English, Education, and Globalisation: A Bangladesh Perspective

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Abstract

As a third world country and a former British colony, Bangladesh has seen a dramatic upsurge in the use of the English language. Built on the concept of imperialistic aspects of the English language, this paper draws on responses from anonymous survey results and interviews and attempts to provide deeper insights into the global aspects of English as a language and the credibility of this language in the minds of the populace. This paper assesses the English language as a feature of globalization where English is considered to be of the utmost value. Questionnaires were designed and interviews were arranged to evaluate the commercial and linguistic aspects of English in Bangladesh to reach a conclusion whether the mass perceives this very language as it should be or there are any other economic and cultural aspects. The findings were presented graphically and the study showed that English fails to meet the expectations of the stakeholders and policy makers of Bangladesh. The paper concludes with some recommendations that could help resolve the situation and present English to the people in a better light.

Keywords: linguistic imperialism; English as a global language; language contact; bilingual education.

Introduction

Phillipson (1992) quoted a sentence from the Annual Report of British Council (1987/88, p.8) which states 'Britain's real black gold is not North Sea oil but the English language' (Phillipson, 1992, p. 49). From the ongoing trends, one is likely to perceive that the report writer was a far better fortuneteller than *Paul the Octopus*, with a success rate beyond a hundred percent. English is flourishing, English is in the air and above all and people are living in English now. Even in a remote corner of a village, you will be enjoying great views of posters, banners or festoons proudly upholding the prodigy of this great language, directly or indirectly. This is not a one-way process; rather, the mass is merging themselves into the same flow. The prominence and promotional activities of English have caused the spread of English teaching, teachers and obviously, a lot of learners. English is highly promising in providing them with better chances in the fields of jobs, in society and at the ideological level (Phillipson, 1992). In the case of Bangladesh, English is a mandatory subject for the learners from the very beginning of their academic life until the tertiary level. On the other hand, English still enjoys an EFL status in Bangladesh. This survey research paper was by collecting and analysing the data obtained from anonymous surveys, case studies, and interviews that had three very rudimentary research questions at the roots:

a. What does English mean to the people of Bangladesh?
b. What is the most significant reason for learning English for the people of Bangladesh?
c. How far can the education policy of Bangladesh justify itself with the actual needs of the people learning English?

The Unquestionable Significance of English

The proliferation of English in the world can be effortlessly perceived only by elaborating on the fact that it is the number one 'lingua franca' in the whole world (Jenkins, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2010; Mackenzie, 2014) and the officially accepted language of more than 85% organizations in the world (Crystal, 2012). It is often taken as the entryway to the modern world. Learning a second language often comes in handy in terms of maintaining communication with the people around the world as multilingualism helps greatly in this regard (Mansour, 1993; House & Rehbein, 2004). If this is the case, English has to be the first and foremost alternative next to the mother tongue. However, the learners of English as a second language often face difficulties as they have to bridle all the four horses namely Reading, Writing, Listening & Speaking at the same time. Keeping these complications in mind, the English language courses are designed to assist them in the best possible ways. To supplement the process, numerous organisations offer English language courses for the mass and there are some state organisations that have opened the gates through which one can authenticate himself to be a potential and prominent speaker of English. In a word, English is in the air nowadays where one finds his 'Querencia' (Heard, 1995). Hemingway (1932) defines 'Querencia' denoting it to be 'a place the bull naturally wants to go to in the ring, a preferred locality... It is a place which develops in the course of the fight where the bull makes his home'. In addition, it is fairly out of any doubt that English makes someone a part of the global village (McLuhan, 1964) due to the radical upsurge in the areas of mass media. The axiom of English has crossed the borders of any state transforming the regular neighbourhoods into the segments of a globalised world (Crewe & Axelby, 2012; Wolff, 2014). Everyone living inside the premises of a third world country bears the sense that they need something to get themselves merged with the people in the Inner Circle and English inclines to be the easiest and the most accessible choice to acclimatize and implement in

pursuing the dream to become a part of the Inner Circle or, at least, go close to it (White, 2016; Kachru, 1985; Nejad, 2011; Phillipson, 1992).

English in Bangladesh

English has been in the veins of Bangladesh since the periods of colonisation. Being a part of the Indian Subcontinent, it has seen dramatic developments of English as the language of the dominators, rulers, oppressors and the decision makers. However, English was not taken into the parts of the then society as a part of the subsidised class or the subdued section of the colony and their popular culture. People had a disdainful stance towards English as the tongue of the 'Firingees' (equivalent Bangla term for an Englishman), the patois of the authority, the voice of their plunderers and anything that suits the same context. After that came the epochs of Pakistan government as India and Pakistan derived two different entities in 1947. Without going much into that narrative, it can only be mentioned that the present national language of Bangladesh, Bangla, is the outcome of a long lasting protest against the Urdu language and a nationwide movement to give Bangla the place it deserves. Commemorating that blood marks in the history of language development in Bangladesh, UNESCO declared 21 February as the International Mother Language Day celebrated every year with remarkable grandeur and ceremonial fashion. Now, it stands profoundly as the eighth language in the world by the total number of speakers that engulfs 190 million native speakers and 20 million non-native speakers (List of languages by total number of speakers, 2016).

