THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH IN BANGLADESH

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Master of Arts in English, University of Rajshahi 1993

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH

Department of English
University of Lethbridge
LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA, CANADA

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Date of Defense: December 20, 2022

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Begum Zohura Khatun and my daughter, Nuha Kareema

ABSTRACT

English is a problem in Bangladesh. This thesis studies the political history of English and English Studies in Bangladesh as the nation continues debates on English. Bangladesh has been a contested ground for languages for centuries. Language such as Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Portuguese, have risen as a language of ruling people in different historical times and they have fallen from the prestige status. Both Bangla and English in the contemporary period have strong positions to the nation.

This research has followed the historical research methods, reviewed the documents of the past, listened to the lectures and discussions on English Studies, and made its enquiries on the secondary data sources. The thesis has simultaneously investigated the writings e.g., i. both Bangladeshi and International writers, ii. social and political theorists' views, iii. Bangladeshi scholars' debates on languages.

English connects Bangladesh to the world, contributes to economic development, creates freedom in career development, and English has a paramount effect on economy, commerce, business, and human resource development. However, English has the potential power to diminish Bangla.

Also, English is a language of power politics. Politics and Governance change the impacts of English. The administrations of the colonial period, of the Pakistan period and of independent Bangladesh have direct connection with the rise and the fall of English Studies which helps to figure out five different ages of English since the arrival of the British East India Company in Bangladesh.

This historical discussion of English is important for the nation to know because the scholars have been debating the status of English in Bangladesh. The thesis through its eight chapters shows different issues such as the historical relationship between English and Bangla, the language hegemony in Bangladesh, the debates between groups over English education,

the decolonizing efforts through introducing Southern English in the curriculum. This research study will help the nation understand the position of English in Bangladesh in the postcolonial period.

PREFACE

It was a great opportunity for me to pursue an MA in an English program in Canada. I decided to take another English degree in Canada after more than two decades of my study break. I did my first MA in English degree from the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. I am fortunate that Professor Daniel Paul O'Donnell replied to my email while I was writing to Canadian Universities for a possible admission. Though I got admission in 2015 at the University of Lethbridge and I needed to defer because the Visa Office did not grant me study permit to participate in the program. It took me five years to get admission again and to start my program in Spring 2021.

While I drafted the thesis, I studied the history of Bangladesh. I see that for centuries, the kings, the sultans, and the nawabs of the country, who were outsiders, had imposed their own language on the common people of Bangladesh, and they never worked for the development of indigenous languages, even for Bangla, the most common spoken language of Bengal. Bangladesh is independent since 1971, first-time in its history. There was previously no hope, or no expectation existed in the dependent Bangladesh for the rights of our native people. Now only in the independent Bangladesh, there is a hope if the nation can work for their betterment. I did not bring other historical issues in the thesis because I tried to concentrate only on languages and the power behind the languages.

For the thesis, I was planning for field-based data collected and making inquiries and interviews in person. I planned to visit historical places too. Though the plan became impossible because of the COVID-19 global pandemic, and the research area was so big that it needed several travels to cover Bangladesh and West Bengal in India. Thus, I accessed the scholarly articles or books, and analyzed the published interviews, lectures of the scholars. That has made my inquiries more accessible. Professor O'Donnell guided me to take the academic

courses which were relevant to the thesis. These courses prepared me and made possible for me to author this thesis on the debatable topic.

This thesis on language history has demanded cautious, scrupulous, and honest efforts in probing into the information. Professor O'Donnell has taught me to deal with the concern in pragmatic ways and suggested more reading to avoid the information gap on the topic of inquiry. I have taken this study on the history of English in Bangladesh as I thought that the thesis would be helpful for the nation to understand how they are dealing with English Studies even in the 2020s.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise due to the Almighty God.

I am speechless and it is impossible to express gratitude in words to Professor Daniel Paul O'Donnell in comparison to what kindness he conferred on me during my last two years' endeavor to study at the University of Lethbridge. The more I wish to write the less words I get to express my gratitude. Dr. O'Donnell is a generous man, and he always tirelessly provides me with academic assistance to solve my shortcoming and learning gaps and gives me advice to proceed my historical studies on Bangladesh.

