

An Overview on the National Language Policy of Bangladesh: Language Manipulation in Different Realms by the Indigenous Community

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Abstract: *A country or nation with an explicit national language policy can create immense linguistic opportunities for social, cultural, and economic development in this modern global world. It is a matter of sorrow that in Bangladesh we do not have a formal national language policy after 50 years of our independence. It is also pertinent to mention here that in Bangladesh, there is basically an implicit national language policy existing for many years for the acquisition and learning of Bangla as a state language and English as a second or foreign language. The language policy which is now used in Bangladesh suggests the use of the national language 'Bengali' in all aspects of life. Therefore, Indigenous groups have no other choices but to speak these languages regardless of having their own languages. A situation like this raises the possibility of language shift to Bengali from their mother tongues. Indigenous people have been part of Bangladesh from the pre-colonial period with their own linguistic and cultural heritage. Bangladesh is the country that fought for language rights in 1952, but how heartbreaking it is to see that the language used by its own people is now marginalized -constitutionally, academically, and socially. In this perspective, the government and policymakers can think of the modification of our existing language policy or make a new explicit national language policy to form a multilingual community and ensure the linguistic rights of different communities of the nation. So in this paper, the researchers shed light on the existing implicit national language policy of Bangladesh to find out its effectiveness for modern Bangladeshi perspectives and the possible suggestions for the modifications and formation of a new explicit national language policy including multilingualism and linguistic diversity. This study also focuses on some problems which are depriving indigenous people of Bangladesh of using their own languages. Besides, the research project will be helpful for language policymakers and researchers for further research on this area.*

Keywords: Linguistic Diversity, Multilingual Community, National Language Policy of Bangladesh

Introduction

Language policy refers to language planning which is now considered important for a country or nation to promote selected languages for social, cultural, political, and economic development. According to Liddicoat (2004, as cited in Djite, 1994:63) language policy has been defined as “the deliberate choices made by governments or other authorities with regard to the relationship between language and social life”. It is basically the rules and practices to achieve common linguistic goals for a community, society, nation, or group. It is pertinent to mention here that in Bangladesh we do not have a formal and explicit national language policy. Actually, an informal or implicit national language policy exists in Bangladesh and it is based on the National Education Policy (LEP) of the country. So, the existing language policies are implemented informally following the objectives and aims of the National Education Policy although the national language policy and the national education policy are two different areas. Bhuiyan & Khan

(2009) states that LEP of Bangladesh is implicit and it can provide a good case to demonstrate a number of issues in terms of the ideologies behind the policy, to what extent it reflects the de facto practices, the case of the LEP in terms of language rights, and the extent to which the nature of the LEP has followed democratic practices and so on. This covert nature of LEP has given rise to a number of problems in the academic system of Bangladesh, for example, there is no unified teaching system (especially in terms of language use) in Bangladesh. (p.2)

Bangladesh is especially known as a monolingual country where Bangla is the first language or mother tongue of the majority of the population. In every sector including official, non-official, academic and non-academic institutions of Bangladesh, Bangla gets the utmost priority. It is also evident that English is also learned and taught as a second or foreign language in our academic institutions from primary to tertiary levels and even the students of universities are encouraged to use English for academic purposes. But the reality is in Bangladesh, there is a multilingual environment where nearly 60 languages are used and practiced among different communities. There are 45 indigenous and small ethnic groups who have their own mother tongues. It is pertinent to mention here that the ethnic groups learn Bangla to communicate with the Bangla speaking majority and they are quite habituated to adopt the Bangla language along with their first languages. The Arabic language is also popular in Bangladesh for religious purposes as most of the people of Bangladesh follow Islam as their religion and in Kaumi Madrasas of Bangladesh Arabic is the medium of instruction. Besides, there is an immigrant community known as the Bihari community and the people of this community speak in the Urdu language among the community members. The people of Bangladesh are also introduced to the Persian language as Bengal and Persia had been in contact from ancient times and presently Persian is taught in some Madrasas as well as at the University of Dhaka.

It is quite clear that in the existing implicit language policy of Bangladesh, Bangla gets utmost priority and it is a must for Bangladeshi people to always put similar emphasis on Bangla language and we know language martyrs laid down their lives in 1952 to make Bangla as one of the state languages before independence. The existing importance of the English language is also effective and beneficial for us as we live in a global village now and English is necessary for economic development. The implicit language policy is not a formal one and in our policy linguistic rights of indigenous communities are neglected from the beginning. But in the proposed education policy of 2010, an objective is added to promote and develop the languages of indigenous and small ethnic groups. The government has already instructed teaching professionals and writers of the indigenous community to write grammar books in indigenous languages and promote first-language-based education for the children of primary levels. It is also worthy to mention that Bangladesh is now developing rapidly due to the globalization process and industrial revolution. Therefore, Different opportunities in the international arena are wide open for the people of Bangladesh.

