic proficiency is being brought up, it might just raise a question as, if a learner is a native speaker of a particular language then he/she will be equally affluent while using the language in any possible environment because it assumes that the user has acquired the knowledge of competence and performance. But there is a massive difference between *basic* interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) which was introduced by Cummins (1979, 1981) in order to draw attention to the challenges that second language learners encounter as they attempt to interact with their friends in academic aspects of the school language.

BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) is the communicative fluency achieved by an individual native speaker of a language. BICS is cognitively undemanding and contextual based. BICS comes into use whenever the speaker uses a language in a completely informal situation. It will take a learner about 1-3 years to learn BICS if properly exposed to the second language.

CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) on the other hand depends on the child's capability to grasp the academic demands placed upon him/her in various subjects. CALP is used in an academic setting and also used as a tool for learning. It takes a learner 5-7 years to learn CALP if he/she is properly exposed to the native language since childhood. Otherwise, it would take a non-native speaker 7-10 years to become well versed with CALP.

CALP differentiated from BICS after the early stages of schooling, where it is observed that

proper academic proficiency can only be developed through proper sessions in schooling and can only be improved with grades.

According to Cummins, [The notion of CALP is specific to the social context of schooling, hence the term “academic”. Academic language proficiency can thus be defined as “the extent to which an individual has access to and command of the oral and written academic registers of schooling”]

The primary theoretical intent of the BICS/CALP distinction was proposed by Oller in 1979. He claimed that ‘all individual differences in language proficiency could be accounted for by just one underlying factor’, which he termed *global language proficiency*. To support his own view, Oller gathered huge data which showed strong correlations between performance on cloze tests of reading, standardised reading tests, and measures of oral verbal ability. But Jim Cummins argued to this theory saying that it is difficult to include all aspects of language use into just one factor called the general or global language proficiency.

Cummins has worked on English as Additional Language (EAL) in BICS AND CALP: Empirical and Theoretical Status of Distinction where he distinguished between two monolingual speakers of English one of 12 years old and one 6 years old. Among these two students, there were huge differences in their ability to read and write English and in their vocabulary knowledge. But there were very minimal differences in between their phonological knowledge or basic fluency. The six-year-old can understand almost everything used in the everyday social contexts. She can use language in an equally efficient manner just as the 12-year old. This shows that some aspects of children’s phonological development take place a little early whereas other

aspects like vocabulary knowledge develop over time. Thus, these very different aspects of proficiency cannot be placed under just one unitary proficiency dimension.

The reason behind putting up this theory of **Cummins** is that it shows relevance with the acquisition of native language/mother tongue which can take place under two different methodology where one though has fluency in using the language in a social context yet not be proficient in using in any academic situation

Now coming back to the issue where the medium of language for academic purposes in schools has always been a matter of concern since independence in India .

In D P Pattanayak's, Multilingualism in India we get to address this issue from a close perspective. Ever since Independence it was initially decided that apart from the few English Medium schools, the subject English would only be taught as a subject from 5th and 6th standard while the other institutions would run on having native language/mother tongue as their medium of instruction.

Before coming to such a conclusion, a lot of controversies were raised on this topic ever since the early nineteenth century among the orientalist, vernacularists and anglicists whether to use the classical language like Sanskrit for oriental learning or to use English not only as a subject but fully as a medium of instruction whereas some were of the opinion to keep the mother tongue as the medium of study respectively in various institutions.

After the Mutiny of 1857, 60% of the primary schools had English as a medium of instruction. The mother tongue /vernacular languages were considered as 'poor and rude' and was unqualified enough to support the young individuals in a competitive world.

Thus, with this decision English attained a superior position and gradually all the vernacular languages started taking a back seat.

This raised a major problem, which was later revised in 1920 where the medium of study through the medium of English were only restricted to the colleges and universities.

After this, there was a dilemma among various institutions, where a lot of institutions chose English as a medium of instruction whereas others chose to use their mother tongue as their medium of instruction.

This problem pertains till date, where even if the learner is supposedly a native speaker of BANGLA, he/she still faces a certain amount of hesitation. This is because they only get to study the language only as a 2nd language in schools. This problem is mainly restricted to the student of the English medium schools.

Now with the help of the data analysis it will be easier to find out, the problems faced by the speakers while learning BANGLA in an academic environment. It also needs to be observed that whether the language English is causing any kind of hindrance in the native speakers' formal development of its mother tongue since English is being used as a medium of instruction and as 1st language in schools despite being a foreign language.