Initially, Dr. O'Donnell supervised me with weekly writing assignments, and I began reviewing articles and books on weekly basis. If I submitted an assignment analyzing a topic and I failed to write appropriately, Professor O'Donnell wrote an analysis on the same article as an example and showed me the correct approach in writing an analysis on an academic paper. These initial supports nourished me to grow in writing reviews and enhanced my morale that I could continue my research effectively. I am very much indebted to his intellectual and humane support. Professor O'Donnell somedays himself brought me books, created my access to the online libraries and permitted me to enter in his other classes to learn new topics and new skills. Further, he taught me how I should focus on a subject of inquiry and uphold a discussion before the readers. I used his Digital Humanities Lab as my own workspace during the COVID-19 pandemic and still I have an opportunity to work in the Lab. He does his best to provide me with financial support through graduate assistantships. He is like a shelter and a shadow over my head that protects me from the sun. Whenever it is difficult for me to proceed, he confers a beam of light on me to see a path ahead to walk on.

Dr. Barbara Bordalejo, my co-supervisor, always assisted and guided me so that I would not falter in any situation. She has created access to join her Canterbury Tales Project (CTP)

which keeps me in close contact with medieval English and manuscripts. I learnt the textual editing of medieval English literature while working as a transcriber from the manuscripts. That is a huge access. Dr. Bordalejo has introduced me to the Digital Studies paradigm and allowed me to work with her as a teaching assistant. Dr. Roopika Risam commented on the thesis proposal and helped me to narrow the scope so that the writing did not address too broad aspects. Her benevolent suggestions contributed hugely towards drafting this thesis in a straight way. Professor Cameron Neylon is always helpful and responsive and has showed me to avoid writing any abrupt endings in the arguments and to continue the issues until they have a safer conclusion. I consider myself a fortunate student under the shelter of the learned supervisory committee. I shall remain humble to walk on the path that the experts have been guiding me since Spring 2021.

My endeavor to achieve this MA program at the University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada is a rigorous undertaking. However, when I look back on the previous years, my memory feels like a nostalgic happy journey all the ways to the present.

I also acknowledge the sacrifice of my wife and the contribution of my superiors of Bangladesh Open University as well as my colleagues, my friends back home in Bangladesh and my family in Canada who are supporting me in different dimensions to pursue this academic program in Canada. I am grateful to you all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BD/BGD	Bangladesh
BHC	Bangladesh High Commission
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BSS	Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (Bangladesh News Organization)
BWDB	Bangladesh Water Development Board
CE	Common (or Current) Era
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
CTP	The Canterbury Tales Project (CTP)
DFID	Department of International Development, United Kingdom
DU	University of Dhaka
EIA	English in Action
EIC	The British East India Company
EIL	English as an International Language
ELC	English Learning Center
ELE	English Language Education
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ELT	English Language Teaching
ELTIP	English Language Teaching Improvement Project
FCDO	Commonwealth & Development Office, United Kingdom
GE	Global Englishes
GTM	Grammar-Translation Method
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
LEP	Language Education Policy
MOE	Ministry of Education, Bangladesh
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NCTB	National Curriculum & Textbook Board, Dhaka
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NSU	North South University, Bangladesh
OEC	Observatory of Economic Complexity
PEDP-II	Education Development Project-II
RD	Regional Dialects
TBS	The Business Standard
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TQI	Teaching Quality Improvement
UC	University of Calcutta
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UofL	University of Lethbridge
USD	United States Dollar
WE	World Englishes
WENR	World Education News and Reviews (New York)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Bengali is our sweet home, and English is our world!

-Rashid Askari

1.1 Abstract

This thesis narrates the history of the rise and the sustenance of English in Bangladesh. English is a paradox. English, the colonial tool, is also the empowering agent of individuals in the postcolonial age that is disturbing the intellectuals and the academia. In this chapter, I introduce the thesis, "The History of English in Bangladesh," its context, and explain why I have undertaken this study, and how I have conducted the research. First, I have narrated the idea of the thesis, the significance of the study, its thesis statement, and research methodology. Second, I have discussed the research context, its geography and people, culture, and the present challenges and controversies on English and English Studies. This initial chapter is the start of unknotting the history of English in Bangladesh.

1.2 Introduction

English is a colonial language in Bangladesh. I see that this language enjoys a status of prestige, carries the hegemony of cultural dominion on Bangla, the national language, creates a fear of eliminating indigenous languages, delivers a flux of confusions, cracks debates among scholars and divides the nation. In brief, the language is honored with salutes and littered with blames. Bangladesh, as a former British colony, has the infrastructure of English Studies and its speakers. Each level and each sector of education associates with the spread of the hegemonic language. However, my thesis finds that scholars are divided in opinions and debating all the times of history and they cannot come to a consensus on English language. This dilemma does not bring a direct approach to the language and the nation has been suffering from the division of thoughts.