It is now high time to make an explicit national language policy encouraging multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Bangladesh so that we can avail of the highest benefit in the national and international arena for our socio-cultural, political, and economic development. The government and the policymakers should review the existing policy and set sail for a new explicit National Language Policy.

Linguistic rights mean the rights to learn and to use one's mother tongue (Arzoz, 2007). Language is a part of the culture, heritage, history, society, and national integrity of a nation. Through language, a unique worldview is expressed and identity is molded. Language holds the past, present, and future of a community whether expressed through prayers, myths, spiritual beliefs, ceremonies, law, poetry, oratory, or through every day greetings, humor, or through values of the community (ILO, 2008, p.2). According to the experts "there are slightly less than 7,000 languages in the world now" (Hoffman, 2009, p. 3). Among these languages, only a few dominant languages are used as the medium of education. We see the same picture in Bangladesh also. In Bangladesh, including Bangla there are 45 different languages

(Sultana, 2011, p.15) such as “Chakma, Garo, Khasia, Magh, Manipuri, Munda, Oraon, Santali, Kachhari, Kuki, Tripura, Malpahad, Mikir, Shadri, Hajang” (Banglapedia, n.d). These indigenous groups live in the south-eastern part of the country along with some parts of Rajshahi, Mymensingh, and Sylhet. These ethnic communities exist within Bangladesh due to migration, historical/political partition of lands and some of the indigenous communities are living here for centuries. All these communities cannot but use the Bangla language in all formal, semi-formal situations.

Therefore, in this paper, we tried to find out about some obstacles which indigenous people are facing in using their own languages in Bangladesh. A concerted attempt has been made to offer some suggestions for overcoming the barriers.

Objectives of the Research

The national language policy of Bangladesh is implicit and it is based on national education policy. Bangla, being the state language of Bangladesh, has the utmost priority in different sectors throughout Bangladesh. English language is also promoted and used as a second or foreign language in academic institutions from primary to tertiary levels for practical purposes. It is also clear that there are more than 60 languages which are practiced and used in Bangladesh by different communities. In these circumstances, it is perceived that we have a multilingual environment and enough possibilities to form a multilingual community in Bangladesh for socio-cultural and economic development. Therefore, the objective of this study is to shed light on the existing implicit national language policy of Bangladesh as well as to explain the importance of making a new explicit national language policy including multiculturalism and linguistic diversity. The majority of the indigenous people in Bangladesh are either bilingual or multilingual speakers. They are competent in their mother tongue with little or advanced proficiency in Bangla and English. Therefore, the primary objective of this research is to investigate their language preferences among their own language, Bangla and English in different social domains along with the challenges indigenous people are facing in protecting their languages.

Research Questions

The primary aim of this paper is to find out the answers to these questions:

1. i) What are the national language policies of Bangladesh regarding the selection and promotion of language or languages?
 - ii) What are the challenges that stand in the way of making a new explicit national Language Policy in Bangladesh?
 - iii) To what extent do we need a language policy encouraging multilingualism or Linguistic Diversity?
2. i) What languages do the indigenous people of Bangladesh use in different domains?
 - ii) Which languages appear to take precedence in all these contexts?
 - iii) Are their languages in danger? If that's the case, how much can we do to preserve them?

Literature Review

National language policy is the policy or rule made by the central government for the selection of language or languages which will be used and promoted in a state or country as national, state, and official languages. According to McGroarty (1997:1) “Language can be defined as the combination of official decisions and prevailing public practices related to language education and use.” In recent decades, many countries of the world have taken necessary initiatives to make national language policy and apply the policy to select, use and promote languages as national and official languages. An organized and well-planned national language policy is considered highly beneficial for a nation from socio-cultural and economic perspectives. It is obvious that National Language Policy is an essential

policy for a multilingual community where there are many communities speaking in different languages but recently many governments of monolingual countries are also making explicit or formal national language policies for social, cultural, political, and economic purposes. In Bangladesh, it will also be highly beneficial if our policymakers can make an explicit national language policy putting emphasis on linguistic diversity and multilingualism.

