

バングラデシュに於ける英語教育：政策，実践，不平等

English Language Education in Bangladesh: Policy, Practice and Inequality

ホサイン，タニア HOSSAIN, Tania

● 国際基督教大学大学院教育学研究科
Graduate School of Education, International Christian University

Education is a process through which people learn to create new institutions, use new technologies, cope with their environment and alter their patterns of behavior. Economic and social development of a nation depends on these factors. In a broad sense education improves the capacity of individuals and institutions that contributes to the social, economic, cultural, and demographical changes which are related with the national development. As a whole, education is a process of providing enlightenment and skills to a nation. It is not clear how these changes occur through education but evidence suggests that schooling and education can make major contributions to poverty reduction, gender equity, responsibility of citizenship and equality of life. On the other hand, some research has shown negative impact of education, as unequal school opportunities create discrimination based on wealth, gender, and socioeconomic role (Glick & Sahn, 2000).

In many developing countries equity in access to schooling remains an important challenge. Bangladesh, regarded as one of the poorest countries in Southern Asia (Asian Development Bank, 2001) also faces this challenge, as poor students have less chance of completing any given education cycle than more affluent ones. Bangladesh is an Islamic Republic.

The Constitution of Bangladesh begins with the name of Allah and it says, "Pledging that the high ideals of absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah" (Constitution of Bangladesh 1979:1). This country is bordered by India on the Western, Eastern, Northern sides, on the southeast Myanmar and in the south the Bay of Bengal. The total area of Bangladesh is 147,570 square kilometers. Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in Southern Asia (Chowdhury & Alam, 2002). According to the World Fact Book, in 2005 Bangladesh was an over-populated, poor and often ill-governed nation despite existing domestic and international efforts to improve economic and demographic conditions. The total population of Bangladesh was 144,319,628, with almost two-thirds of all Bangladeshis employed in the agricultural sector, with rice as the single-most-important product.

After independence in 1971, it was hoped that economic emancipation would lead to political freedom, and that poverty would be eradicated. Now after 36 years of its independence, there are disappointments in the achievements. Nearly half of the population still lives under the poverty line. According to social sectors of South Asia, almost 38 percent of the population of Bangladesh is illiterate, but barely 20 percent are truly functionally literate.

The female literacy rate is 26 percent and the male 49 percent.

This paper focuses on the inequitable education system in Bangladesh. The emphasis is on the difference between classes in rural and urban schools as well as between the Bengali medium and English medium schools. A major goal of this dissertation is to consider implications, for language policy and planning in the educational system of Bangladesh.

Education can contribute to reduce poverty. Indeed there are many studies which demonstrate that the key to poverty reduction is human capital. For example one-year of additional schooling leads to a rise of 16 percent in the wages of Malaysian men and 18 percent in the wages of Malaysian women (Bangladesh 2020, 1998). The corresponding numbers for Thailand are 17 percent and 13 percent. Bangladesh however does not have enough schools nor do many of the schools meet minimal quality standards. Moreover the existing schools are failing to provide instruction to meet the demands of globalization. As a result, Bangladesh has not developed a workforce capable of competing in technical skills with other Asian developing countries (Bangladesh 2020, 1998).

According to Bangladesh 2020, in the higher secondary level of public education, the rate of inefficiency is very high. Bangladesh has an adult literacy rate of only 38 percent, which is much lower than Sri Lanka, for example (90 percent). Fifty percent of the students who enter in the primary schools of Bangladesh do not complete their five-year education and many of them achieve only a second-grade level of attainment. It takes an average of more than 12 years to complete the 5 years cycle (Bangladesh 2020, 1998). In 1996 only 200,000 students (three percent of the 11-15 year age group) graduated from secondary schools in Bangladesh. This number is for a country of 144,319,628 million people, too few to supply the talents for the development of Bangladesh. Although Bangladesh

spent 2 percent of its GDP on education to elevate learning achievement, the task facing Bangladesh seems to be challenging (Bangladesh 2020, 1998).

This paper examines the language situation and language policy of Bangladesh both before and after independence. I review different policies implemented during the colonial period. I also describe the different language policies and educational reforms after independence in 1971. The status and functions of Bengali and English are considered in the context of language practices in school.

The purpose of this paper is to describe and examine the present status of Bengali and English in the educational system of Bangladesh. The emphasis is on the difference between classes in rural and urban schools as well as between the Bengali medium and English medium schools in terms of language use in the classroom.