Generally, Bangladesh is taken as a monolingual country where the national language, Bangla, is spoken by 98% of the people (LLC, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2015; Kachru, Kachru, & Sridhar, 2008). Kachru, Kachru, & Sridhar (2008) explain further that even the native speakers are not aware of the minority languages spoken inside the borders of their country and some of them have not even heard the names of some dialects. Although there are 36 marginal groups with their own languages (Mohsin, 2003), the government of Bangladesh denies the existence of any indigenous people in Bangladesh (Chittagong Hill Tracts: "There are no indigenous people in Bangladesh", 2011). By this, it can be affirmed that, linguistically, Bangla is the only language that has been serving the purposes of communication throughout the history.

However, with the emergent demand of global and intercultural communicative competence (Jackson, 2014; Dai & Chen, 2014), it became essential to cultivate an education policy that would serve the goals of creating global citizens (Dower & Williams, 2002; Mayo, 2005) as well as reflecting the needs of the learners. In the case of education policy in Bangladesh, there have been several testimonies of power practice and hegemony. Though literacy is always in the focal point in designing educational policies (Datta, 2007), studies have revealed several occasions that should be considered while taking account of educational policies. These policies have moved from their traditional strands and now tend to integrate into a 'postmodern critical approach' (Paciotto & Delany-Barmann, 2011). Mohsin (2003) asserts that 'the government of Bangladesh has deeply hegemonic and chauvinistic policies of its own' which puts it into a problematic situation. As more and more countries are reshaping and redesigning their policies to keep a sustainable demand of English (Tsui & Tollefson, 2008), Bangladesh, along with the other third world countries, is forced to provide more and more space to English. So far, the education policy of Bangladesh has been through significant number of amendments and modifications e.g. introducing the English version of the national curriculum in the late 1990s, enactment of Private university Act 1992 that inculcated the classroom instructions in all the private university to be completely in English, and, establishing mandatory English courses in all the universities of Bangladesh in 1994 (Rahman, 2015). On the other hand, a

third world country like Bangladesh is rigorously affected by the 'imperialism' imposed on the language policies through the gates of 'aids', 'English language promoting organisations' and 'language agents' (Phillipson, 1992) and from the sociolinguistic aspects, this very nation is still to find it's way to the global prospects of English. Phillipson (1992) also affirms that 'the dominance of English is asserted by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages' (p. 47) and unfortunately, in our case, Bangla represents the other language. He terms this as 'linguicism' that occurs when 'there is a policy of supporting several languages, but priority is given on teacher training, curriculum development and school timetables to one language' (p. 47). Such processes have also been labelled as 'neocolonialism' in education (Altbach, 1971) as 'the educational systems of most developing countries, on almost all levels, remain rooted in the administrative structures of the former colonial rulers. The colonial power may not be the direct cause of this situation, but the fact that the structure and organisation of the schools reflect a foreign model necessarily has an impact on the nature of the education provided' (p. 237).

Contemporary Practices in English Teaching

To match with the advent of English, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for teaching English was first introduced in the secondary and higher secondary levels of Bangladesh in the 1990s by the National Curriculum and Textbook Bard keeping the notion of developing communicative competence in the global context (Binoy, Sultana, & Basu, 2007). In Bangladesh, English is taught as a compulsory subject (English Part I & II) included in the syllabi of Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary School Certificate examinations (Secondary Curriculum, 2016; Higher Secondary Curriculum, 2016). However, there have been several disputes over the success of CLT in Bangladesh and most of them concern the complications regarding classroom management, less supportive infrastructure and a shortage of competent teachers (Haque, 2015; Rahman & Karim, 2015; Islam & Bari, 2012). One more peculiar specimen can be the passing rate of Dhaka University. A newspaper report published on 25 September 2014 in www.bdnews24.com reported hat only two students could make it to the gates of admission into the English Department of Dhaka University. Furthermore, English courses have been made obligatory by the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh for the undergraduate levels of all disciplines and the latest reform in educational policy (2010) evidently projects that 'English will be taught as a compulsory subject at the degree level of all colleges and universities. It will carry 100 marks/3 credits' (National Education Policy 2010, p. 32, clause 09). Along with these aids, students have better chances of receiving alternative assistance from the international organisations, e.g. British Council, to replenish their skills of the English language. Moreover, there are different streams of learners with their own curriculum and teaching system. Right now, the mainstream of the students falls under the category of the national curriculum or, the Bangla curriculum that follows the national curriculum of Bangladesh designed by the government. All the books are distributed free of cost to the learners which are written in Bangla and the testing system aims at evaluating their analytical abilities which is termed as 'Creative Learning and Teaching'. The second major group comprises of the students from the English medium schools. These schools follow the curricula designed internationally and Edexcel is the most common one of them. The next cluster encompasses the pupils who follow the English version of the national curriculum. These books are the English translations of their original Bangla counterparts and the same system of testing & evaluation is followed in this case. The fourth group consists of the learners opting for the Islamic system of learning and teaching referred as 'Madrasa Education' with their own authority or, education board and individually designed books. At last, there is another stream of education namely 'Vocational Learning' that is dedicated to occupational