Helal Uddin Ahmed in his article titled *The Need for Language Policy* published in the Financial Express on 21st February 2021 has presented a brief analysis on the existing language policy of Bangladesh and written about the historical context of languages of Bangladesh from ancient to the modern period. He has critically analyzed the language system of Bangladesh and mentioned that Bangla plays a central role in Bangladesh as well as English is considered as the second language. It is also evident from his writing that based on our national education policy in academic institutions of Bangladesh Bangla gets utmost priority up to the secondary level and after that English gets priority and for higher education, English has its priority. Ahmed (2021) states that although the standard of English in Bangladesh is not very high, it is still adhered to by its urban followers as an elite language. Globalization, satellite television, internet etc, have exposed Bangladesh to the English language as never before. The rapid expansion of the garments industry and gradual freeing of world trade also generated awareness regarding the need for English communication skills. Consequently English has become essential for economic purposes. In line with this trend, English was formally recognized as a second language in 2001. He has written about the conflict between language varieties in Bangla, historical role of English language, language policy of Bangladesh based on different education policy adopted time to time after independence and at the end suggested that “Bangladesh must have a clear and cohesive policy for the teaching, learning and application of languages in the national and international arena.”

Md. Manzurul Islam in his article on *A Pragmatic Language Policy in relation to English: Bangladesh Context* has written about the real situation of Bangladesh related to language policy. The writer suggests that it is necessary for Bangladesh to make a ‘pragmatic’ language policy and change the language policy regarding English.

Mohammad Monzoure Khoda Bhuiyan and Sanjida Afrin Khan have raised several important questions or areas regarding the existing implicit (informal) language education policy in their article titled *Language Education Policy and Nationalism in Bangladesh: Do they Share Responsibility for Culture Shock and Identity Crisis in the Nation?* They have analyzed the existing language education policy of Bangladesh and found that it is implicit in nature. According to (Bhuiyan and Khan, 2009) this covert nature of LEP has given rise to a number of problems in the academic system of Bangladesh, for example, there is no unified teaching system (especially in terms of language use) in Bangladesh. Bangla and English are considered as dominating languages by the indigenous communities and it has caused identity crisis and major drop-out in indigenous communities. Here problems mainly arise from the implicit language education policy of this country. The researchers throughout the article describe the “ideologies behind language education policy” and the aim is to make the people aware of “fundamental human rights regarding education through mother tongue, regardless of status, race, ethnicity, culture or social position of any particular group and also to raise awareness against language extinction. They have mentioned at the end that initiatives can be taken by the government through revising the LEP of this country.

It is clear from the above references of the articles that Bangladeshi researchers are concerned with the nature of existing national language policies based on the aims and objectives included in national education policy and they have suggested a new revised, modified, and explicit national education policy for socio-cultural and economic development. But it is evident that the researchers have focused on national language education policy and a few researchers have given explicit suggestions for making a new explicit national language policy. Therefore, in this study, our aim is to make the government and

policy makers aware of making an explicit (formal) national language policy to cope up with the modern global village.

Bengali is the official language of Bangladesh, as stated in the country's constitution, which was also written in Bengali, as well as the law enacting the "Bangla procholon ain" in 1987. This law mandated the use of Bengali in all public and national spheres, with English serving only as a lingua franca for communicating with foreigners. The acknowledgment of indigenous languages was unfortunately omitted out of these initiatives and laws. After independence, Mohsin (2010) emphasizes the need to develop "one language, one culture, and one nation" (p.106). Article 6 part 1 of the constitution declared all the citizens of Bangladesh will take the identity of Bengalis. As said by Mohsin, (2010), CHT's representative and the only non-Bengali member of parliament at the time, Manobendra Narayan Larma, declined to sign the constitution, claiming: You cannot impose your national identity on others. I am a Chakma, not a Bengali. I am a citizen of Bangladesh, Bangladeshi. You are also Bangladeshi but your national identity is Bengali ... they (Hill people) can never become Bengali. Mohsin (2010) contemplated Bangladesh's language policy, stating that "Bangladesh has one of the most hegemonic and chauvinistic language policies" (p.157). She expressed this statement driven by the fact that February 21st has indeed been designated as International Mother Language Day throughout the world, commemorating the sacrifice of Bengali language martyrs for their mother tongue in 1952. The day acknowledges the right to talk in one's mother language. The indigenous peoples of this country, unfortunately, are denied the freedom to speak in their native tongue in public spaces.

People from ethnic communities cannot use their native language exclusively in all domains while having a separate language. As previously said, the majority of them are bilinguals, having learned the national language in addition to their native tongue. Furthermore, English is important in schooling. Except for English, all topics are taught and learnt in Bengali at Bengali-medium schools, but English-medium schools provide a "globalised curriculum imported from the United Kingdom for the preparation of the social elite.". Therefore, these communities have no substitute than learning and using two powerful languages to get them 'educated' and to be a part of the 'social elite'. While some researchers claimed that the indigenous groups in Bangladesh use their mother tongue 80-100% in the domain of the home, they have also found the presence of another indigenous language and the use of Bengali in it (Ahmed, Kim & Kim, Sangma, 2010; Brightbill, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2008a, 2008b; Rafi, 2006).

