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"Banglish": Emergence of a new English variety

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Abstract

A large number of English varieties are emerging day by day with the global expansion and use of English. Bangladeshi English which is formally known as 'Banglish' is one of the newest English varieties in the world of 'Variety of English'. The study is an attempt to gauge and analyse the Banglish from different linguistic levels. This study was undertaken to explore the scenario of Banglish (Bangladeshi variety of English) from Chandpur district of Bangladesh dealing with existing pronunciation, morphology, syntax and semantics style in a participatory approach. The study was qualitative by nature and the methods of data collection consisted of record keeping of words through direct interview, informal talk and FGD with Chandpuri local educated people, and reading some related journals, articles, books and passages. The results of the study explore that English variety in Bangladesh exists in terms of unique pronunciation, morphology, semantics and syntax system of Bangladeshi people and it also differs from standard British English. On the basis of the findings, some implications have been suggested for education, foreigners and language policy makers.

Keywords: English variety; Banglish; Linguistic levels; Chandpur; Participatory approach.

Introduction

Today there are about 6,000 languages in the world, and half of the world's population speaks only 10 of them (Kenneally, 2007). English is one of the most dominant amongst these 10. "Today English is spoken or written, with varying levels of fluency, by a third of the world's population" (Crystal, 2003:8). The rapid spread of English language across the world has created a number of English varieties. The Concise Oxford Linguistics Dictionary defines 'variety' as "any form of a language seen as systematically distinct from others" (Mathews, 2003, p.236). Language can vary not only from one individual to the next, but also from one sub-section of speech community e.g. family, village, town, region etc. to another (Varshney, 1977). As a language, English also varies from country to country, region to region. Variety of English refers to differences between the Standard English and other English's regarding pronunciation, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics in terms of regional or geographical setting. For instance, Indian English, Singapore

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English, Nigerian English etc. are the dominant varieties of English. The variation within a seemingly uniform language has become so great that some linguists (McArthur 1998, Kachru 1986, 1992) have considered it's necessary to analyse this diversity in greater detail and provided some systems of classification which would make the process of describing various aspects of English easier and more thorough (Dabrowska, 2012). This study is an attempt to configure the Bangladeshi English in the lens of variety of English.

In the context of Indian subcontinent and also in Bangladesh, English was introduced by the East India Company and spread out by the British Raj. The Minute of Macaulay (1835) aimed at creating "a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern- a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect" (Kachru, 1983). After 1835, English was rapidly used all over the Indian subcontinent. Now-a-days, English is widely used in the multiple arenas like education, business and commerce, intra-national and international communication etc. in Bangladesh. This wide use has created room for Bangladeshi words in English sentence and context (Hossain, Hasan & Meraj, 2015) which helps to emerge Bangladeshi variety of English formally known as Banglish. Now Bangladeshi educated people in different districts are the preserver and upholder of Bangladeshi variety of English (Hossain, Hasan & Meraj, 2015). By considering the use and expansion of Bangladeshi variety of English, the researcher was interested to conduct this study.

Theoretical Framework

World English vs. World Englishes vs. Global English

World English: World English refers to the English language used in business, trade, diplomacy and other spheres of global activities as a lingua franca.

World Englishes: World Englishes refers to the different varieties of English and English based creoles developed in different regions of the world. On one hand, Kachruvian school of thought conceptualises World Englishes as a paradigm that "captures the dynamic nature of world-wide spread of the language" (Matsuda & Frierdrich, 2010, p.3).

Global Englishes: Alternatively, the term Global Englishes has been used by scholars in the field to emphasis the more recent spread of English due to globalization, which has resulted in increased usage of English as a lingua franca.

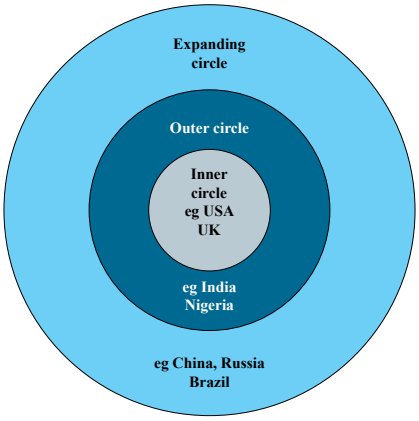
Standard English: Standard English (SE) is a synonym of good or correct English usage. Trudgrill & Hannah (1982) denoted that although Standard English is the kind of English in which all native speakers learn to read and write most people do not actually speak it.