My study had two objectives. The first objective was to find out differences between the classes observed in one rural and two urban schools. The second objective was to find out the differences between one observed English-medium and two observed Bengali-medium schools. In Bangladesh, English-medium schools are located in urban areas. There is no English-medium school in a rural area. The following framework can provide a picture of the schools' location in Bangladesh.

Table:1 Frame work

	Urban	Rural
English-medium school	Y	X
Bengali-medium school	Y	Y

My research questions were:

- (a) What are the differences between the classes observed in two urban schools and one rural school?
- (b) What are the differences between two observed Bengali medium schools and one English medium school?

I visited the three secondary schools in Bangladesh during March and early April 2006. After visiting and observing classes I found that the learning environment of the three schools varied greatly. I will summarize my findings and discuss their significance.

Rural-Urban Differences

In this section I will mention the differences between the rural and urban schools. The urban schools are well equipped and has good facilities, such as books, chalk, dusters, desks, good buildings, toilets and surroundings. Most of the teachers are female. Some of them have teacher-training certificates. The school has a good environment to learn and teach English. My understanding from my short visit is that the students of this school are interested in learning English.

The rural school is situated in a remote area of Bangladesh. This school is not adequately equipped and has broken doors and windows. This school lacks the basic facilities such as books, dictionaries, blackboards, toilets, classrooms, satisfactory buildings and surroundings. Most of the teachers are male and non-subject teachers. Teachers as well as Students lack fluency in standard Bengali. The school does not have an adequate environment to teach and learn English. Students depend on rote learning at this school.

Through my observations and my interviews with teachers I found that teachers' proficiency of English language varied between the rural and urban schools. In Shobujbagh Government Girls High School (urban Bengali-medium school), some young teachers were proficient in English but some senior teachers lacked the ability and confidence to teach English effectively. Most of the teachers did not make any grammatical mistakes though they have problems of pronunciation.

In Shinabahr High School (rural Bengali-medium school), there were only two English teachers. They

were non-subject teachers and were not adequately proficient in English language. They made many mistakes in grammar (See chapter V). Because of their poor command in English, they seemed to lack confidence in English teaching. I also felt that they lacked confidence because of their low level of education. One teacher majored in Islamic Studies and another teacher graduated from the general line. Though they received training from the National Curriculum Textbook Board for three months, my classroom observation showed that they lacked knowledge of the basics of English, typical teaching methods, grammar, fluency in English and acceptable pronunciation in English.

From my classroom observations and also from the policy planners' interviews, it is clear that the teachers who teach English (especially in the rural area) are poorly educated. Teachers of English themselves have not been exposed to suitable oral models. Moreover, there are many problems, such as poorly equipped schools, inadequately financed programs and less affluent institutions.

The living conditions of the teachers as well as the students also varied in the urban and rural area. During my visit to Gazipur schools, I visited two teachers' homes close to the school. I found that they have tin-framed houses with a tin roof. The teachers have one or two room traditional rooms. I also visited one teacher's house of the Bengali medium school. (Because I had been a student of that school, she invited me). I found that she lives in an apartment in a middle class locality where most of the tenants are government employees.

In the urban area, the number of school children out of school is small, because there are maximum opportunities to attend and minimum obstacles. Children are not needed for gardening, farming and so on. In the rural area, children need to do house work and help their parents in farming, gardening etc. For this reason, the number of rural school-age children out of school is comparatively high.

The number of students also varies in these schools. In urban Bengali and rural Bengali schools, we find that classes are very large but in the urban English medium school, the number of students per class is much lower than in the Bengali medium schools.

In rural classrooms, I observed a traditional teaching style and rote learning. The few books available were outdated. Most classroom blackboards had a list of sentences and words in English which the students had to memorize each day. Sometimes sentences were grammatically incorrect and nonsensical in the context of daily lives. In one class, one teacher wrote a definition of “voice” on the blackboard that I did not understand. The students memorized words or sentences which they never used in their daily life. Most of the time students use Bengali in their homes. In spite of this fact, English remained the instructional medium of the secondary school. Due to these problems, students will face difficulties when they go to tertiary level of education where the medium of instruction is only English.