They have no other language options in the realm of education besides Bengali and English. In Bengali-medium they are exposed to textbooks all written in Bengali and about two books written in English, such as 'English For Today' and another English Grammar book. Moreover, in the English medium, the primary language spoken and used as a medium of instruction is English with little use of Bengali. As a result, there is little opportunity for them to use their original language in the educational setting. Furthermore, in addition to nurturing the Bengali language, the textbooks include themes that are tough for bright youngsters. However, according to Kamal, Sikder, and Nasreen (2004a), most indigenous parents want their children to know Bengali while also promoting Bengali culture, making school education almost unadaptable, and they also want their children to be able to read and write in their mother tongue. These parents believe that teaching their children Bengali will prepare them to interact with the majority of people. They also place a high value on studying English. Therefore, in the domain of education, from primary to higher studies they use Bengali and English. In a formal setting, it is clear that prestigious and powerful languages are employed more than less powerful languages. In a close, informal setting such as a family or friendship, no other language can easily replace the mother tongue. Which language takes precedence over others is usually determined by a variety of reasons.

Sociological factors may impact and subcategorize the speaker's behaviour toward their language choice, according to researchers. As a result, social factors such as age, education, gender, and a variety of other social aspects play a significant impact. Other external reasons may force a speech group to use a specific

language because they have no other choice, and this may even push them to prioritize it over their own tongue. These external anthropological elements, such as mainstream cultural influence, language policies, educational system, employment rules, and mainstream social norms, may have a considerable impact on indigenous language choice in Bangladesh, encouraging increasing adoption of mainstream language (Bengali). Through quantitative and qualitative data collecting, this study will attempt to determine the social and socio-psychological aspects in order.

Methods Used for Data Collection

We have read and analyzed research articles published on different platforms including online journals, newspapers, and magazines for this study and a semi-structured interview has been conducted to have a clear idea of the national language policy of Bangladesh. At first we prepared an interview questionnaire for the teaching professionals who have at least five years of experience as language teachers in different public and private universities of Bangladesh. We have collected the interviews of ten interviewees and recorded their interviews using mobile phones. We have recorded their voice calls after having their permission and they have spontaneously participated in the interview sessions. Their responses and opinions have been analyzed carefully to collect data for this research. Besides, we have collected data based on our personal observations and experiences. Overall, we have used data triangulation techniques for the first part of this study.

A mixed-method approach was used to collect data, which included both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. To get a general idea about their language choices in the social domains, a questionnaire will serve well to a great extent. Besides, through questionnaires, it was easy to find out their socio-economic background, which could have been very hard to elicit from the qualitative method. On the contrary, along with the language used, it was also essential to find out their thoughts and opinions about the present situation and the prospective language usage in the future. And for that, a semi-structured interview was conducted.

To explore the roles of the social factors in language choices, four major criteria have been selected. These are age, gender, education, and location.

The Questionnaire

The data for this study was gathered using two distinct questionnaires. One was created for teaching professionals and the other was designed to collect data from people from the ethnic community. Each of the questionnaires consisted of two parts.

In the first section, the participants were asked to fill in blank spaces and tick options with personal information such as age, gender, education, location, and information about their parents' profession and education. The questionnaire also asked for the location of the educational institution as well as the teaching medium.

The participants had to tick the frequency of their language use in Bengali and English in the second portion of the questionnaire, which comprised various scenarios and interlocutors. The frequency was calculated using the Likert scale. Open-ended questions were also utilized to get more specific information from language users.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data gathered through questionnaires were analyzed using Google form. Individual responses were recorded for 21 questions in the Google form, then the mean score (Likert score) of language usage of seven domains for every individual was calculated. After that, the mean score of every domain for participants was calculated. Moreover, a mean comparison was conducted for different groups based on age, gender, education, etc. to figure out the influence of these factors in language usage. The data

gathered through semi-structured interviews were transcribed and translated into English. Following that, prospective and current subjects were classified for further investigation and discussion.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Bangladesh is considered as a monolingual country and 98% people of this country speak in the Bangla language as well as the ethnic groups and the immigrant Bihari community learns and use Bangla to communicate with the people of the mainstream. The implicit national language policy that is practiced in Bangladesh focuses on the promotion and use of Bangla as state language and English as a second or foreign language. The policy seems relevant and logical for a monolingual country like Bangladesh. But now we need to make a new language policy reflecting on multilingualism and linguistic diversity as already we have a multilingual environment and many languages are used inside the country. The following statement is given by a language teacher professionally for the answer of interview question number 5. Besides Bangla and English, ethnic languages, there are also other languages which are communally effective for religious and other purposes like Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Sanskrit for religious purposes and at the same time French, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, European and other languages are taught and learned inside the country basically for the purposes of tourism, research and translation. (Interviewee 1)