training. Their books are also designed separately and have a distinct evaluation process. To elaborate over the higher-secondary education of Bangladesh, it would be enough to say that all these secondary levels have their own advanced or higher level examinations. Also, students have the freedom to switch to any module of teaching at certain periods which enables them to opt for any mode of teaching they prefer (An overview is provided in Table 1). Considering all these viewpoints, it is certainly conceivable that English is already in the brains, minds, and hearts of the students who have gone through the national curriculum or English medium curriculum before they begin their tertiary education.

Table 1: Overview of the secondary and higher secondary examinations

Secondary Exams	**Target learners**	**Higher Secondary Counterparts**
Secondary School Certificate (SSC)	Students following the national curriculum (both Bangla & English version)	Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC)
Dakhil	Students following Islamic system of teaching	Fazil
SSC (Vocational)	Students aspiring for job placement training more than institutional education	HSC (Vocational)
O Level	Students following international curricula	A Level

Besides, there is one more underlying society that consists of the working people. For these people, most of whom have obtained their education in a Bangla-medium environment, English often poses to be a threat and sometimes burden. The above case study or, seemingly unnecessary elaboration in the introduction part is just a casual phenomena.

Methodology

The respondents for this survey research paper come from versatile socio-economic backgrounds. The first portion comes from the university students. The university students were selected from four public and private universities in Bangladesh specifically University of Rajshahi (RU), Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU), Hamdard University Bangladesh (HUB) & United International University (UIU) among which the first two are government-run universities and the other ones are privately owned educational institutes (University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, 2016). The second group of informants are the people working in various sectors of the country. The first part was comprised of the members of the upper class (economically or intellectually), for example, directors or managers of public and private organisations, university teachers, journalists, writers, education researchers and experts. The second part involved the middle layer of the organograms, for instance, executives, officers, medical promotion officers, reporters and filed workers of different organisations. The last part incorporated the people from the grassroots level like fruit sellers, small grocery owners, rickshaw pullers, street hawkers, road-side tea sellers and drivers of public vahicles. For ensuring the objectivity of the research, their names have not been revealed, however, their occupations and positions are included in the transcriptions.

Data were collected through two different methods. The first method included the distribution of 240 copies (including both Set A and B) of questionnaires among the respondents and the second method involved interviews in the form of researchers' notes. It was made sure that the respondents had a clear understanding of the survey and the impacts before starting delivering the responses. Only the respondents enthusiastic for participating were approached and none of them had been persuaded by any means to contribute to the survey. All the responses are

deliberate & spontaneous derived from a group of respondents with Informed Consent (Switankowsky, 1998; Marshall, 2007). Also, all of them were aware of the fact that their names or any sort of identifiers would be kept undisclosed thus preserving a thorough level of Confidentiality and Anonymity (Kulakowski & Chronister, 2008; Wiles, 2012).

The first set of questions was designed for the students studying at the above-mentioned universities. In total, 120 copies were distributed and all of them were submitted with responses as both the researchers have direct access to all the universities. After that, another set of questions was distributed among the working people of the country. The rest 120 copies were divided into three parts and distributed in groups. It is also to mention that there was a third set as well which was the Bangla translation of the second set. This was used in case the situation necessitated one. Findings from both of them have been analysed and incorporated under one figure. Out of 120 of them, only 89 were submitted.

To obtain a clearer view of the selections made by the respondents and inquire about additional responses, five short interviews were conducted. All the interviews have been recorded and transcribed by the surveyor. The findings have been presented (in percentile) through Figures 1 and 2 and the transcriptions are included in the Appendices. The responses of the questionnaires were tabulated and have been presented in the Findings.

Findings

All the figures provided below are the results of an anonymous survey conducted in Bangladesh where all the figures represent the percentile of the responses for each choice. The questionnaires are provided in the Appendices section along with the transcriptions of the interviews. Studying the finding has brought some interesting facts to light.