4)Research Methodology

FIELD SURVEY

The Research Methodology was conducted through Field survey, with the help of 8 speakers who were native speakers of Bangla but studied in English medium school, with Bengali as their 2nd language.

The field survey has helped me to get an idea about the Academic proficiency of Bangla speakers through the contrastive study of the speakers data collected through the survey.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The data was collected through two different Methods –

- QUESTIONNAIRE
- WORKSHEET

The use of the **Questionnaire** helped to get an overall idea about the speakers background and observe measure their tendency towards the usage of Bengali Language in their daily routine.

The **Worksheet** that was designed as a part of one of the methods of Data Collection was to gauge the academic proficiency of the speakers by various test questions . For this language proficiency test the worksheet has four important parts , the first part was fill up the blanks of the paragraph , here in this part randomly every 5th word was erased and the informant was asked to fill that , the second part consisted of rewriting a Bengali passage in their own words, the third part had an English passage was given to them for translating into Bengali . The part covers the amplification of idea in their mother tongue .

SPEAKERS

Most of the speakers are teenagers and are of 15-16 years of age. All of them are native speakers of Bangla but have learnt Bangla within the family environment as their mother-tongue. During their early education, this has become their 2nd language due to reason of studying in English medium school.

As a result, the mother tongue remains as a medium of communication in one social context whereas English was adopted with the academic environment.

The status in the use of mother tongue restricted to a specific domain

5) Data Analysis and Discussion

1. The questionnaire part tried to capture the linguistic development of the speaker in early

days .

2. The worksheet helped to determine the errors faced by every individual speaker while constructing a sentence, or getting the spellings correct, or to enhance their creativity through good writing skills.

Now after studying the 8 speakers' response some common and some uncommon factors have been noticed .

A sample questionnaire was designed to know about the speakers' background and to analyse the data with the given answers from the speakers'.

PART- I

Analysis of the data received against Questionnaire

1.1 Linguistic Status of the Speakers

Out of 8, only Speaker 4 and Speaker 5 have knowledge of some European languages apart from English, Bengali, and Hindi. Speaker 4 has the knowledge of French and Speaker 5 has the knowledge of French, Spanish, and German. Though the background behind learning these languages was different for both the Speakers.

- The common factor noticed among all the 8 speakers was that all of them had BANGLA as their mother tongue.
- All the 8 speakers wrote almost the same answer that they learnt their mother tongue from their mothers. In some cases it can be specifically defined about particular individuals, that it was since childhood that they acquired their mother tongue. But the close relations like parents, like parents have the major role.
- So, this gives us an idea that all the native speakers got their initial lesson of BANGLA since childhood with the help of their own parents.
- Another observation from the questionnaire states that almost all the speakers have started to learn English or the other language like Hindi a little later when they joined school. Though the subject English were taught to them right after joining school i.e. either from transition or nursery class that is still not equal to the exposure that they got from their mother tongue.
- Another similarity found in the speakers is that almost all the speakers use English and Bengali for daily communication except for Speaker 4 & 5, who even uses Hindi in their

communication. In fact, it has also been noticed that the speakers have the tendency to speak BANGLA even with other family members and friends too.

- Again two points of the questionnaire that had almost the same opinion which was received from all the speakers, that they speak English and Bengali for daily communication except for speakers 4 and 5, who even uses Hindi simultaneously during their communication.
- Only Speaker 2,4, 6 and 7 has been found to have an inclination towards only reading Bengali books or novels. While the rest 4 speakers have no interest either in reading and writing Bengali apart from academic purpose.
- But a strange difference has been observed among 6 out of 8 speakers . Speaker 1,2,5,6,7& 8 has said “YES” to the fact that they are comfortable if any of their subject texts or concepts are explained to them in BANGLA .
- The reason behind this statement is that mostly because BANGLA is their mother tongue and they use BANGLA in their daily mode of communication which is what makes it easier for them to understand complex concepts of English .
- This has been a major point of observation found from the answers given by the speakers whereas speaker 3 & 4 showed no such requirement of explaining difficult concepts in their mother tongue.

This brings it to an end of the analysis of the Questionnaire, where most of the speakers had almost a lot of opinions in common. The sample of the worksheet will give an idea

about the work ahead.