All the interviewees agree to the policy that Bangla should always be the utmost priority as the mother tongue of the majority in Bangladesh. They also mention that English is important for our economic development as it is an international language and we should promote English language for a better future. At first we need a specific and written plan to determine the status of different languages practiced in Bangladesh and then implement the policy to achieve the specific goals. It is now effective for us to go for the multilingual mode for socio-cultural and economic development. The following statement of an interviewee depicts the real scenario of our implicit language policy. The education policy or the language policy has loopholes that should be corrected. There is a lack of proper balance between the use of Bangla and English. Although Bangla is our mother tongue, we are not using it properly. Automatically English is getting preference among the urban people and village people are lagging behind. Linguistic balance and purity are necessary for both Bangla and English. (Interviewee 7)

We have observed glorious fifty years of our independence and Bangladesh has become one of the fastest-growing countries in the world because of the gradual and stable economic growth. The central bank of Bangladesh is creating a new record of reserving foreign currency every year because of the remittance flow and export-oriented garments and other industries. Now it is possible for the people of Bangladesh to avail of the opportunities of globalization and industrialization for economic development and a national language policy with the inclusion of multilingualism and linguistic diversity can be one step ahead for our socio-cultural, political, and economic development. We can encourage our people to learn different languages and they will be able to avail of the benefits from the international arena. In these circumstances, the policymakers of Bangladesh should modify the existing language policy and set sail for a new explicit national language policy. We need a clearly stated language policy and obviously we should form or develop an explicit national language policy in Bangladesh. It is a matter of sorrow that even after 50 years of independence, we do not have an explicit national language policy. (Interviewee 7)

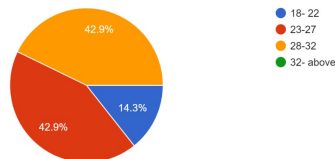
We have collected data through semi-structured interviews from teaching professionals and all the teaching professionals suggest modifying the implicit language policy and making a new explicit national language policy to cope up with the modern global environment. The following suggestion of the interviewee 1 is worthy to mention here. First of all the authority concerned should spell out what should be the status of English language vis a vis Bangla. Secondly, we need to go for the multilingual mode in the country. We need to allow and come out of the cocoon of monolingual mode of using one language. We need to give preference to the dialects, indigenous languages. We should also go for the promotion of

other European languages and these can serve us in different ways. The authorities should take into consideration the expenditure of turning ourselves into a multilingual community. (Interviewee 1)

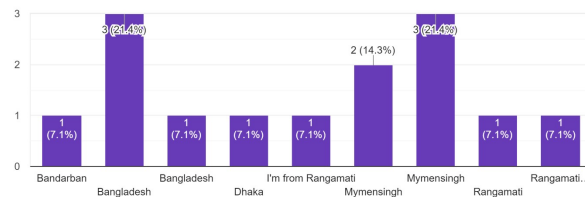
Findings

Findings from Questionnaire 1 (used for the people from the ethnic communities)

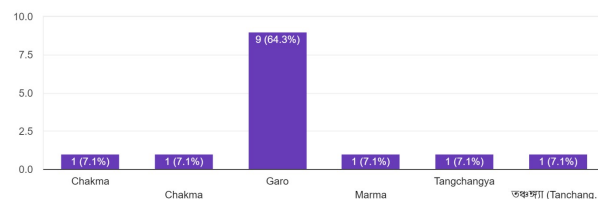
Which age group do you belong to ?
14 responses



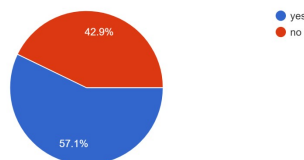
Where are you from ?
14 responses



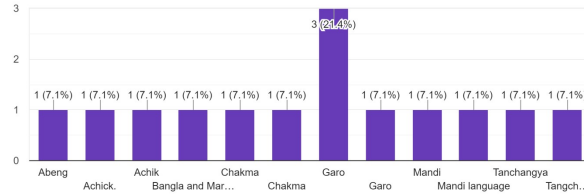
Which ethnic community do you belong to ?
14 responses



