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EXPLORING BHAIRAB DIALECT VIS-À-VIS STANDARD BANGLA

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Abstract

The present comprehensive study investigates the differences and uniqueness of the dialect of Bhairab, a prominent commercial area of Bangladesh located in Kishoregonj district in comparison with the Standard Bangla. Language usually varies after every particular distance throughout the world. Most often these variations and differentiations are found in the day-to-day use of supra-segmental elements of oral language. This study compares some of the traditional, social and public words and sentences of Bhairab dialect with the spelling and pronunciation of standard Bangla. At the same time, it aims at the changes found in tone and intonation in the dialect of Bhairab. Accordingly, 50 respondents participated in the survey and five professionals were interviewed to collect data. The natural instinct of humans is always inclined to sustain the traditional culture, linguistic identity and nationalism. Regarding that, dialectal sustainability also significantly matters to uphold one's own culture and language. The central objective is to bring out the traditionalism and pastoral of a same language in any dialect other than its standard version. The paper also tends to show the profusion of some specific sounds that are used by the inhabitants of Bhairab.

Keywords: *Dialect, new vocabularies, /h/, /ðö/, /ɒ/*

1. Introduction

Dialects are the assets of a language. According to Wardhaugh (2006), dialect can be used to describe differences in speeches which are associated with geographical areas and social groups of a speaker. Language variation matters in all regards. Language is the means of expressing and receiving messages for interactions verbally or non-verbally. Verbal language again varies from place to place. Even a particular language does not remain same in all the places of its territory. It changes in rhythm, tone and intonation. It also changes in regards of expressions and mood. The differences of languages are mixed up in Bhairab. So, some words seem to be ambiguous to the natives of other districts. Bengali is a cocktail of many languages. Due to centuries of powerful influences from Europeans, Mughals, Arabs, Persians, and East Asians, Bengali has absorbed countless words from foreign languages, often totally integrating these borrowings into the core vocabulary. After centuries of invasions from Persia and the Middle East, numerous Turkish, Arabic, and Persian words were absorbed and fully integrated into the lexicon. Later, European colonialism brought words from Portuguese, French, Dutch, and most significantly English.

Bhairab is one of the most influential areas of commerce and trade in Bangladesh. It is located in Kishoregonj district of Dhaka division. Bhairab is the most famous area of fish business. The people of Bhairab have their own language and style in speaking Bangla. Most of the inhabitants living in Bhairab do not speak the standard Bangla language. They use dialect for their

day to day conversations. The dialect of Bhairab is similar to some extent with the Mymensingh dialect. They also borrow some words from Sylhet dialect. Stories of people who have been to Kishoregonj or Bhairab and faced the local intonation and ostensibly perverse tongues of the dialect speakers come to life as interesting during conversations.

2. Objectives

The primary objective is to find out the differences of pronunciation style, tone and intonation in the day to day language of Bhairab in comparison with the proper pronunciation of standard Bangla in a precise way. The study also aims at showing some interesting sentences they use in their everyday life to prove that dialectal sustainability indeed matters.

3. Literature Review

The prevalent practice of classification of the varieties of Bangla is not based on any premise of the language planning (Faquire, 2012). Consequently, in Bangladesh we could not have any directory to gather all the regional languages in a credible way. The regional languages are also known as dialects that have strong existence it the respective area. Dialects are semi-permanent language varieties of language which vary mainly according to geographical region (For example, Tangail dialect, Rajshahi dialect, Noakhali dialect, Barishal dialect, Chittagong dialect etc) and social class (For example, Gulshan dialect, Dhanmondi dialect, working class dialect, middle class dialect). But dialects can also be related to other aspects. It is uncertain, for example, that male and female language varieties and language differences related to age are also dialectal. Faquire (2012) states that the varieties of Bangla in the different region show variations at different levels: phonological level, morphological level, syntactic level and semantic level of their linguistic structure. In this current study also, the researcher has identified several variations between standard Bangla and the Bhairab dialect.

3.1. Dialect Variations

There are infinite sources of variation in speech such as social status, gender, age, ethnicity, geographical location, profession and economic background of a speaker (Holmes, 2001). The social class or/and group in which language is used varies. The diversity that lies within Bangladesh can be witnessed through the many dialects of the same but very different Bengali spoken in the different regions. It is also a surprise that people from one region do not understand the dialects of people from another region because of the heavy accents, despite the relatively small size of the country (Chowdhury, 2018). Dialectal differences in Bengali manifest themselves in three forms: standardized dialect vs. regional dialect, literary language vs. colloquial language and lexical (vocabulary) variations. The name of the dialects generally originates from the district where the language is spoken. Language change certainly leads to variation, and variation within a language community often leads to societal evaluation of specific topography as good or bad (Thomason, n.d.).

3.2. Varieties of a language

Language has a significant role in the identification of a speaker's behavioral pattern, traditions, culture, and society. Since language is the recollection of human thoughts generated in a particular culture within a particular period of time, it upholds the nature of that culture—a culture that typically forms over an extended period of time. There are a large number of Bangla dialects that depict the cultural, historical and linguistic pattern of a particular social class (Karmakar, 2017). The term variety is the label given to the form of a language used by any group of speakers or used in a particular field. A variety is characterized by the basic lexicon, phonology, syntax shared by members of the group. Varieties of a language are of four types: the standard variety, regional (geographical) dialects, sociolects (social dialects) and registers (functional varieties).