Variety of English

Variety of English refers to the diversified forms of English which exist in the different regions throughout the world. Variety of English is mainly two types: native English variety and non-native English variety. American English variety, British English variety, Canadian English variety, Australian English variety, New Zealand English variety and Ireland English variety are generally known as native English variety. On the other hand, ESL and EFL speakers country's Englishes are known as non-native variety of English which merge Kachru in his three cyclic models.

Figure-1

Biraj Kachru's (1997) Three Circles of English (Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Files)



Note: Based on Primary Data

Each country of this circle has individual English variety.

Apart from these, Trudgill and Hannah (1982) identify four major features of variety of English which are: a) same word, different meaning; b) same word, additional meaning in one variety; c) same word, different in style, connotation, frequency of use; and d) same concept or item, different word.

The importance of variety of English is described mainly from communicational and pedagogical perspectived. It is definitely used in an environment where native speakers of English are few. It is used in mass media, in creative function, in business, politics etc.- most often resulting in code mixing and switching (Proshina, 2014). So it is a crying need to know about different kinds of English variety.

As pedagogy is the science of teaching, a language teacher should have knowledge about the variety of a language for effective teaching and learning. It allows for a non-native variety to be viewed as an independent system, described in its own terms. Whether Platt, Weber and Ho (1984, p.2-3) stated that it can also be used in the educational system.

Different varieties of English

With the global use of English, English is losing its Englishness, and various varieties have emerged continuously which are described below in a short extent.

Hinglish: Hindi variety of English

'Hinglish', a combination of the words "Hindi" and "English" is an established English variety in India. To understand the Hinglish some example are exemplified here: I bought some small small things; Why you don't give them one one piece of cake? (Reduplication).

Chinglish: Chinese variety of English

'China' has also nurtured a new form of English variety which is known as 'Chinglish'. According to the criteria of judging a new English Platt et al. (1984:2-3), Chinglish could be new English, because: Chinglish has developed through the education system and it has become 'localized' by adopting some language features of its own. For example: 'The brother in the upper bed, 'who is your lover in dream?' (A boy student asked another student who was sleeping in the upper bed who his ideal girl was.)

Singlish: Singapori variety of English

Singlish as Singaporeans' colloquial language, to be used in informal situations among family and friends as a way to build solidarity. Brown (1999) states Singlish broadly as the local brand of English. Some examples of Singlish pragmatics are- Singapore, a nation strong and free, You want me to get lost, I will definitely not, Believe in yourself in who you really are etc.

Objectives

The main objective of the study was to explore the Bangladeshi English variety. To meet the main objective, the answers to the following questions were sought by this study:

1. What types of varieties of English is existed in Bangladesh?
2. How Bangladeshi English is different from standard British English in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics?

Rationale of the Study

Global spread of English happens to emerge a number of English varieties. After independence, in 1972 'Qudrat-e-khuda education commission' placed English as a second language which uplifted the usage of English language throughout the Bangladesh. Although 'Bengali language implementation act-1987' placed English as a foreign language but the usage and expansion of English is expanded day by day for its global needs. The large use of English throughout the country especially between the educated and literate persons forming a new English in the context of Bangladesh. To judge and measure the scenario of Bangladeshi English, researcher conducted this study. Besides, as a Bangladeshi, researcher also underwent the process in real life and noticed such English variety which attracted them to measure the situation.

Methodology

This study was undertaken examine the variety of Bangladesh English in a participatory approach. The study was mainly qualitative by nature and the methods of data collection consisted of record keeping of words through direct interview, informal talk and FGD with Chandpuri (one of the district of Bangladesh) local educated people, and reading some related journals, articles, books and passages with a view to gathering comprehensive idea about the context. The table 1 sum up the research tools, respondents, the total number of samples and sampling procedures.