In Bangladesh, there is a big difference between the urban and rural life as well as income. Middle class and lower middle class families in the rural areas differ from the urban middle and lower middle class families. In urban areas, Bengali medium public schools are more expensive than rural public schools, but cheaper than urban private schools and English-medium schools. Most of the elite class sends their children to the private schools. Normally such private schools are very expensive. Urban areas are comparatively well developed economically, compared to rural areas. Urban schools have good facilities including the school building, desks, furniture, textbooks, school surroundings and sanitary system while in the rural schools students do not have enough classrooms and they often must sit under the shade of a tree to attend the class. Teachers’ quality also varies greatly. A low enrollment rate and high drop out rate are primarily rural problems.

Students and teachers have problems with standard

Bengali language. The quality of English teaching in the urban Bengali school (Shobujbagh Girls High School) is also not very high. Teachers and students in the rural area have very little or no contact with English in their daily life. Students study English because it is the gate to enter into higher education or to get Secondary and Higher secondary certificates.

Thus a key finding of this research is that there is a huge disparity between rural and urban education in Bangladesh. Rural students lag behind the urban students and are disadvantaged. In spite of all these facts, English is compulsory from the first grade of school and English is an important part of the secondary education curriculum. Through my classroom observations I found many secondary students, mostly in rural schools, have studied English from the age of five yet do not understand it.

There exists significant inequality among different social groups and regions, and rural children are most vulnerable to it. Most of the secondary schools are located in rural areas. Considering the English class in the rural Bengali-medium school (Shinabazar High School), the teachers’ performance and student’s competence in English is highly questionable. Due to lack of proficiency in the medium of instruction, children of the rural schools face serious problems in the English classes. My classroom observation shows that classroom performance of the rural students is very poor.

In Bangladesh around 38% of the people are illiterate, which means that almost 62% of the population is deprived of basic education. Moreover, about 42% of all people live under the poverty line. Poor people cannot bear the school costs for their children. In this social situation learning a foreign language seems to be a major burden for the poor people.

From my discussion of my observations and interviews, it is clear that there is a great disparity between urban and rural schools. In practice a wide variety of procedures operate under differing local

conditions. This applies to use of teaching methods, physical condition of the classrooms, use of teaching aids, preparation and use of lesson plans, educational qualification and professional experience of the teaching staff, teacher's language ability, class size and sitting arrangements, classroom teaching, classroom management, sex of teachers, age at which the students enter in the school, performance of the learners, use of textbook and dates of terms.

Differences between Bengali-medium and English-medium Schools

In this section I will mention the differences between the Bengali and English-medium schools. Bengali-medium and English-medium schools represent two very different student populations. Moreover, very different socio-educational practices operate in each school. The use of textbooks, pedagogical tools, learning styles, teaching materials and medium of instruction are different in these schools. These practices contribute to inequalities among the learners. In my experience, it seemed that students in Bengali-medium and English-medium schools belong to two different worlds.

The English-medium school is situated in a posh area of Bangladesh. This school is adequately equipped with books, dictionaries, blackboards, library, air-conditioner, toilets, classrooms, satisfactory buildings and surroundings. The teachers are properly trained and fluent in English. During my observation period, I was impressed by their proficiency in the language. Teachers in the English medium school live in a posh area in Dhaka. Most of them come to the school by private car. Thus, the living standard of the teachers was quite high.

In the English-medium school, teachers use many reference books in the classroom. But in the Bengali-medium schools (both rural and urban) teachers depend heavily on the textbook, which is not adequate. In the Bengali-medium schools (especially in the rural school)

I felt that teachers had a lack of confidence. Many teachers in the Bengali-medium schools depend on translation methods from English to Bengali. Teachers needed to use Bengali in the English language classes. In Bengali-medium schools teachers could not correct individual's mistakes but in the English-medium school teachers were able to take care of all students' needs.

In Bengali-medium schools, teachers were mainly focused on grammar. The teachers needed to pay attention to grammar, as the students in the rural schools do not understand the text after reading it. Classroom instructions in grade IX and X (both in Bengali-medium schools) generally deal with grammatical features like tenses, verbs and articles. But in the English-medium school, teachers need not deal with grammar to that extent. Instead students are engaged in creative writing and self-learning much of the time.

Discipline within the schools also varied. The English-medium students are well disciplined in the schools. But there is limited socialization in the English medium school, as many students lack regular social interaction outside of school. There is a kind of isolation and exclusiveness within the school.