Table 2: Responses to Set A (in percentile)

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
S1. I learn English because I love to enrich my knowledge of English.	23	22	26	7	12
S2. English is necessary for me to get a better job.	48	16	12	17	7
S3. I believe that without English I cannot shine in life.	53	3	14	13	17
S4. I want to achieve fluency in speaking rather than in writing or reading.	69	16	7	5	3
S5. English courses are highly effective in my university.	17	21	16	31	15
S6. My goal is to achieve a decent command over English only to maintain external communication.	57	24	6	8	5
S7. I want my English classes focus more on real life communications rather than theoretical aspects.	61	19	2	12	6
S8. English does not attract me as a subject other than being a part of the core courses.	54	27	1	7	11
S9. I do not want to study English after finishing the mandatory credits for my degree.	76	19	1	4	0
S10. English is only necessary for my future career and higher studies abroad.	64	9	12	14	1

Table 3. Responses to Set B (in percentile)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
S1.English is necessary for my job.	42	27	5	15	11
S2.I cannot communicate with my clients without English.	12	31	9	39	9
S3.I use English for all my local correspondences.	1	2	0	14	83
S4.I use English for all my international correspondences.	56	19	11	12	2
S5.It is alright for me if I can make sense in my writing without maintaining accuracy.	82	13	1	1	3
S6.I try to avoid speaking in English with my bosses and clients.	67	21	6	4	2
S7.I would not even try to learn English if I had option to do so.	41	34	8	12	5

Discussion

It becomes obvious from the survey results that the current practices in teaching English in the tertiary levels clearly reflect the government's aspirations underlying '…we need to upgrade the quality of our higher education to match the international standard. It is very important for the young people to acquire professional skills and we will have to take all necessary steps to ensure this.' (National Education Policy 2010, p.5) and it is obvious that in the echelons of higher studies in Bangladesh, the significance of studying English is irrefutable. It has been so compelling on the parts of the learners that they believe that English is a mandatory part in their career and without English they do not stand a chance of survival in the global world. There also lies a shortage in their intrinsic motivation as they are learning English merely as a part of their education, not as a subject that can enhance their future learning or has the capacity to aid them in entering the world of great scholars and literature (S1, S2, S3, S9, S10 from Set A & S1, S2 from Set B).

Keeping this focus in mind, it is expected that the learners will have a firm grip on the English language before starting their higher education. However, the present competency level of the learners does not comply with this picture completely. The findings produce a clear image of the discrepancies that are eventually built inside the learners and transformed to them through the faulty teaching system in the secondary and higher secondary levels. The findings also suggest that the learners are not satisfied with the effectiveness of the English language courses at the universities (S5 from Set A). One of my professors, Md. Jahurul Islam, from the Department of English, University of Rajshahi, once expressed his view regarding the vocabulary used by an average learner at a university and he was shocked to discover students using sentences like 'I have ill', 'I absent for sick' and many more. While attending the classes, we had to bear his reconciliations over the students and he termed these sentences as 'Mad English'. As he was one of the designers of the National Textbook of English (Higher Secondary Level) in Bangladesh, he doubted whether these books are actually followed as they meant to be or not. If these books were used in the real sense in the secondary and higher secondary classes, the learners would have gained at least six thousand new words before entering the premises of the universities. Our findings point directly to the faulty teaching system in the lower levels which created a fearful appearance of English in the minds of the young learners. S6, S7, S8, S9 from Set A & S5, S6, S& from Set B clearly indicate that the learners are at a stage where they try to avoid the use of English as the teaching system of secondary and higher secondary levels does not provide them with an opportunity to practice

English, mainly speaking and listening, for real life communications and when they have to interact with the people using English, they become frightened. It is also a noticeable in the English language classrooms at the universities where the learners are highly reluctant to speak in public although they are very good at writing and reading.

Moreover, the previous studies had found that CLT stumbled in its roots because of integrating unsuitable approach in response to the social setting of Bangladesh, less motivation in the norms of T-S interaction, and above all, insufficient and indecorous training facilities for the EFL teachers (Rahman & Karim, 2015). Earlier researchers also found that CLT becomes very hard to implement as Bangla is the medium of instruction in the lower levels and this severely hampers the communicative practices intended to be carried out (Siddique, 2004). Barman, Sultana and Basu (2006) pointed out several issues that had negative impacts on the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh which included unavailability of expected number of proficient facilitators, socio-economic limitations, less reliable administrative system, inadequate infrastructure and management system, mismatch of the method with the culture, class size, seating arrangement and assessment. They also blamed the poor remuneration for the teachers of schools and colleges and less funding support as the leading causes for the less qualified populace of educators in these levels. All these problematic factors have an overall effect in the minds of the learners and in the findings, S4 from Set A and S5 from Set B evidently express that the learners are doing the same mistake in their higher education. As speaking and listening has not been enforced in the lower levels, they tend to put more emphasis on speaking & listening which creates another problem. They take it granted that the use of English is all about oral communication with the people giving less importance on writing or reading.