Table-1
Scaffolding of the research study

Research Tools	Respondents	Total Number	Sampling Procedure	Research Questions
Direct interview schedule (one to one)	Chandpuri local people (Post Graduate, Graduate holder)	15 (5 from Chandpur Sadar, 5 from Faridgonj Upzilla and 5 from Horny Durgapur village)	Purposive	i & ii
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Chandpuri local people (Literate & Semi-literate people)	20 FGDs for 200 people (10 per group)	Purposive	i & ii
Document analysis	English variety related journals, articles, books and passages	135	Purposive	i & ii

Analyses of data and Findings

In this section, the Bangladeshi English variety is analysed from the Chandpuri local context. And how Bangladeshi English is different from the standard British English in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics are also presented on the basis of reviewing journals, articles, books and passages, informal talk and FGD with people and data from direct interview.

Phonological varieties

Pronunciation also contributes to generating new variety of English. In Bangladesh, people pronounce English in different tone that is directly noticed in this study. People here tend to pronounce the "per" cluster in "fer" for instance they pronounce the word "performance" and "perfect" respectively as "ferformance" and "ferfect".

The following table is the outcome of this study which captured the phonological differences between Banglish and standard British English:

Table-2

Selected words from informal talk, FGD and interview with Chandpuri local people

Word	Accurate English pronunciation	Bangladeshi English pronunciation (in Chandpuri context)
Know	/nəu/	/nɔ:/
Girl	/gɜ:(r)l/	/ga:rl/
Start	/sta:t/	/æsta:rt/
Literature	/litrətʃə(r)/	/litare:sar/
Much	/mʌtʃ/	/mʌs/
Say	/seɪ/	/se /
Bay	/beɪ/	/be /
Which	/wɪtʃ/	/huɪs/
Play	/pleɪ/	/ple:/
Form	/fɔ:m/	/frɒm/
Topic	/tɒpɪk/	/tɒfɪk/
Very	/vɛrɪ/	/bɛ:rɪ/
Deep	/di:p/	/di:f/
First	/fɜ:(r)st/	/fʌst/
Own	/əun/	/ɔ:n/
Chair	/tʃɛər/	/sɛar/
Face	/feɪs/	/fe s/

Note: Adapted from: Hoque, 2011

Morphological variety

Some morphological words from different context of Bangladesh also showed a new variety of English. The morphological varieties of Banglish are described below from different aspects.

Religious and cultural words

Culture is reflected in their language, literature, religion, music, dress, cooking etc. for example, the celebration of any religious festival specially Eid in our country, celebration of "Pohela Boishakh", "Pohela Falgun", "Nabanna", "Sanghai", "Pandal", "Akherimonajat (meaning final prayer)" etc. are usually referred to as cultural practices in Bangladesh which helps to emerge new variety of English words in terms of morphology.

Localized or nativized words

By observing some news of English newspapers of Bangladesh, the researcher has found some Banglish characteristics like "Pohela Boishakh celebrated in a festive mood", "Hartal called by deprived people", "Ilish (meaning hilsha fish)", "Price hike", "Putul (meaning

inactive) president", "Cattle hut (meaning market) in Chandpur". It is found that four out of six newspaper headlines contain one or two Bangla words. This wide use of Bangla in English actually Englishizes the Bangla words and helps to generate a new variety of English that is more localized or nativized.

Variety in Noun

Some examples of Banglish in terms of proper or common nouns which are usually used in Banglish as English word:

1. Bengali proper name, English product name: Shamsuddin Sweetmeat
2. English proper name, English product name: Ecstasy Tailor's
3. English proper name, Bengali product name: Rocky Kabab Ghar

Some examples of Informal talks with Banglish

The following words make entity in the Banglish and contribute to create new words which are usually used in English in Bangladesh.

Table-3
Banglish word

Words	Origins of the word	Literal meaning	Intended meaning
Vabs	Bangla + English	Being moody	Moody in negative
Abar ask	Bangla + English	Asking something again	To ensure something/ to agree with someone
Offja	Bangla + English	To stop or off	To stop someone

Note: Adopted from Tinny, 2010

Syntactical variety

By conducting interview, FGD and informal talk with local people of Chandpur, researcher found some variety of English in terms of syntax from different aspects. Some examples of those arenas are presented below-

verbal inflexion

Utpal argue that we should call a spade a spade.

plural marking:

I am firmly sure that all religion will obey it.