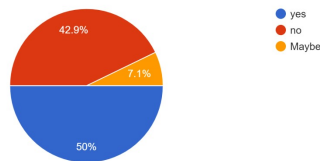
Are you a student ?
14 responses



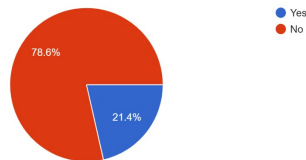
What is your mother tongue ?
14 responses



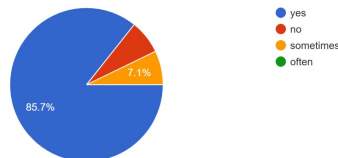
Does your mother tongue has got any written script ?
14 responses



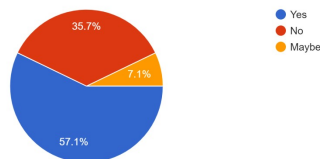
Was learning Bengali language difficult for you ?
14 responses



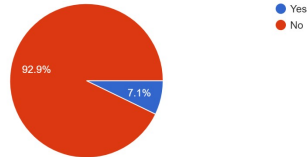
Do you use your mother tongue with your family member at home ?
14 responses



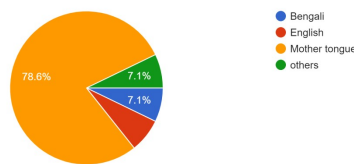
Is people from your community equally competent at your mother tongue and Bengali?
14 responses



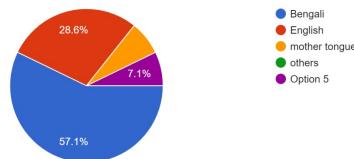
Did you ever get chance to study to study in your mother tongue ?
14 responses



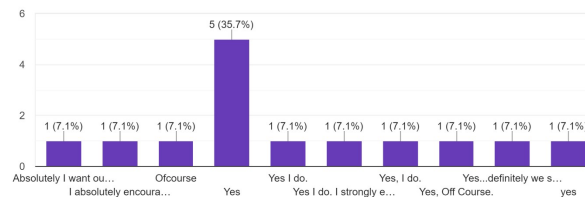
If you get chance which language will you like to use for your daily conversation (oral communication) ?
14 responses



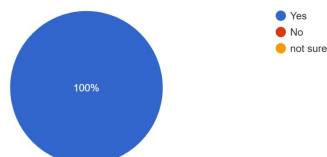
Which language are you comfortable for written communication?
14 responses



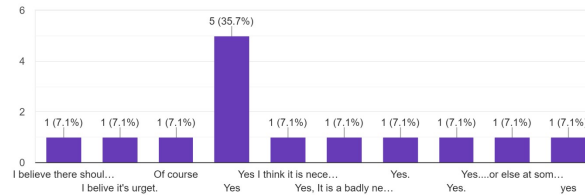
Do you encourage new generation to learn and use their mother tongue?
14 responses



Do you think people from your community should get chance to study in their mother tongue?
14 responses

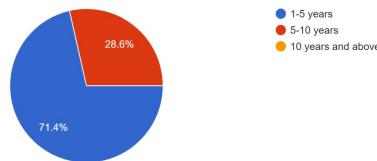


Do you think there is a need for language policy development to preserve your mother tongue ?
14 responses

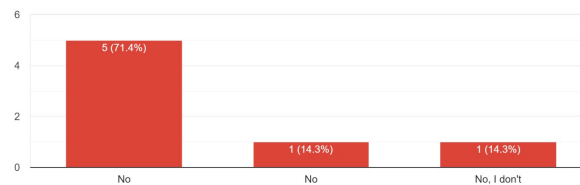


Findings from Questionnaire 2 (used for the teaching professionals)

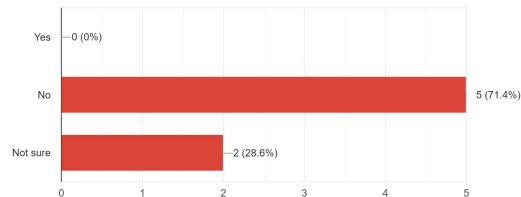
1. How long have you been in teaching ?
7 responses



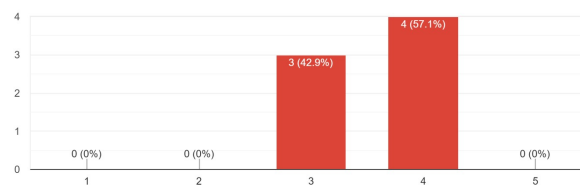
Do you belong to any tribal community? If yes, from which?
7 responses



Are your tribal students equally competent in Bengali, English and their mother tongue?
7 responses