The Bengali medium schools are more crowded than the English medium school. My classroom observation shows that the number of students in one class in the English-medium school is not more than 15 but in Bengali-medium schools (both in rural and urban areas), the number of students is as many as 100 in one class.

Thus from my observation, it is clear that there are significant differences between the English and Bengali-medium schools. English-medium schools are more advantaged than the Bengali-medium schools. All policy planners and teachers agreed that English is highly esteemed as a language of prestige, power, economic prosperity and social mobility. But very few people in rural areas need English and very few of them leave the country to work. English plays very limited role in the lives of most rural Bangladeshi

people. English education benefits a small proportion of the population in Bangladesh. The gap between rural and urban schools and between English-medium and Bengali-medium schools contributes to inequality in Bangladesh. To date no special programs have been taken to minimize the rural-urban disparity.

Bengali plays a crucial role in Bangladesh, but it has not been adopted as a medium of instruction in formal education or other sectors of education. Despite the fact that Bengali has played an important role in the ideology of Bangladeshi nationalism, Bangladesh has not taken steps to make Bengali an effective co-equal language of instruction. Production of Bengali textbooks and other educational materials is inadequate for widespread use of Bengali for subject-matter instruction. Indeed, English is widely seen as the preferred language of textbooks. Moreover, the difficulty for teachers is enormous, as few teachers outside the capital have sufficient English language skills to teach English well, and the high student-teacher ratio (secondary level 1:56; up to 1:73 in many areas) makes language teaching enormously difficult, even for the most highly qualified teachers (Khandoker, 1997; World Bank, 2000).

Without question, English is linked with socioeconomic class in Bangladesh. English is used in the home and in many social settings among upper-class families, and the language offers significant economic opportunity and privileges for its speakers. As a result, elites are generally reluctant to support universal Bengali-medium instruction. Although it may reduce social inequality, Bengali-medium education would also reduce the linguistic advantages currently enjoyed by English speakers (see Hossain, 2004). Given the obvious economic advantages that English affords its speakers under the current system, middle class families try to ensure that their children have access to English-medium instruction. Thus public pressure for English language teaching at an early age is widespread, including the policy of teaching English from grade one. Yet

for most children, English language proficiency is quite low (Baumgardner, 1996; Hossain, 2004), in part because of the low level of teachers' English language proficiency and the low quality of English language education. Thus the present policy continues to support advantages for groups having access to English education, while contributing to the ongoing educational difficulties facing the rural and urban poor. The medium of education, Bengali or English-medium, distinguishes the well-educated and economically advantaged urban dwellers from the under-educated and economically distressed rural population. Facing the consequences of the current medium of instruction policy is one of the most important issues for policymakers in the educational system of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh needs to formulate an education and language policy which would provide benefit to all people of Bangladesh, including rural agricultural workers. The following are my recommendations, based on my research findings.

Recommendation for Education and Language Policy in Bangladesh

1. Literacy

Bangladesh should make eradication of literacy a higher priority than English language learning. At present the rate of literacy in Bangladesh is very low (about 38%). Although Literacy of all citizens has been a declared aim of the national education policy of Bangladesh, only limited progress has made, and freeing the country from illiteracy remain an unachieved goal.

2. Full Enrollment in Primary Education

Although enrollment in primary schools has increased, full enrollment remains an unattained goal, even though primary education is free and compulsory. It is important to increase the rate of enrollment in the primary schools in Bangladesh.

To do this, Government needs to take steps to aid poor families, whose parents cannot bear the cost for uniforms and food. The school should take measures to attract students, perhaps by providing scholarships for poor families.

3. Unified Educational System

Promotion of one education system in Bangladesh is necessary. The country has three different systems of education which are running parallel to each other. There is almost no connection between the Bengali-medium schools, the English-medium schools and the Madrasha system of education. These three systems serve three classes of the society. The English-medium schools serve upper class, Bengali-medium represents middle class and Madrasha system represents the poor class of the society. Madrasha education and English-medium schools have little in common, except that both are separated from the culture of the country. They follow different syllabi and use different media of instruction (Choudhury, 2002). In past it was possible for the students to move from one stream to another stream, but at present the gap between these three streams has become too wide, and it is almost impossible for students to move from one stream to another stream.

4. Teachers Training

At present, there is a shortage of qualified teachers in secondary schools. Many teachers cannot get training when they get a job. Teacher training courses must be included at the graduate level.