Furthermore, Hamid and Baldauf (2008, p. 17) stated that the English teaching of Bangladesh in most cases is 'basically the same over two decades'. Collectively, these issues are reflected in a broader spectrum when these students enter the tertiary education and are put into the communicative practices of English. The findings (S6, S8, S9, S10 from Set A and S6, S7 from Set B) also suggest that these learners fail to internalise the aspects of English as it is anticipated to be and they consider English merely as a means of accomplishing their higher studies and obtain the degree. This situation compels them to overlook the literary and ornamental features of English that can be used in enhancing their own language aptitude and leaves English simply as a means of survival in the world. For both the groups, the students and the working people, English does not possess a position that could be utilised in gathering more knowledge, developing an understanding of the contemporary trends, augmenting a sense of progressive thoughts and literary acquaintance. As most of them generally keep themselves away from the use of English, they fail to keep pace with the world of scholars as most of the books are written in English. Apart from the specific situations mentioned in the questionnaire, the best exposure they have in English relies mostly on the use of social media and computers.

Another study focused on less available opportunities for in-class activities, students inclination towards accuracy over fluency and deficiency in necessary ELT materials (Islam & Bari, 2012). Furthermore, Ansarey (2012) adds some other issues e.g. inconsistency between the curriculum and testing system and learners' low level of motivation and communicative skills. At last, Farooqui's (2014) case study presents that in most rural or semi-rural institutions, Grammar Translation Method (Byram & Hu, 2013; Tetzner, 2006) is used for teaching English and Bangla is used as the medium of instruction. This unswervingly affects their exposure to the target language as well as their Critical Period of language learning as this hypothesis considers the younger age to be the better age for language acquisition (Birdsong, 1999;

Penfield & Roberts, 2014; Singleton & Ryan, 2004). Thus, from the findings, it can be effortlessly assumed that the apathy towards English is not born overnight, rather, it is the result of instigated practices that have created an anxiety towards English in their minds and the learners have taken it granted inwardly that English is tough to learn and we should not mess with it.

Moreover, they tend to make haste while preparing for this very subject which generates more complications. The ever growing demand of English makes it harder on their parts by getting dissolved with their fear. In fact, they cannot match their knowledge of English with the expected level in their higher studies or job sectors because of having a superficial understanding of English. To add more, the learners of Bangladesh are more dependent on their teachers in terms of classroom teaching and they can hardly accept the communicative norms of English as a major focus is premeditated on improving reading and grammar skills (Rahman & Karim, 2015). They fail to realise that English teaching in a university is not the same as it happened to be in their schools and colleges. As more and more qualified ELT practitioners join the crowd of university teachers every year, it can be undoubtedly presumed that the learners can interact with better and more skilful educators than they used to encounter in their past. Still, the learners cannot internalise the concepts of English for a greater benefit which must be addressed on an urgent basis. It can be associated with the concept of 'banking' education as defined by Freire (2005) where:

(a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught
(b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing
(c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about
(d) the teacher talks and the students listen-meekly
(e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined
(f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply
(g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher
(h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it
(i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she or he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students
(j) the teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects (p.73)

As an aftermath, pupils struggle with their credibility in writing and cannot harvest an expected level of oratory skill when they are exposed to the physical situations in the universities. As projected earlier through different studies, they rely on the teacher completely who will guide them through the annulled realms of English. Students cogitate about English in a way that they just want to get over with it anyhow. They fail to intellectualise the significant aspects of this language and take it as customary that it is only a technique for their lives which is evidently identifiable through the responses (S1, S2, S3, S7, S9, S10 from Set A and S1, S2, S3, S6, S7 from Set B).

Another finding can be addressed as the incapability of realising the real benefits of learning a new language. Bearing the importance of learning English in mind, learners should be motivated enough to conceptualise this language and comprehend that learning will help them in their own higher studies as most of the books are written in English. This will also be beneficial to their L1 and future career as well as improving their cognitive and analytical abilities (Trimnell, 2005; Smith, 2016). On the other hand, Hasan (2015) describes that 'many people in our country are interested to learn French because it may help them to get UN jobs

and jobs in Multinational companies' which can be taken as another indicative of the treatment of English in the hearts of the people of Bangladesh. English still enjoys an EFL status in Bangladesh where people are adhering to it only for a better prospect in future that may include a handsome salary, migration to a developed country and so on. It is evident that these people are just the common victims of a third world country who aspire to reach the pinnacle which is fashioned to them as the Adam's Apple namely the English language. English has proved itself to be the elixir that can turn the table of anyone's fortune. In Bangladesh, one will find a lot of persons who completed tertiary degrees in English just to move on swiftly in the job market without any intention of serving the mankind. The responses undoubtedly provide evidences of such attitudes towards English.