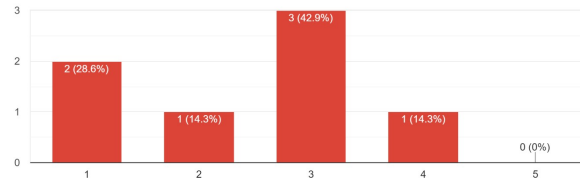


Rate your students competency in Bengali.
7 responses



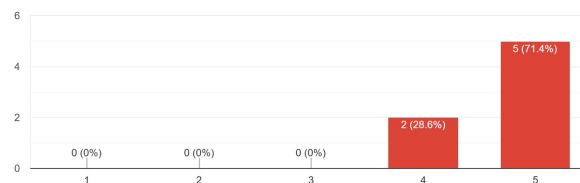
Rate your students competency in English.

7 responses



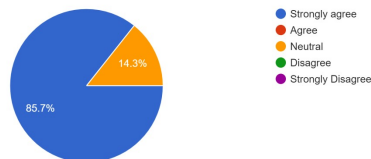
Rate your students competency in their mother tongue.

7 responses



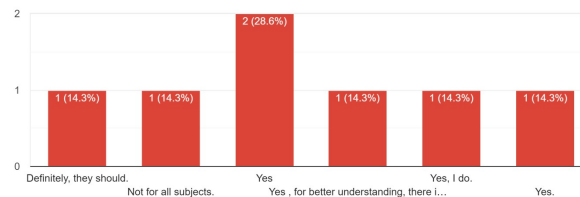
Do you think they lack materials for their mother tongue as compared to Bangla or English ?

7 responses



Do you think people from ethnic community should get chance to study in their own language ?

7 responses



Discussion

National language policy is the policy or rule made by the central government for the selection of language or languages which will be used and promoted in a state or country as national, state, and official languages. An organized and well-planned national language policy is considered highly beneficial for a nation from socio-cultural and economic perspectives.

Bangladesh is a monolingual country and is considered the only monolingual country in South Asia. Bangla is the national language of Bangladesh and according to a 2011 Census, Bangla is predominantly spoken by 98% of the country's population. In article number 3 of the constitution of Bangladesh Bangla is clearly stated as the state language of the country. Bengali Language Implementation Act 1987 made it mandatory to use Bengali (now Bangla) in all government affairs except in the cases of foreign relations. English is also considered a popular and prestigious language as it is an international language and necessary for international communication and Bangladesh was once a part of the British colony.

The existing national language policy for the promotion of Bangla and English is effective for Bangladeshi Perspectives but at the same time, we have many small ethnic groups, immigrant Bihari communities, and nearly 60 languages are practiced and used inside the country. Besides, Bangladesh is now one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. In this perspective, a new explicit national language policy encouraging multilingualism or linguistic diversity will be highly beneficial to avail of linguistic opportunities from national and international domains.

Addressing the first research question, data were collected to find out three language practices of the indigenous community, however, from the findings, we have been assured of three languages used by them and these are Bengali, English, and their own language. At this point, let us consider family, friendship, and religion as informal/intimate domains, neighbourhood, and social networking as semi-formal domains, and education, transaction, and govt. & employment as formal domains. While moving from the continuum of informal to formal domains, the use of Bengali increased significantly and the scope of using their language decreased moderately. Moreover, a strong interference of the Bengali is seen in the intimate domain of friendship. Therefore, even in the intimate domain, intrusion of the second language prevails.

This is a semi-formal domain where the choice of Bengali and their own language turned out almost equal in the quantitative data. And social networking sites, which is a public platform to connect with people and to express thoughts and ideas, can be regarded as a semi-formal domain; as people use both formal and informal language in it. The average mean indicates that they use the two languages in an equal way with frequent use of English. Since it is a public platform, their scope of using their language is limited to their friends and family. Furthermore, they stated that combining Bengali and English on these social networking sites gives the idea that the users are fluent in these languages to others.

People from indigenous communities are directly exposed to the Bengali and English languages through education, which is a formal sphere. It is not only required to communicate in these languages in educational institutions, but it is also required to read, write, and learn in these two languages. In this arena, the usage of the indigenous language is contingent on having classmates and professors who are members of their community. Teachers from other ethnic groups converse with them in Bengali. The results of this study suggest that Bengali is used more frequently than English.

Another most formal sector is govt. and employment. The preference of Bengali is at its peak. The use of English, however, turns out a little bit higher. Govt. officials and the employment sectors of Bangladesh are in the hands of a powerful mainstream community. Despite the fact that the Bangladesh government offers 'quota' opportunities for indigenous people in government positions, their opportunities to speak their native language at work are constrained. In private-sector professions, and from the other hand, they are required to incorporate conventional Bengali as well as formal English when required.