5. English Teaching in Rural and Urban Schools

English can be made optional in rural schools and compulsory in urban or elite schools. At present English is compulsory for all secondary schools in Bangladesh except the Madrassah Schools. But my research shows that English education in rural areas wastes time and energy. The socioeconomic background of the rural students does not support

learning English in Bangladesh. Thus, English can be made optional in the secondary schools especially in the rural areas. Some elite schools or schools with trained teachers can make English compulsory.

If this policy can be successfully implemented, students can go to secondary school by taking vocational training courses. After graduating from secondary school, they can do work which is favorable to their economic and social status.

6. Bengali as a Medium of Instruction

Bengali needs to be the medium of instruction in the tertiary level, except in departments of English, medical and engineering. At present English is the medium of instruction in the tertiary level. Thus, the students from the rural schools face problems to adjust with the system. To solve this problem, English language programs for poorly prepared students need to be established in the universities. Some institutions have such programs but not sufficient to fulfill the needs of the society. Gradually Bengali needs to become the medium of instruction in the tertiary level too.

7. Textbook Translation and Production

Translating books into Bengali is necessary. Although Government established the Bangla Academy to meet the demands of textbook production, it has not achieved its goal. Therefore a new system of Bengali textbook production is needed.

8. Curriculum Development

English-medium schools are alienating Bangladeshi children from the Bengali culture (Zaman, 2004). A new language and education policy needs to be implemented for English medium schools. Bengali language and culture should be given importance in English-medium schools. After passing from the English-medium schools, students also face difficulty to go to higher studies in Bangladesh. The syllabus and curriculum needs to match Bangladeshi culture

and society.

9. Vocational Education

Vocational and Technical education need to become interesting and popular. In Bangladesh vocational education is neglected. Vocational and technical education can give student job opportunities. Some attempts have been made but more is needed. Specifically government should establish more vocational and technical training centers.

In recent Secondary School Certificate examinations, 30% of the students failed the English exam. If the students have the option to choose vocational education instead of English, they could pass and involve themselves in preparation for work which is accessible to them. Students should have the option to take technical and vocational education instead of English.

10. Minority Languages and Dialects of Bengali

Minority languages need to be considered in the language and education policy. It is important to note that Bangladesh is not a monolingual country. There are 48 ethnic minority groups in Bangladesh with their own languages (Zaman, 2004). Language-in-education policy does not consider the many minority languages in Bangladesh. Policy debates focus exclusively on the roles of Bengali and English. Currently, these minority children need to learn at least three languages.

Only a small amount of literature exists concerning the minority languages and Bangladeshi dialects. More extensive work is needed in this regard. To work on language policy, future research on minority language is needed to see how many minority languages exist in Bangladesh. Some minority languages are unwritten and those languages need to be recorded. To make an effective language policy in Bangladesh, this information is necessary. Government should also take necessary steps to

conduct research on dialects in Bangladesh. The different dialects have yet to be described. Even the most prestigious dialects need to be recorded. It is hoped that government would conduct research on minority languages and dialects of Bangladesh, which will be helpful in future efforts to formulate an effective language policy in Bangladesh.

This paper demonstrates that both Bengali and English are introduced in all levels of education in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi students have favorable attitudes towards English. Despite the absence of consistent language policy, the people of Bangladesh accept the fact that English is necessary in education. But this English education creates inequalities among the students of rural and urban areas. It seems that equity in access to schooling is an important challenge for Bangladesh. The inequitable educational system in Bangladesh offers less opportunity for rural students to compete in any given educational cycle than the students who are from the wealthy class. This case study is by no means exhaustive and cannot provide all the answers to the problems regarding use of English in rural and urban contexts. But this study may be a step in the right direction in the search for adequate and functional alternatives to resolving problems relating to language and social inequality. A more dynamic language policy would undoubtedly yield better results than those achieved until now.

The birth of Bangladesh (1971) lies in the language movement. After 36 years of independence, it is time to promote a language policy which would benefit the whole nation. All citizens should have access to education which would be helpful for the development of Bangladesh. Rural students and students from disadvantaged families should have access to equal education. By analyzing the needs of Bangladesh, government should formulate a language and education policy which would be beneficial for all. I hope these recommendations would help the policy planners to formulate a language and education policy which would give equal benefit to all citizens of Bangladesh.