One more alarming point is the number of students enrolling in the Department of English of Bangladeshi universities. Either they are forced to get themselves admitted just because they could not make it to their dream subject or they want to enjoy a hassle-free life during their higher education. So, the complicated factors are on the rise from both the parties e.g. those who did not opt for studying English and those who opted for it in reclusion. However, both the groups have one common intention which is to achieve a sound knowledge of English. By any means, the education policy of Bangladesh does not conform to this state. Still, English is celebrated to the fullest as remarked by Phillipson (1992) that the expansion of English is backed by 'ethnocentricity' and 'professionalism' that creates a 'regression' in the minds of the people leading them to become more and more calamitous to learn English. He further designates the 'ideological functions' of English where it is taken as a goal for material advancements and a means for efficiency thus placing English in the pinnacle of 'patriarchal mode of production' (p.68). In our context, Imam (2005) justifiably notes that 'In Bangladesh it is now essential for even factory worker, who earns less than the minimum wage, to know some English, the language of the labels on goods and packaging' (p.480). In terms of survival and job opportunity, the people are swivelling towards English at their levels best. As depicted by Gramsci, this vision turns them to an objective form of knowledge, rather than a subjective one which is not palpable for society in the long run as 'knowledge' should be used as 'science', not as a 'technique' (Hoare & Smith, 1971). Also, by achieving a shallow knowledge of English, a massive part of our population is transforming into 'traditional intellectuals' (Brooker, 1999) who only hold the information of bits and pieces of English and are bound to the order that is bestowed upon them as a result of hegemony, unlike 'organic intellectuals'. This study also reveals that 53% of the respondents of a particular group think that they cannot even do anything better in life without knowing English. That is why they have turned their attention towards English allowing the erroneous notion of 'knowledge' sink in which results from the "coercion" and conformation to the state without any resentment (Gramsci, 1980).

The massive globalisation of English similarly takes it one step forward by creating a sense of superiority by using English mixed with Bangla. A large portion of the respondents even believes that they will never shine in life without English (S3 from Set A). The young generation is so obsessed with the use of English in their speaking, that currently, we have a new dialect which is often termed as 'Banglish' that involves the concoction of Bangla and English words (Manzoor, 2006; Nordquist, 2016). It can be mentioned that the education policy and current teaching practices fail to propagate the effects of 'language attrition' (Schmid, 2011; Seliger, 1991; Köpke, Schmid, Keijzer, & Dostert, 2007) and as a process, more space for English to sink in is getting fashioned day by day. The education policy is a puzzle in itself considering some perilous issues. For example, English is never used in dispensing any official document by the government except few instances and English is never reinvigorated in the government offices the way English is proliferated in the educational institutions. This creates

a void backwash effect in the minds of the learners which forces them to accept that English is only necessary for their student lives and that is why 76% of them do not want English any longer after the completion of their mandatory credits. The education policy, by any means, does not propagate this belief it itself. The findings do not project any intense circumstance that could prove the success of the education policy and reforms.

Recommendations

Grounded on the findings, some recommendations have been listed below:

a. English teaching has to be made more contemporary and either the existing educators have to fathom the implication of modern approaches leaving their cocoons or they have to make space for newer, more enthusiastic and more energetic teachers who have a passion for teaching rather than reading out the texts to the class. Still, in most schools and colleges, the teachers follow the traditional grammar translation method making it a habit for the learners to be carried forward even in the universities. CLT should be practised to its accurate perception.

b. Infrastructure and funding have always been our common problem, however, educators have to be aware of the fact that beavering on this issue, they cannot let go the future of the learners. They have to meditate over the alternatives so that the learners can get the utmost benefit. Their congression should be more focused on the real life practices so that the students can promulgate their authentic potentialities in learning English and nurture this language from the beginning of their academia.

c. The government has to be more vigilant in appointing the English teachers, especially in the secondary levels to shape the learners from the roots. The learners are fearful to English in terms of speaking mostly as they get the prospect of English speaking hardly. To sort out this issue, more exertions should be given on dragging them to the podium and let them replenish their skills in front of the audience from the very beginning. If possible, Task Based Learning (Ellis, 2003) can be applied. Prabhu (1987) has set some decidedly competent and practical applications of TBL which can also be adopted.

d. The stakeholders have to be more thoughtful in designing and implementing the education policy so that it equals with the current practices. By any means, it cannot be accepted that the national education policy has been crammed up by the stimuli arising from globalisation and linguistic imperialism. The modification of education policy can never be an erratic process without paying admissible attention towards the tangible level of the individuals who will be essentially under the practice of the policy. Canagarajah (1999) has conferred the aspects of imperialism in language teaching detailing the looming realities in curricula design and pedagogical practices that can also be taken into consideration while formulating the policy in our context.