The standard variety is the form of a language used by the government and communication media, taught in schools and universities and is the main or only written form. The standard variety is the most widely used in a community. It is more fixed than other varieties, allowing less variation in pronunciation, spelling/writing and grammar.

4. Methodology

The study is conducted among the 50 respondents of all spheres in Bhairab region of Kishoregonj district in Bangladesh. The participants are randomly selected from different institutions and stages to find out the qualitative information of their dialect, pronunciation, tone and intonation of Bangla language. The respondents were asked to transform 25 standard Bangla sentences to their Bhairab dialects. After analyzing the data, the researcher has depicted 16 sentences in the current study. The sentences were also transliterated for the better understanding of the variations. Other sentences were not finally shown in the paper considering some formal issues of cultural and linguistic variations.

The study used the descriptive approach with utilization of qualitative data such as direct interviews and observational studies with existing information and case studies in the related field. Three college teachers and two shopkeepers were interviewed to discern some relevant information about the Bhairab dialect. The rationale was to depict the language variations between Bhairab dialect and the standard Bangla as observed by the researcher in synchronization with the conceptual analyses.

5. Findings and Discussion

The study of language variation escorts language development activities. For example, when developing a writing system, it is desirable for it to be convenient and conventional to the largest number of speakers of the very language. Consequently, it is imperative to ascertain the most coalescing features of the language. The differences may be found partially and completely. Some utterances are found strange and fantastic. Different tones may be discovered. Their dialect is not at all same with the language of Dhaka city though Bhairab is located in the Dhaka division. Some lapses have also been found after the successful completion of the study.

5.1. New Vocabularies

There are few words used by the natives of Bhairab having completely different meaning than that of standard Bangla. Such a word is 'গজব' (/gɒʒɒb/) that means 'curse' in Bengali. But in the dialect of Bhairab, people use it to mean 'beautiful', 'excellent' or 'very nice'.

Regarding seasonal register, the word 'ঠান্ডা' (/θʌndʌ/) that is used to mean cold, is uttered in a completely different word 'টেল্লা' (/tellʌ/) and they use 'জার' (/d͡ʒʌr/) in lieu of 'শীত' (/ʃit/).

There is another word uttered as 'বেইন্নালা' (/beɪnnʌlʌ/) which means morning and uttered as 'সকাল' (/ʃɒkʌl/) in standard Bangla.

They also use the word 'ছান' (/sʌn/) for 'তরকারি' (/tɒrkʌrɪ/) to mean curry and the juice of the curry is known as 'ঝোল' (/ʐœl/) in standard Bangla but the Bhairab dialect has this word as 'সৌরা' (/ʃəʊrʌ/).

The natives of Bhairab sometimes use the word 'বেইলা' (/beɪlʌ/) to indicate a young girl and 'বেডি' (/bedɪ/) to mean a woman. The word 'টুট' (/tʊt/) is used for 'প্যাঁচ' (/pæt͡ʃ/) to indicate conflict. They also use the word 'লাউ' (/lʌʊ/) for the replacement of the word 'কথা' (/kɒθʌ/) to denote speech. Such a way, there are several new vocabularies were found which are attention-grabbing, utterly modified and newfangled.

5.2. Day to day dialogues

From the linguistic point of view, all dialects have the equal prestige. And, it is found that gaining status, a dialect becomes the *standard variety* or *standard language* of a country. The sentences that the people of Bhairab use in their daily life are their dialectal language. The survey was conducted with 50 respondents who are the permanent inhabitants of Bhairab.

Some selected samples are presented by the researcher to give an overview of their dialect. The dialect has a bit longer tone in most of the sentences the regional people use than the language of standard Bangla.

The following 16 samples have been considered to depict from the collected data:

SL	Standard Bangla with transliteration	Bhairab Dialect with transliteration
1	লোকটা এভাবে তাকিয়ে আছে কেন? /lokta evabe takiye ache keno?/	বেডাডা এমনে চাইয়া লইছে দু। /bedada emne chaiya loice du/
2	এই আলোচনা করার প্রয়োজন নেই। /ei alochona korar proyojon nei/	ইতার আলাফেরতো কোনহ দরহার নাই। /itar alapherto konho dorhar nai/
3	কিরে তুই কখন আসবি? /kire tui kokhon asbi?/	কিরে তুই কোম্বালা আইবে? /kire tui kombala aibe?/
4	আজ সন্ধায় ব্রিজে যাব। /aj sondhay brije jabo/	আইজ্জা হাইনজালা বিরিজো যায়াম। /aijja hainjala birijo jayam/
5	আজকে আমাদের বাড়িতে আসবা, ঠিক আছে! /ajke amader barite asbe, thik ace!/	আইজ্জা আমডার বাইত আইবে, ঠিহ আছে! /aijja amdar bait aibe, thiho ace!/
6	আমরা অনেক এনজয় করেছি তাই না? /amra onek enjoy korci, tai na?/	আমরা কতলা মজা করছি, নারে? /amra kotla moja korci, nare?/
7	আমি এখন বাস স্ট্যান্ড আছি। /ami ekhon bus stand aci/	আমি অহনে বাস্টিন আছি। /ami ohone bastin aci/
8	নুসরাত, এসো ওখানে যাই। /Nusrat, esho okhane jai/	নুসরাত, আ হেনো যাই। /Nusrat, aa heno jai/
9	এই দেখনা, দেয়ালে ২ টা বড় বড় ছিদ্র। /ei dekhona, deyale dui ta boro boro chidro/	এই দেহছ না দেওয়ালের মইধ্যে দুইডা বড় বড় বিন্দুর। /ei dehos na, dewaler moiddhe duida boro boro bindur/
10	প্রচন্ড শীতে শরীর ঠান্ডা হয়ে আছে। /prochondo shite shorir thanda hoye ace/	যা না জার পরছে পুরা শৈইল টেল্লা হইয়া গেছে। /ja na jar porce pura shoil tella hoia gece/
11	ওরে বাপরে অনেক গরম। /ore bapre onek gorom/	মাগ্‌গোমা ততা অ। /maggoma tota o/
12	তরকারিটা অনেক টক লাগছে। /torkarita onek tok lagce/	ছানডা অনেক চুক্কা লাগতাছে। /sanda onek chukka lagtace/
13	বেশি কথা বলবে না। /beshi kotha bolbe na/	অত লাউ কইরো না। /oto law koiro na/
14	আমি সকালে আন্নির বাসায় গিয়েছিলাম। /ami sokale Annir basay giyecilam/	আমি বেইন্নালা আন্নির বাসায় গেছলাম। /ami beinnala Annir basay geclam/
15	ভাতের সাথে ঝোল নেন। /vater sathe jhol nen/	ভাতের সাথে সৌরা নেন। /vater sathe shoura nen/
16	ভাঙ্গা চামচ দিয়ে খেয়োনা। /vanga chamoch diye kheyona/	ভাঙ্গা ছিফি দিয়া খাইয়ো না। /vanga sifi dia khayo na/

5.3. Profusion of /h/ sound

The profusion of /ha/ sound is mentionable in Bhairab dialect. The most of the people use /ha/ sound instead of /ka/ and /kha/ sound in speaking Bangla. For example, they pronounce 'দরহার' (/do(r)hʌr/) instead of 'দরকার' (/do(r)kʌr/); 'অহনে' (/ɔhɒne/) instead of 'এখন' (/ekhɒn/). The people also use /ha/ in almost all other regards also whenever they want. It is a broad spectrum quality of the inhabitants of Bhairab.

5.4. Use of /ðö/ sound (in Bangla /দু/)

The natives of Bhairab use the sound **/ðö/** (in Bangla /দু/) at the end of many of their day to day dialogues. The example is presented earlier in 5.2 in sample-1. This is a kind of unique feature of the dialect. There is no specific meaning of this sound. It is just an expression which is mostly found in Bhairab dialect.

5.5. Profusion of /e/ and /ɒ/

The people of Bhairab generally use the Bangla pure vowels in the pronunciation of **/e/** and **/ɒ/** sounds. They use 'যাইবে?' to mean 'যাবি?' (Will you go?); 'বিরিজো' to mean 'ব্রিজে' (in the bridge/toward the bridge). That means the **/ɪ/** sound is converted to **/e/** and the **/e/** sound is converted to **/ɒ/**.

6. Interpretation from Interviews

Though the study has found wonderful variations comparing the standard Bangla and the Bhairab dialect, in most of the cases, the academics or professionals do not usually use the dialects. Of course, they have the intonation or various pitch levels while talking which proves that the dialect also influences to their speech acts. Especially, the interviewees stated that the professionals do not use dialects in formal places. Some people use not at all. However, the rural people use dialects in almost all of their everyday talks. A teacher-interviewee states about the complete modification of words. In case of some words, the pronunciation has been quite modified like for the polysyllabic phrase 'বাস স্ট্যান্ড' (/bʌs/ /stænd/) to mean 'bus stoppage', they use disyllabic 'বাস্টিন' (/bʌstɪn/) which is indeed remarkable. Similarly, the word 'ছিদ্র' (/t͡ʃɪðrɒ/) has been transformed to 'বিন্দুর' (/bɪndʊr/), a surprisingly different word.

7. Conclusion

The dialect of Bhairab is not that much different than the standard Bangla language. As it is located closer to B-Baria and Sylhet district, some of their utterances and tone are similar with their language. Sailzmann (2007) states that the way individuals speak varies not only according to their regional and social dialects but also according to context. Likewise, the context also contributes to develop the Bhairab dialect which is inimitable and sustainable. Bhairab is also a proposed district. It is quite dependent with its own resources. Its language also has individual characteristics and uniqueness. The researcher has observed that language variation occurs in this region with modified tone and intonation. This variation again sustains and the sustainability of the dialects goes on.

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