Factors that are Influencing their Language Choices

The majority of previous research studies demonstrated that the younger speakers of minority communities are attracted to the mainstream language, while the older speakers tend to speak their mother tongues. The findings of this study show the same.

In all language studies, the educational level has always influenced language choice. This research is no exception. At the graduate level, as expected, the preference for the popular language Bengali has been larger. With the growth of the educational level, there is greater use of Bengali in the remaining formal sectors.

There are fewer opportunities to talk in the minority language in urban areas because they are frequently filled by people from the mainstream community. A prior study demonstrated how geographically

isolated locations can aid in language preservation. Indigenous peoples mainly dwell in hill tracts; however, they are finding it difficult to do so because of Bengali settlers and the educational system.

Unlike other research, the findings show that the role of gender is insignificant to some extent in this study. The difference between comparative mean values is not sufficient enough to make any judgments

Correlation of the factors influencing their language choice

After these discussions, we are now certain that the education level of the indigenous, their age, and the locations where they are staying or living most have a direct impact on their language choices and these factors are taking a crucial part in choosing the appropriate languages in the other domains. Till teenage, they all get an environment where they have the opportunity to speak in their mother tongue, more or less in all domains.

Gradually, after giving the HSC exam, they shift to the urban areas for higher education and jobs. Eventually, they get themselves surrounded by Bengalis in all walks of their lives including teachers, classmates, bosses, and colleagues. They reach maturity when they proceed to use the second language more frequently than the first. On top of that, they expose themselves to a new learning environment where the medium of instruction is English.

In the educational institutions in their locality, they studied in a situation where they could speak in their language and in Bengali where necessary. On the alternative, they are expected to speak exclusively Bengali and English at urban universities. All these issues together made the indigenous community use Bengali or English more than their own language.

Factors that can influence Possible Language Shift

Following the analysis and discussion of the data, we learned that ethnic communities in Bangladesh employ Bengali in most domains while keeping their mother tongue in the personal realms of home and religion. As a result, the language transition from their mother language to Bengali has not been accomplished. The current scenario demonstrates Bengali's supremacy in official realms and rising intrusion in personal spheres. The regional language being spoken, but it is not strong enough to keep Bengali from encroaching. Apart from that, the indigenous populations' increased preference for Bengali is linked to gaining economic and educational advantages. By this time, if they have access to more conventional educational institutions and a higher level of life in urban regions, they are more likely to switch totally to Bengali.

Moreover, the affirmative views regarding the Bengali language by the indigenous people specify that they have accepted, learned, and are using it without any negative feelings. If this positive approach prevails in the minds of the current generation, it is predictable that this language will be more appreciated, accepted, and will be highly preferred by the next generation. And all these will eventually lead the language shift towards Bengali and their language will be lost.

Conclusion

The implicit and informal national language policy based on the national education policy for the promotion of Bangla as the state language and English as a second or foreign language is relevant for Bangladesh but at the same time through the data analysis, we have found that there are more than 60 languages practiced among different communities of Bangladesh. Now it is time for our government and policymakers to modify our language policy and already in the proposed national education policy of 2010, the policymakers have added the objective to promote and develop the languages and cultures of the indigenous and small ethnic groups. So it will be effective to go for a multilingual mode from practical perspectives and the government or policy makers should specify policies for making a new explicit national language policy.

The major purpose of this research was to learn about the indigenous community's language usage in various areas. The outcomes of this study show Bengali's dominance in the formal realms and its worrying presence in the personal sectors, as expected. Furthermore, education, geography, and age all have a role in their language choices.

Obtaining a better education and relocating to developed city-regions are the primary reasons for preferring Bengali to their native tongue. If their generation receives better elementary education in urban areas, whether in Bengali or English, they will almost certainly speak Bengali and English more than their native tongue. According to the current scenario, people have only begun the process of shifting while keeping their language in the areas of family and religion. Nevertheless, the increasing trend of people relocating to the city for education, jobs, and a better quality of life, as well as the infiltration of Bengali into personal spheres, suggest that in the next years they may totally convert to Bengali. The existence of indigenous people adds to the complexity of our culture, giving Bangladesh's national fabric added energy nevertheless; the languages of Bangladesh's indigenous peoples are in decline due to difficulties in preserving them. In this case, the government should allow indigenous people to utilize their native languages for certain levels of education and activities. Indigenous peoples, on the other hand, must be cognizant of their language rights. Generally, considering indigenous languages are a basic branch of human rights, all parties should take the appropriate steps to safeguard them.

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