Conclusion

This was a small-scale survey to inquire into some impending facts of English learning and this study divulges some of the realities from the minds of the participants. The results and findings project that the driving force behind the policy makers is immensely ill-advised which demands an apposite amalgamation of needs analysis and enactment for a fruitful output. If this dispute is not rehabilitated on an urgent basis, the days are not far when it will get over the heads of the learners in the course of their fight in terms of escalating the concrete resolutions of learning

and Bangla will facing more language attrition in the process of paving more pathways for English. It is also to be clearly itemized that our intention is not to demean the education policy, current practices in teaching English in Bangladesh or the substantial diffusion of English as a global language; rather, our insignificant venture is to point out some conjectures that might prove to be fruitful for the betterment of the teaching practices in Bangladesh.

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Appendices

A. Questionnaire Set 1 (for the university students)

Please select only one option for each statement that suits your standpoint.

1. I learn English because I love to enrich my knowledge of English.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

2. English is necessary for me to get a better job.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

3. I believe that without English I cannot shine in life.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

4. I want to achieve fluency in speaking rather than in writing or reading.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. English courses are highly effective in my university.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

6. My goal is to achieve a decent command over English only to maintain external communication.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

7. I want my English classes focus more on real life communications rather than theoretical aspects.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

8. English does not attract me as a subject other than being a part of the core courses.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

9. I do not want to study English after finishing the mandatory credits for my degree.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

10. English is only necessary for my future career and higher studies abroad.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Thank you.

B. Questionnaire Set 2 (for people working in different sectors)

Please select only one option for each statement that suits your standpoint.

1. English is necessary for my job.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

2. I cannot communicate with my clients without English.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

3. I use English for all my local correspondences.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

4. I use English for all my international correspondences.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. It is all right for me if I can make sense in my writing without maintaining accuracy.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

6. I try to avoid speaking in English with my bosses and clients.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

7. I would not even try to learn English if I had option to do so.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Thank you.

C. Translated version of Set 2

অনুগ্রহপূর্বক প্রতিটি বিবৃতি থেকে শুধুমাত্র একটি বিকল্প নির্বাচন করুন যেটি আপনার দৃষ্টিকোণের সাথে সামঞ্জস্যপূর্ণ ।

১. ইংরেজি আমার চাকরির জন্য প্রয়োজন ।

☐জারালোভাবে সম্মত ☐ সম্মা☐ নিরপেক্ষ☐ ☐ অসম্মত জোরালোভাবে অসম্মত

২. আমি ইংরেজি ছাড়া আমার ক্লায়েন্টদের (মক্কেলদের) সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে পারি না ।

☐জারালোভাবে সম্মত ☐ সম্মা☐ নিরপেক্ষ☐ ☐ অসম্মত জোরালোভাবে অসম্মত

৩. আমি আমার সব স্থানীয় যোগাযোগের জন্য ইংরেজি ব্যবহার করি ।

☐জারালোভাবে সম্মত ☐ সম্মা☐ নিরপেক্ষ☐ ☐ অসম্মত জোরালোভাবে অসম্মত

৪. আমি আমার সব আন্তর্জাতিক যোগাযোগের জন্য ইংরেজি ব্যবহার করি ।

☐জারালোভাবে সম্মত ☐ সম্মা☐ নিরপেক্ষ☐ ☐ অসম্মত জোরালোভাবে অসম্মত

৫. এটা আমার জন্য ঠিক আছে যদি আমি লিখে ভাব প্রকাশ করতে পারি, সেটা নির্ভুল না হলেও ।

☐জারালোভাবে সম্মত ☐ সম্মা☐ নিরপেক্ষ☐ ☐ অসম্মত জোরালোভাবে অসম্মত

৬. আমি আমার বস এবং ক্লায়েন্টদের (মক্কেলদের) সাথে ইংরেজিতে কথা বলার এড়ানোর চেষ্টা করি ।

☐জারালোভাবে সম্মত ☐ সম্মা☐ নিরপেক্ষ☐ ☐ অসম্মত জোরালোভাবে অসম্মত

৭. বিকল্প থাকলে আমি ইংরেজি শেখার চেষ্টাও করতাম না ।

☐জারালোভাবে সম্মত ☐ সম্মা☐ নিরপেক্ষ☐ ☐ অসম্মত জোরালোভাবে অসম্মত

আপনাকে ধন্যবাদ

D. Questionnaire for interview

Q.1. Do you speak English? (আপনি কি ইংরেজি বলতে পারেন?)

Q.2. Why do you think English is necessary? (আপনার কেন মনে হয় যে ইংরেজি প্রয়োজনীয়?)

Q.3. In what circumstances, you use English? (কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে আপনি ইংরেজি ব্যবহার করেন?)

Q.4. Do you use English always, even if it is not necessary? (আপনি কি সবসময় ইংরেজি ব্যবহার করেন, প্রয়োজনীয় না হলেও?)

Q.5. Do you enjoy using English or, you do it as you have no other option? (আপনি কি ইংরেজি ব্যবহার উপভোগ করেন নাকি উপায় নেই বলে ব্যবহার করেন?)