はじめに

教育は人々に新しい技能や行動様式を伝授する一連のプロセスであり、国家の社会的・経済的・文化的発展に欠くことのできない重要な要素である。一般に教育は貧困の撲滅や性別による不平等の解消、責任ある市民の育成に多大なる貢献をしている、とされる。しかし、近年では教育機会の不平等がさまざまな差別を生み出す温床となっていることも同時に指摘されている。現在、多くの途上国では就学機会の不平等問題が大きな課題として残っている。南アジアの最貧国であるバングラディッシュも無論またその例外ではない。同国では1971年の独立から40年近くを経た現在もなお国民の半数以上が貧困に苦しみ、38%もの人々が非識字の問題を抱えている。その一方で約2割の人々は高度な教育を享受している。教育は貧困の削減に貢献することができるが、バングラディッシュにおいては学校の数が不十分であり、既存の各学校でもその質的な水準は最低限度のものでしかない。同国が発展を遂げるために必要な人材を十二分に確保するという観点からすれば、現在の教育制度をめぐる環境は非常に困難な状態にあると言えるだろう。そこで、本論文はバングラディッシュの不平等な教育制度、特に中等レベルの学校に焦点を合わせ、バングラディッシュの言語教育政策と計画の連関について考察を加える。そして、バングラディッシュ独立以前と独立以降の双方の時代における言語状況と政策を検討しながら、実際の学校観察から得られた知見を元に現在のバングラディッシュ教育制度内でのベンガル語と英語の両言語が置かれた状況を描き出し、検証を加えることを目的としたい。

本研究の主要な観察目標は二つある。第一に、都市部と郊外の学校の差違を発見すること。第二に、英語学校 (English Medium-School) とベンガル語学校 (Bengali Medium-School) の差違を発見すること、である¹。以下に現地の学校訪問による参与観察によって得られた知見を素描する。

都市部と郊外部の学校

まず、都市部と郊外部の教員についてみる。都市部の学校は有資格者の女性教員が多く、設備は非常に整っている。生徒は概して英語学習に意欲的である。一方、郊外の学校は設備が不十分であり、その保守もうまく行われていない。教員の多くは男性である。郊外の学校は英語学習を行うには環境整備が不十分であり、生徒たちは主に暗唱学習に頼っている。筆者の観察する限り、教員の英語力についても都市部の学校と郊外の学校では相当の差があることは否めない。都市部の教員は一部の年配の教員を除けば英語に堪能であり、自信を持って授業を行っている。それに対して郊外の教員はその数が少ないこともさることながら、英語を教えることに自信がないように見受けられた。また、彼らの多くは専門的な訓練を受けておらず、教授法・英語文法・発音などの基礎的な知識も欠いていることが観察できた。総じてバングラディッシュの英語教師 (特に郊外の学校の教師) は教育水準が低く、英語の熟達度から言っても生徒の発音の手本となりえるレベルにはないことは明白であろう。英語力と同様、教師の生活水準にも相当の差が見受けられた。郊外の学校の教師が貧しい生活環境にあるのに比して、都市部の教師は中間レベルの政府職員が多く住むアパートなどに居住している。

次に生徒である。都市部の生徒は家庭で農作業などを手伝う必要がないため、欠席率が低い。それに対して、郊外部の生徒は農作業の手伝い等で季節によっては欠席率が相当に高くなる。都市部の学校は特にベンガル語学校で大人数クラスとなるが、英語学校は少人数制がとられている。郊外の学校では暗唱学習が行われ、わずかに使用されている教科書は古い。また、英語は中等教育で中核となる教科であるにも関わらず、教えられている英語は不正確なものであった。結果的に、英語が教授言語となっている高等教育へ進学した生徒は大変な苦勞をすることになる。家庭の生活水準も都市部と郊外部では大きな差が存在している。

都市部の学校は郊外部の学校よりも学費が高いが、経済的に発展した都市部のエリート層は子弟をさらに高額な学費が必要な私立の英語学校に通わせている。学校教育を受けるためのコストは国民の約4割も存在する貧困線以下の生活を強いられている人々にとって大きな負担となっている。

都市部と郊外部の学校間には相当な格差が存在している。英語の授業のみを取り上げてみても、都市部と郊外部における教師の水準と生徒の学習達成度には看過し難い格差が生じている。そのような状態にも関わらず、英語は第一学年から義務化されており、同時にそれは中等教育カリキュラムの中心的な教科に位置づけられているのである。