PART-II

Analysis of the data received against worksheet

Here, in the case of Worksheet analysis, each of the speaker's answers is considered personally for observation.

WORKSHEET FORMAT—

- ✓ Fill up the blanks of a paragraph
- ✓ Rewriting the text in own words
- ✓ Translation of English paragraph into Bengali
- ✓ Amplification of idea

The idea behind designing of the worksheet in this format, was to find out –

- The ability of selecting the vocabulary in the context.
- The ability of restructuring of the sentences
- The ability of
- The ability of Expansion of idea in writing ,selecting own vocabulary.

Analysis of the cloze test

The cloze test was designed in a way where every 5th word from a random paragraph was omitted just to test the speakers' knowledge of sentential construction and it even gave a brief

idea about the speakers' lexical knowledge.

The Cloze test consisted of a paragraph which had 16 blanks out of exact accuracy rate was 100% for all the blanks.

Speaker 1 though not exactly accurate with all the answers of the Blank, but it could be noticed that the speaker 1 has an idea about sentence construction. He filled up all the answers in present continuous tense and did not mix up with any of the tenses with other.

Speaker2 , though had mixed up the tenses in few blanks which are in present continuous and again in the 6th position of the blank he used simple past. If we compare the two blanks in the context of the paragraph, it seems completely wrong. But again, he has shown exact accuracy in rest of the blanks.

Speaker 3 – Shows an immense lack of development in the case of sentential construction and grammatical knowledge. Though she got a few answers in the blanks correct that was either a noun or an adjective which somehow did not give a clear reflection of the speaker's grammatical knowledge and speaker even had poor writing skills.

Analysis of Bangla Summary, Translation & Amplification of idea

- While summarising the BANGLA paragraph, the speaker 1's writing showed up with several mistakes. He had problems in transforming complex BANGLA structure into

simple ones. Whenever he tried to conjoin two structures and make a simple meaning out of it, he mostly shifted from the original meaning and produced sentences difficult to understand. His writings even reflected very poor ability of grammatical construction. The problem mainly lay in expressing the sentences through writing.

- Again, in the case of Translation, the speaker showed an extreme lack of lexical development. Though he tried to focus on expressing the overall meaning of the paragraph by not doing a word to word translation, yet he failed to express it properly. In fact, he could not spell the term “Kyoto” in BANGLA and wrote it in English.
- Similarly, in the case of Amplification of ideas, the speaker got the meaning of the phrase correctly but due to lack of lexical knowledge and appropriate grammatical knowledge, his creative ability for expanding the idea is not reflected .
- In the case of summarising paragraphs, the speaker 2 did not follow the instructions of shortening the paragraphs in his own words, rather just gave a word to word description by following the “original” with slight changes in the dialect. Though he presented a grammatically correct format yet there was a lack of lexical development in the Language, in which the speaker wrote. Being a native speaker of BANGLA and given an inclination towards reading of Bengali Story Books as told by the speaker himself. So, these kinds of mistakes were unexpected from the speaker’s end.
- In the case of the English to Bengali translation, the speaker tries to shorten the paragraph, instead of translating sentences from the paragraph. Repetitive use of deictic verbs like “সেই”, which seemed totally unnecessary were present in the paragraph. Few

variations in the lexical were found in the writing of the speaker like “ব্যবসা –বাণিজ্য”, “জনমানবহীন” etc.

- While in the case of, “*Amplification of ideas*” the speaker manages to get the metaphorical meaning of the phrase and explains it in simple sentences. Not much use lexical inputs were found in the explanation. Though Speaker 2 is a native speaker of Bangla, his Bengali development is nothing much noticeable. In fact, the speaker has even answered that he requires a Bangla explanation in case he fails to understand complex English structures so apparently it means he is more comfortable in BANGLA.
- In the case of speaker 3 it has been noticed that the speaker has a poor knowledge of syntactic structure, and even the writing skill is not good, which reflected in her summarising of Bangla paragraph in Bangla. It has further been noticed that the speaker has shown poor performance in the use of “functional word” especially in the usage of the term “ebong” and in fact the speaker has failed to understand the contextual knowledge from the paragraph.
- While translating the English paragraph in Bangla, Speaker 3 tried to do a word to word translation but somehow did not use the proper lexical terms required for the paragraph. The Speaker lacked the sense of expressing complex structures; this is may be due to the lack of grammatical knowledge.
- While in the case of “*amplification of ideas*” the speaker did not get the concept and what was asked to explain from the phrase. The speaker lacked the creative ability and she even informed that she had no previous knowledge of amplification of ideas and

even stated that it was never taught to her inschool.