Many childrens in the field

Then thousand of peoples suffering from dysentery will….

variety in the uses of proposition:

Water on the floor.

Jump into the roof.

Some other differences:

Table-4

Difference between standard British English and Bangladeshi English

Standard British English	Bangladeshi English (in Chandpur context)
He is going to market.	He goes to market.
The Bengali language is our dominant language.	Bengali language is our dominant language.
My mother exercises every day.	Everyday my mother exercise.
Water over the floor.	Water on the floor.
We are going to shopping.	We are going to marketing.
The sun rises in the east.	Sun rises in the east.

Note: Adopted from Authors (on the basis of data analysis)

Slogans and advertising:

- Seen on a coaching bulletin board in Chandpur:

  "The more you read, more you pursue."

  "We apply bamboo theory for the students for better output."

- Sign on a famous beauty parlour window in Gulshan:

  "Not tease the girl bank from here. She may be your mother or aunty."

- Others:

  "Dear, I miss you dearly, please come quickly."

An example of Banglish syntax through a rhyme:

"Flying down here, talking English, Banglish, English
And this category so funny- the brown shaheb!
But brown shaheb forgetting always he actually local
Why so much show-off, he not grow up with rice-daal?
In our heritage we saying crow trying hard, becoming peacock
Possible never, ever, never, he will be so much pain and shock!
But if he write a book winning the English language match
I will giving my honest salam, so much respect for that."

(Extracted from Ahsan Akbar, on December 11, 2014 at 12:01; Retrieved from: http://www.dhakatribute.com/artsletters/2014/dec/07/haydhakabanglish≠sthash.It3L9f76.dpuf).

Semantic variety

The Englishization (a process by which any other language is used or uttered in English intonation) of Bangla words emerged new semantic variety. Indeed, some of Bangla words like 'Jotils' and 'Jhakkas' are uttered in English tone and these are referred to 'awesome' is the example of semantic variety. Sign at a barber's saloon in Chandpur: We need your mouth to wash the garbage (means you are invited to facial in our saloon) also presents semantic variety.

Same word different meaning

Table-5

Same word different meaning

Root word	Banglish	Standard British English
Master's	Also indicates 'teachers'	Only indicates 'post graduate'
Water	Only indicates 'water'	Also indicates 'extravagant'

Note: Adopted from Authors (on the basis of data analysis)

A select glossary of Banglish:

- Grameen bank = a village bank
- Four twenty = a cheat or fraud
- Tiffin room = snacks room
- Double roti = a loaf of bread (Kachru, 1986).

Some example of code-mixing:

The following code-mixing expressions were found in the participant conversations:

- We are looking for shotroos. ('We are looking for enemies.')
- Priya believe me ami tomake onek onek love kori. ('Priya, believe me, I love you a lot.')
- Ami bollam je that's good news. ('I said that's good news.')
- Raki math private pore. ('Raki takes private tuition for mathematics.')
- Baktigoto experience theke bolci. ('I told from my personal experience.')
- Tui to sala akta son of bitch. ('You are a son of bitch.')
- He enjoys giving adda. ('He enjoys chatting.'). The interested thing to notice here is the use of the English word 'giving' to make way for the Bengali word adda.

Major findings

After analysing data, the following major findings are found in this study-

- A moderate scale of English variety exists in Bangladesh.
- Bangladeshi English or Banglish has some individual characteristics.
- Bangladeshi English variety exists in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.
- Bangladeshi English variety is different from the standard British English.
- All educated people use Banglish in their daily conversations and their daily activities.

- Semi-literate and illiterate people mainly use code-coxing (mixing of Bangla and English) in their conversations.
- Bangladeshi English variety mainly appears in speaking than writing.