ベンガル語学校と英語学校における差違

ここではベンガル語学校と英語学校との差違を中心にみることにしたい。両者はその生徒がもつ家庭的経済的背景をはじめ、教育実践の方法や使用する教科書類・学習用の各種機材などあらゆる面で大きく異なっている。この両者の違いが学習者間の不平等に影響を与えていることは容易に想像されるであろう。いうなれば、ベンガル語学校と英語学校の生徒は違う世界に棲んでいるようなもの、といえるであろう。

英語学校はその多くが高級住宅街に位置し、学習用の機材はもちろんのこと、教室内の設備もエアコンが完備されている。一方、ベンガル語学校は郊外の貧しい地区にあり、その設備は非常に不適切かつ不十分なものであった。英語学校の教師はよく訓練されており、その英語力も申し分ないものである。例えば、ベンガル語学校の教師が教科書の翻訳に頼り、一人一人の生徒の質問に的確に返答できないのに対して、英語学校の教師は副教材を使用しながら、生徒個人それぞれのニーズに対応した指導を行うなど、その資質には相当の開きがあるとみてよいだろう。こうした指導力の違いに加えて、教師の生活水準も大きく異なっ

ている。英語学校の教師は高級住宅街に居を構え、通勤には自家用車を使用している。つまり、彼らの生活水準は相当に高いもの、といえるであろう。このようにみても、英語学校はベンガル語学校に対して圧倒的に優勢なように思えるが、ただ一点だけベンガル語学校がすぐれている点がある。それは学校内での社会化という機能である。英語学校は少人数制をとっており、一クラスあたりの生徒数は最大でも15人を超えることはない。高級住宅地に住み、学校外での他者との触れ合いや相互作用の機会がほとんどない英語学校の生徒たちは社会化という観点からはその成熟度が不足しているように観察された。一方、設備面での制約があるベンガル語学校では一クラスあたりの生徒数は多いときで100人を超えることがあり、こと社会化機能に関してはベンガル語学校の生徒たちに軍配が上がるといえるだろう。

本研究での観察によって得られた知見をまとめると、以下のようなものとなる。第一に、英語学校とベンガル語学校の間には非常な格差が存在するという。英語学校はベンガル語学校に対して明らかに優位であり、行政当局関係者や教師たちは英語が社会経済的に威信を保持しうる優勢な言語であることに異論を挟まない。しかしながら、英語を実際に必要とする人々は極めて限られており、特にその傾向は郊外地域で顕著である。バングラディッシュにおける英語教育は限られた少数の人々に利益をもたらす一方で、その他の大多数の人々に対する教育機会の不公平性はいまだに解消されていないのである。第二に、ベンガル語はバングラディッシュ国内で重要な役割を演じている言語ではあるものの、教育制度内での教授言語としては十分に機能していない。ベンガル語による教科書やその他の教材の製作が不十分なものである一方、英語は教材に使用する言語として好ましいとみなされている。だが、都市部を除けば教師の英語力は十分とは言えず、教師一人当たりの生徒数の多さとも相まって英語教育の困難さを増大させている。最後に、バングラディッシュにおいては社会経済的階層と英語が密接に結びついて

いることが指摘できる。上流階層では各家庭はもちろんのこと様々な状況で英語が使用されている。そして、英語は顕著な経済的メリットをその言語使用者に与えているのである。結果として、エリート階層はベンガル語による普遍教育（たとえそれが教育機会の不平等を是正するようなものであっても）への支持を嫌う傾向にある。そうした状況下では中間階層の父母は子弟を英語学校へ進学させたがるようになり、早期英語教育への要求はますます強化されることとなっている。現段階では教材や教師の問題もあり、低学年の英語力はいまだ満足できるレベルには到達しておらず、政策的にも英語教育を子弟に与えることができるような階層への優遇が継続している状況にある。

教授手段としての言語は都市部の教養があり経済的にも恵まれた階層と郊外の貧しく教育を十分に受けられない階層とを隔ててしまっている。そうした言語による隔離的な状況を如何に解消していくのが今後のバングラディッシュにおける教育政策上の最も重要な課題となろう。今日、バングラディッシュは明確な言語教育政策を必要としている。それはあらゆるバングラディッシュ国民にとって利益をもたらすものでなければならない。