- Speaker 4 showed poor grammatical construction and lack of effective writing skills while summarising the Bangla paragraph in the worksheet. As said by the speaker earlier in the questionnaire that she likes to read Bengali novel, but somehow her writing skills fail to express any such growth which happens through reading in any particular language.
- As incase of translation, Speaker 4 doesn't follow the norm of a word to word translation and tries to write the paragraph in a summarisedform. The speaker's inclination towards reading Bangla novels somehow does not reflect in her writing skills, it doesnotshow the usage of proper/good lexical terms. Some spelling errors were even noticed incase of this speaker.
- As said by Speaker 4, she had no previous knowledge of the term "amplification of ideas" and was never to the particular concept in school.
- Speaker 5 answers showed that she had a difficulty in summarising the paragraph due to thepresence of complex and compoundsentences in the original Bangla passage. The speaker displayed a very poor writing skill and was unable to summarise the paragraph by keeping the original meaning of the passage intact and even lacked grammatical knowledge.
- In thecase of translation, the speaker opted for a word to word translation of the English paragraph in Bangla but failed to use appropriate lexical items while

constructing the paragraph. The speaker showed unnecessary usage of the relative verb. While solving the “amplification of ideas” the speaker failed to get the concept of the question and did not attempt it.

- In the case of speaker 6, the cloze test was performed with very minimal mistakes, though the Speaker was not fully accurate the words used to fill up the blanks were appropriate if we consider it beyond the actual context. While summarising the paragraph the speaker showed inappropriate grammatical sentence construction and even failed to get original meaning from the paragraph and showed poor writing skills. In the case of amplification of ideas the, speaker failed to get the instructions and could not interpret the phrases as required.

5) Conclusion

- At the end, it can be concluded that due to the interaction between the two languages i.e. English (foreign language) and Bangla (native/mother tongue) there is some lack caused in the development of the language. Although the speaker’s native language is

Bengali and they feel extremely comfortable in communicating in Bangla, there is still a difference in behaviour among the speakers while they use it for academic purposes.

- They are not as academically proficient in Bangla as they are in communicating in the language. Their writing skills reflect that uncomfortably, the expressions through writing are not properly developed in the speakers. Although the speakers said that they are very comfortable in communicating in Bangla and even likes to understand difficult concepts if made to understand in Bangla but somehow it doesn't show in their writing skills. There was alack of development in sentential construction, lexical and grammatical knowledge.
- So, it somehow proves that, due to the interference caused by the foreign language English in the academic requirement of the children, the proper development of the native language in case of academic purposes somewhere causes a hindrance or it may be even be said that the 1st language growth,in this case, English as the English medium schools chooses English as their 1st language, doesn't happen properly. The speakers were not fully proficient in their 1st language which reflected even when they tried to use their native language or mother tongue for academic purposes. Their 1st language somewhere lacks accurate development comes from the point that the speakers are comfortable to study or understand difficult concepts in Bangla when they fail to understand it in English.

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APPENDIX

PART -1

Sample of the questionnaire :

1. How many languages do you know?
2. What are the languages do you know?
3. Which one is your mother tongue?
4. Where have you initially started to learn your mother tongue from?
5. Up to which class have you studied your mother tongue?
6. When and where have you first started to learn your other language from?
7. What are the languages that you tend to use for daily communication?

LANGUAGE ATTITUDE QUESTIONS :

- 1) Do your parents speak Bengali with you?
- 2) Where do you prefer to use your mother tongue the most?
 - a. At School
 - b. At Home
 - c. At coaching classes
- 3) With whom do you prefer to use your mother tongue the most?
 - a. Mother

- b. Father
 - c. Sister
 - d. Brother
 - e. Peers
 - f. Teacher
 - g. Grandparents
- 4) Do you consult any Bengali version of your Textbooks?
- 5) Do you have any inclination towards Reading or Writing anything in your mother tongue apart from academic works?
- 6) Do you feel comfortable if you are made to understand certain subjects or contexts in BANGLA while you are being taught?
- 7) If YES, then why?