Discussion of the Findings

Bangladeshi English variety is the new reality in the world of 'variety of English'. This study revealed that a moderate scale of English variety exists in Bangladesh. English has diffused deeply in the country. The people of Bangladesh use English in their daily life for various purpose like education, business and commerce, social communication, electronic mediated communication and whatnots. As a result, a unique version of English has originated in Bangladesh throughout their daily communication and conversation. This is known as Bangladeshi variety of English which is now also referred as Banglish. This similar finding was found by Hossain, Hasan & Meraj (2015) in their study where they asserted that Bangladesh is no exception in creating an English variety and English used by Bangladeshi speakers may be labelled as Bangladeshi English.

This study strongly referred Bangladeshi English as 'Banglish'. Today it is now popularly termed as 'Banglish' (Hassan, 2011). About this Hossain, Hasan & Meraj (2015) was defining it as Bangladeshi variety of English or Bangladeshi English or BaE. Generally it can be said that Banglish is an informal term for a dialectal mix of Bengali (the official language of Bangladesh) and English. According to Alam & Shafiq (2012) – "Use of 'Banglish' in which Bengali and English words are mixed seamlessly together is widespread, like 'Hinglish' in India, a combination of Hindi and English." In a brief, Banglish is the new emerging variety of English which is nurtured in Bangladesh.

As Banglish is a new variety of English so there has some individual characteristics which are mentioned here from different angels:

- Bengali words are making their entries. For example – Pohela Baishakh (Bengali New Year), Salam (greetings), Jonab (Sir) etc.
- Pronunciation variety largely appears in Banglish. For instance-

Figure-2

Example of pronunciation variety

British English	Banglish (in Chandpur context)
Schedule	Skedul
Vitamin	Vaitamin

Note: Adopted from Authors on the basis of data analysis

The pronunciation variety in Banglish is influenced by native tone. For example, 'Tomato' is pronounced in Banglish as 'Tomaatoo' (টমাটু), 'Sure' as 'Shiyur', 'Tiger' as 'Tigger' etc. Bengali words are infused in English gradually.

- English suffixes are being attached to Bengali words and vice versa;
- In syntactic level, there also appeared some kind of variety. Word order of English is changed in Banglish in some extent. For example: Do you know where is he?
- Literal translations of Bengali proverbs are being introduced. For example: Go Gorango

(By the name of God) is used by Chandpuri local Hindu People. Other examples include: Bikrompur Sweetmeat, Hasem Hair Cutting, Jamai-Bou sweets (followed by a Bengali phrase).

- Now-a-days, Banglish characteristics are also seen in rhymes.

"…….
I hail from zamindar family,
Very honourable and nicely,
Trust me, my friends are also
……."

-[The opening lines of "A1 Elites" by Bangladeshi poet Ahsan Akbar (The devil's Thumbprint, 2013)].

This metrical line also represents the glimpse of Banglish.

One of the major findings of this study is that Bangladeshi English variety exists in most of the linguistic levels. It means Banglish exists in the phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Although Bangladeshi English variety does not equally exist in these linguistic levels, but more or less Banglish is presented in most of the linguistic levels. In a similar fashion, Hossain, Hasan & Meraj (2015) study's result and detail analysis has brought out that syntactically, semantically and phonologically a new English variety is emerging in Bangladesh.

Every linguistic level has their distinct natures which make Banglish quite different from the standard British English. Banu (2000) affirms that over the years because of uncontrollable expansion of English use, "Bangladesh will have developed some special features of its own that can be described as systematic and recurrent devotions from the British English."

The native-like pronunciation (Bengali local tone) was widely reflected in the Chandpuri people pronunciation of English word which is quite different from standard British English. For instance, the word 'institution', 'special' pronounces respectively as 'inostitution' and 'especial' in Banglish which is showing differences with standard British English. Pronunciation of English has been influenced by Bangla language variety and thus created a new format of English pronunciations which are mainly understand and used locally. These types of pronunciations mainly make difference between Banglish and standard British English. In FGD, the participants opined that they use Bangla words to make English localized and comprehensible. Bangladeshi people may not understand the native utterances and that is why Bangladeshi pronunciation is needed, they mentioned. In this way, Banglish pronunciation is varying from standard British English.