バングラディッシュの言語教育政策への提言

1. 識字率

バングラディッシュは非識字の問題を撲滅するように努力すべきである。国家の教育政策で高いプライオリティを与えられているにも関わらず、いまだに同国の識字率はわずか38%に留まっている。識字問題は英語教育よりも優先されるべきである。

2. 初等教育就学率

初等教育就学率は上昇しつつあるが、いまだに全員就学は達成されていない。就学適齢期の児童を全て就学させるためには貧困層への経済援助や奨学金制度の充実などが必要である。

3. 単線型学校教育

単線型教育制度の整備が必要である。現在は三つの教育体系が併存する形となっているが、これら三つの学校体系は相互に関連するものではなく、それぞれがそれぞれの階層の子弟を教育する形になっている。このことは社会での人的な流動性を縮減し、社会全体の活性化を妨げている。

4. 教師教育

現時点では中等教育有資格の教師が絶対的に不足している。大学院レベルでの教員養成コース創設が望まれる。

5. 英語教育

現在必修科目となっている英語を選択科目とする。本研究による観察では郊外での英語教育は時間の浪費に終わっている。社会経済的背景から英語学習に困難を抱える生徒のために選択制を導入すべきである。

6. 教授言語としてのベンガル語

高等教育レベルでは一部の領域を除いてベンガル語が教授言語として採用されるべきであろう。現在では英語が教授言語となっているが、このことは地方出身の学生たちにとって大きな負担となっている。大学に英語の補習授業を設けるとともに、ベンガル語の漸次的な導入が必要である。

7. 教科書問題

教科書のベンガル語化が必要である。政府は専門機関を設置してベンガル語による教科書作成を進めているが、成果を挙げていない。ベンガル語化のためには抜本的な改革が必要であろう。

8. カリキュラム改善

英語学校はバングラディッシュ文化から子供たちを遠ざけている。英語学校においてもベンガル語及びバングラディッシュの文化が相応に尊重されるような政策が実施されるべきである。教育は文化と社会に適合するものでなければならない。

9. 職業教育

バングラディッシュでは職業技術教育が徐々に発展しつつある。これまで職業教育や技術教育は重視されていなかったが、これらは生徒たちに就業機会を提供するものであり、政府はよりいっそうの職業技術教育振興に尽力すべきである。特に英語教育に代えて職業技術教育を選択できるようにすれば、約3割にも上る英語による卒業試験の落第を大幅に削減できるであろう。

10. 少数言語と方言

言語教育政策においては少数言語や方言もその考慮の中に取り入れられるべきである。バングラディッシュには48の少数民族が存在し、彼らは独自の言語を使用している。これまでの言語教育政策ではこうした少数言語への配慮はなく、少数民族出身の児童生徒は最低でも三つの言語を学ばなければならなかった。これまで少数言語や方言に関する書物は極めて限られた数しかなかったが、今後はこうした言語に関する研究や記録が必要である。言語教育政策を有効かつ効率的に推進するためには、少数言語に関する知識の蓄積が重要な役割を果たすからである。

まとめ

本研究は、バングラディッシュであらゆる段階の教育にベンガル語と英語の双方が導入されていることを紹介した。同国の生徒たちは英語学習に意欲的に取り組んでいる。政府は首尾一貫した言語教育政策を欠いているにも関わらず、人々は英語が教育に必要な不可欠の言語であるという現実を受け入れている。しかしながら現状の英語教育は都市部と郊外の生徒間に不公平を生み出している。このことからバングラディッシュでは進学機会の不平等問題が喫緊の課題となっているように思われる。この不平等な教育システムは地方の貧しい生徒の教育を受ける権利を侵害し、富裕層の生徒との間に甚大な不公平をもたらしている。本研究によるケーススタディは上述の問題に全て答えるものではないが、同国の言語的社会的な不平

等問題に対する適切で機能的な選択肢を発見するためのひとつの指針を提供するものとなろう。よりダイナミックな言語政策は間違いなくより良い結果をもたらすであろう。独立から36年を経た今こそ全ての人々にとってより幸福をもたらすような言語政策が求められている。本研究の提言が当局の政策策定に際しての一助となることを切に願っている。

- 1 ここていう英語学校とベンガル語学校とは教授言語として英語もしくはベンガル語を使用する中等学校を指している。