E. Audio transcriptions of the interviews

All the interviews have been conducted in a secure & convenient environment without the intervention of any third person ensuring an entirely stress-free mental condition of the interviewees. Nobody has been persuaded by any means and all the responses have been recorded as they sentences have been uttered out by the actual participants. However, corrections have been made only in the cases of grammatically inaccurate, incomplete, fragmented or run-on sentences and to guarantee the objectivity, all the names have been omitted mentioning only their speculative role in the society as a participant. In addition, translations have been provided where applicable.

Interview A: A CNG (auto-rickshaw) driver

Q.1. Do you speak English? (আপনি কি ইংরেজি বলতে পারেন?)
Answer: অল্প অল্প পারি । (I know bits and pieces of English.)
Q.2. Why do you think English is necessary? (আপনার কেন মনে হয় যে ইংরেজি প্রয়োজনীয়?)
Answer: ইংরাজি ছাড়া কেমন কইরা হইবো কন? একটু আগেই একটা ভাড়া লইয়া নামায় আইলাম এয়ারপোর্টে ।গুলশান, বারিধারা, উত্তরা এই সব জায়গায় তো ইংরাজি না জানলে অনেক ভাড়া মিস হইয়া যায় গা । (What can be done without English? I just dropped a passenger at the airport. A lot of deals are missed at Gulshan, Baridhara, Uttara and places like these if you don't know English.)

Q.3. Q.3. In what circumstances, you use English? (কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে আপনি ইংরেজি ব্যবহার করেন?)
Answer: আমি শুধু ভাড়া লইবার টাইম কই যাইবো কয় টাহা দিবো এইডা জিগাই আর কিছু না । (I only ask about my fare and destination, not more than that)

Q.4. Do you use English always, even if it is not necessary? (আপনি কি সবসময় ইংরেজি ব্যবহার করেন, প্রয়োজনীয় না হলেও?)
Answer: না না । দরকার না থাকলে আমি কইবার যামু কান ইংরাজি? শুধু বিপদ আপদ এর লাইগা ২–৪ টা শব্দ শিখা লইসি । মাঝে মাঝে ভাব লইতে হয় তো বিদেশীগো সামনে । (No no! Why would I use English without necessity? I have just learned some words for circumstantial cases. It helps create an impression in front of the foreigners.)

Q.5. Do you enjoy using English or, you do it as you have no other option? (আপনি কি ইংরেজি ব্যবহার উপভোগ করেন নাকি উপায় নেই বলে ব্যবহার করেন?)
Answer: না মজা লইলে তো আরো শিখা লইতাম । এইডা হইল ঠেকায় পইড়া শিখা আর কি । (No, I would have learned more if I enjoyed it. It's just I have no other way to overlook it.)

Interview B: Senior Officer of a private bank

Q.1. Do you speak English?
Answer: Yes, I do.

Q.2. Why do you think English is necessary?
Answer: It is necessary for communication mainly.

Q.3. In what circumstances, you use English?

Answer: To be frank, I do not need to use English for speaking. I hardly use it for writing as we have to write emails sometimes and in most cases, we have a preset template.

Q.4. Do you use English always, even if it is not necessary?
Answer: No.

Q.5. Do you enjoy using English or, you do it as you have no other option?
Answer: Not really. I use it only when I have no other option.

Interview C: A lecturer of a public university

Q.1. Do you speak English?
Answer: Yes of course.

Q.2. Why do you think English is necessary?
Answer: For me, it's necessary for teaching and my research.

Q.3. In what circumstances, you use English?
Answer: I use English for writing papers and sometimes in class for lecturing.

Q.4. Do you use English always, even if it is not necessary?
Answer: No, I don't.

Q.5. Do you enjoy using English or, you do it as you have no other option?
Answer: I only enjoy it if I can find someone to converse with, otherwise, no.

Interview D: A government employee

Q.1. Do you speak English?
Answer: Yes.

Q.2. Why do you think English is necessary?
Answer: For talking in some cases when we have foreign guests.

Q.3. In what circumstances, you use English?
Answer: Only when we have to talk to foreign delegates, though, it is very rare for me.

Q.4. Do you use English always, even if it is not necessary?
Answer: No, never.

Q.5. Do you enjoy using English or, you do it as you have no other option?
Answer: No, I use it when I have no choice.

Interview E: A university student

Q.1. Do you speak English?
Answer: Yes, but, I hardly use it.

Q.2. Why do you think English is necessary?
Answer: It is necessary to understand some parts of my class lecture and give presentations.

Q.3. In what circumstances, you use English?
Answer: I only use it in my presentations.

Q.4. Do you use English always, even if it is not necessary?
Answer: No, I do not.

Q.5. Do you enjoy using English or, you do it as you have no other option?
Answer: To be honest, I prefer using Bangla while speaking. English makes it hard for me to tell exactly what I am thinking. However, for writing, I have no option other than English.