PART-2

Sample of the Worksheet:

শূন্যস্থানপূরণ করো :

ওরা হাঁটতে হাঁটতে এগিয়ে , কিন্তু একটু পরেই শ্যামলের চিংকার , " আমি বালিতে ডুবে যাচ্ছি , বাঁচাও"

চিংকার শুনেই আমরা দাড়িয়েছি , সুমন বলে উঠল !কটু এগোতেই দেখি , সীমা হাত ধরে টানার চেষ্টা __ গিয়ে তারও পা ডুবে __বালিতে । আমরা কি করবো ____ বুঝে উঠতে পারছি না ।

এর মধ্যে ওই যুবক দলটিও আমাদের পাশে এসে দাঁড়িয়েছে . হঠাৎ সেই "পাগড়িবাবু",যার গানকে শ্যামলের ভাঁড়ামি বলে হয়েছিল ,সে তার মাথার পাগড়িটা খুলে ফেলল . তারপর একটা প্রান্ত ছুড়ে দিলো ও সীমার দিকে . ওরা ধরেও ফেলল . পাগড়িবাবু বলতে না বলতেই আমরা পাগড়ির অন্য ধরে টানতে লাগলাম . চোরাবালির থেকে একটু একটু করে ওরা দুজনেই চলে এল কাছে . আমরা সবাই একসঙ্গে স্বস্তির নিঃস্বাস ফেললাম.

নিজের ভাষায় লেখো :

প্যারিস শহরের অল্প একটু দূরে ছিল তার ছোটো বাসাটি . বাড়ির কর্তার নাম পিয়ের শোপ্যা ।

তার সারা জীবনের শখ ছিল গাছপালার জোড় মিলিয়ে ,রেনু মিলিয়ে তাদের চেহারা,তাদের রং ,তাদের স্বাদ বদল করে নতুন রকমের সৃষ্টি তৈরী করতে। তাতে কম সময় লাগতো না। এক একটি ফুলের ফলের স্বভাব বদলাতে বছরের পর বছর কেটে যেত। এ কাজে যেমন ছিল তার আনন্দ তেমনি ছিল তার ধৈর্য। বাগান নিয়ে তিনি যেন জাদু করতেন। লাল হতো নীল , সাদা হত আলতার রং , আঁটি যেত উড়ে , থোসা যেত খসে। যেটা ফলতে লাগে ছ মাস তার মেয়াদ কমে হত দুমাস।ছিলেন গরিব,ব্যবসায়ে সুবিধা করতে পারতেন না। যেমন করতো তার হাতের কাজের তারিফ তাকে দামি মাল অমনি দিতেন বিলিয়ে। যার মতলব ছিল দাম ফাঁকি দিতে, সে এসে বলতো , কি ফুল ফুটেছে আপনার সেই গাছটাতে, চার দিক থেকে লোক আসছে দেখতে , একেবারে তাক লেগে যাচ্ছে।

TRANSLATE THE PARAGRAPH IN BENGALI

In ancient days, there lived in a remote part of Japan a man and his wife, and they were blessed with a little girl, who was the pet and idol of her parents. On one occasion the man was called away on business in distant Kyoto. Before he went he told his daughter that if she were good and dutiful to her mother he would bring her back a present she would prize very highly. Then the good man took his departure, mother and daughter watching him go.

At last, he returned to his home, and after his wife and child had taken off his large hat and sandals he sat down upon the white mats and opened a bamboo basket, watching the eager gaze of his little child. He took out a wonderful doll and a lacquer box of cakes and put them into her outstretched hands. Once more he dived into his basket and presented his wife with a metal mirror. Its convex surface shone brightly, while upon its back there was a design of pine trees and storks.

The good man's wife had never seen a mirror before, and on gazing into it, she was under the impression that another woman looked out upon her as she gazed with growing wonder. Her husband explained the mystery and bade her take great care of the mirror.

Not long after this happy homecoming and distribution of presents, the woman became very ill. Just before she died she called to her little daughter and said: "Dear child, when I am dead, take every care of your father. You will miss me when I have left you. But take this mirror, and when you feel most lonely look into it and you will always see me". Having said these words, she passed away.

ভাবসম্প্রসারণ করো :

কেরোসিনশিখাবলেমাটিরপ্রদীপে
ভাইবলেডাকযদিদেবগলাটিপে
হেনকালেআকাশেতেউঠিলেনচাঁদা,
কেরোসিন-শিখাবলেএসোমোরদাদা।