'Pohela Baishakh' is a Bengali word but it is very often used in the Bangladeshi English, such as 'Pohela Baishakh celebrated in a festive mood in the whole country'. Here, the word 'Pohela Baishakh' has no equivalent word in English. So it has been accepted as an English word in Banglish. On the other side, 'Riding a cycle is good from riding a bike' instead of 'Riding a cycle is better than riding a bike'; reveals syntactical difference and 'He is going to marketing' used in Banglish instead of 'He is going to shopping' reveals semantic difference. These all are representing the unique norms of Banglish which are different from the standard British English. This study brought these into focus.

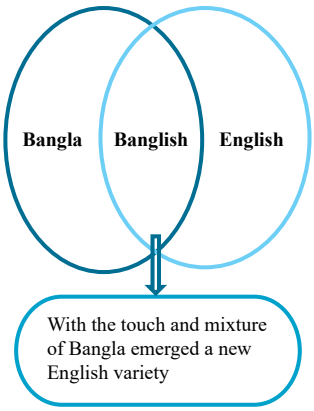
Most of the participant in FGD and interview schedule responded that all used Banglish in their communication and Bangladeshi expressions are also used in international media like BBC sometimes. These Bangladeshi expressions have become English because sometimes literature also uses these words, they further added. Hence, Banglish emerged as a new English variety.

While transcribing the radio, we have found some words like 'sweet dreams', 'vuut (meaning ghost) FM', 'our radio friends' and the RJs frequently pronounce Bangla words in English tone (Hossain, Hasan & Meraj, 2015). And this trend is also spread throughout Chandpur district within literate, semi-literate and illiterate people. One participant in FGD responded that "In present age, conversation is quite impossible without Banglish." That means they use Bangladeshi English variety in their daily conservations instead of standard British English. In this regard, Zulhas Ahmed (pseudonym), a teacher of English Medium School in Chandpur district explained:

"We are good neither in standard British English nor in Bengali, so we use Banglish when we are teaching English. So, we talk in a mix where we use both English and Bangla words together, like Singlish."

According to Kachru (1992) usually, the local variety is widely accepted by the local people and this acceptance helps to orginate a new variety of English. In line of this statement, the local acceptance of Banglish developed a new English variety. Therefore this new English variety might be figured as following figure:

Figure-3
Emerging of Banglish



Note: Based on Primary Data

Implications of the Study

Although the study is in many ways exploratory, it raises several important issues. On the basis on findings some implication of this study are mentioned below:

Implications for Education:

Banglish can (and does) perform a variety of such functions:

- to draw students' attention to what they already know;

- to make students aware of new rules and items in the standard English variety;
- to help students 'notice the gap' and make comparisons;
- to motivate students;
- to build rapport with individual students;
- to establish a warmer, friendly atmosphere;
- to scaffold knowledge construction for pupils with limited Banglish language resources;
- to draw students' attention to the appropriate contexts of use for each variety.

Finally, the teachers should turn a monotonous class into an enjoyable one, change students' attitude positively and enhance their motivation through Banglish communication also.

Implications for Foreigners:

- as the study captured several linguistic levels for analysing Banglish, it helps foreigners to understand Banglish variety;
- this study has also allowed for the investigation of intelligibility firmly embedded in the Bangladeshi socio-cultural communicative context, and to be reconceptualised as a negotiated process which would be helpful for the foreigners.

Implications for Language Policy:

- it therefore allows for Banglish as a non-native variety to be viewed as an independent system, and described in its own terms that helps language policy makers;
- it also helps to understand Bangladeshi English variety from different aspects which play vital role in language policy.

Conclusion

At the eleventh hour, it can be said that the new emergence of English variety which ceremoniously known as Banglish exists in Bangladesh in most of the linguistic levels. Although it is not as established as Hinglish, or Singlish, it is obvious that Banglish is in its embryonic stage as a 'variety of English'. As Meiorkord (2012) mentioned that "Bangladeshi English is now predominant variety." According to Hossain, Hasan & Meraj (2015) this newly created variety of English has become a wing or independent variety or modified variety of world English. By this study, researcher attempted to find out the Bangladeshi variety of English from Chandpur local context and hope that the next researcher would work in the whole country in a large scale. The acceptance of Banglish in the national and international levels will be judged by the next researcher.

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