My thesis, "The History of English in Bangladesh," explores the history of English, narrates the main historical events, presents the major components of the confusion, which are

the political power for introducing it in Bengal, the initial disagreement of British Orientalist and the Anglicanist educationists, colonizers' top-down approach for imposing English, the financial contribution of native privileged people for English institutions and their earnest advocacy for European education, the Christian missionaries' arduous work, the medium of instructions, social theorists' views on colonial languages. Simultaneously, it exposes how the contested groups expose the languages as a cultural hegemony, power dominion and a tool of subjugation, and further, how they show the language as a tool of economic emancipation, a pathway of social access, and a voice to the voiceless.

The first three chapters of the thesis, which are i. Introduction ii. A brief history of prestige languages of Bangladesh iii. A brief history of Bangla, would serve to establish the historical context so that you can understand the position of two languages, Bangla, and English in Bangladesh. Otherwise, the history of English in Bangladesh remains fragmented, and you would not get the full story.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The thesis writes a history of English in Bangladesh though I am not writing the history of English for the first time. Previously, Sultana and Roshid have given a brief view of English Language Education (ELE) since 1835 CE and talked about the local Bengal reformers and the British collaborated in introducing English education in Bengal (Sultana and Roshid 2021). Begum and Islam presented the history of the English language since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 (Begum and Islam 2018). Rahman and Pandian showed the position of English Studies in the chronology of different education policies and commission reports after 1971 (Rahman and Pandian 2018). Islam and Hashim emphasized more the role of English politicians and Christian missionaries during the British period (Islam and Hashim 2019) in establishing English in Bengal. Baksah tried to give a cursory background history of English

since the arrival of the British in India (Baksah 2022). Arafat and Mehnaaz presented the history of English teaching with references to the British colonial role in starting English Studies (Arafat and Mehnaaz 2020). Rowshon Ara explained the historical background of the English language in Bangladesh from 1947 (Ara 2020). Azam and Kusakabe referred to the historical facts from the seventeenth century and focused on the challenges of Muslim students in participating in English education during the British period (Azam and Kusakabe 2020a).

In another sense, none of the above writers provide a complete history of English in Bangladesh. Though the history of English is closely connected to the history of debates on English Studies, I find that the absence of a complete history in English promotes more controversies towards English Studies.

This research traces back and forth on the historical path to identify how English had already passed through the colonial period, suffered decolonizing impact, regained support, and has then adapted the localized demands and has been assuming a global role as World Englishes.

1.4 The Thesis Statement

English is a paradox and a source of debates in Bangladesh. Since its inception, English has waved through debates. In the meantime, English language rises as a prestige language, falls, and revives its status in Bangladesh. At the request of the local privileged people, the British, the Anglicanists, introduced English in Bengal (Cutts 1953; Loomba 2015) because, as local privileged inhabitants already realized, "English was money" (Clark 1956). At the same time, the British Orientalist scholars preferred other prestige languages of India e.g., Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, as a language of education in Bengal (Kumar 2017; Azam and Kusakabe 2020a). I see that there was a continued debate between the Orientalists and the Anglicanists from the 1770s to the year 1835. Initially the British Orientalists proposed using

native languages including Bangla to administer the local population. Ultimately, because of public pressure, the British were led to impose English and to instill European education in the Kingdom of Bengal and ripped up the official prestige of the Persian language and banned it from its official status (Macaulay 1835; Schendel 2009; Loomba 2015; Azam and Kusakabe 2020a). Thus, since the 1830s, the British legalized English officially in administration, in the court of law, in education, in business in Bengal and English has possessed the status of prestige since the British period. The British colonial period in Bengal ended in 1947. Then in East Pakistan (Bangladesh), English remained in the same official status and played the functional role between East and West Pakistan (Ara 2020) till the Pakistan rule passed over in 1971.

Bangladesh after liberation has made Bangla as the national language. Bangla is blessed with the prestige of being the only state language in the country. In the independent Bangladesh, initially the political leaders did liberate its education system from English and turned the medium of instruction into Bangla and this politically motivated decision lowered the status and use of English (Chowdhury and Kabir 2014; Rahman et al. 2019). Then again, Bangladesh has started to revive English Studies since the 1990s (Alam 2018).

This research views that the history of English in Bangladesh is the history of power as well as the history of debates. The present context of English Studies differs immensely from colonial Bangladesh though English had never lost its relevance because of its power to global education, career opportunity, and international exchanges (Rahman et al. 2019). For decades, the debates show that English has a hegemonic power over Bangla as well as a liberating power of individuals. This history of English also shows a problem that the mass people in Bangladesh do not know how to deal with English and English Studies though the nation interprets English as language of prestige and power. The thesis statement is that English, the colonial tool of the

British, has become paradoxically a decolonizing tool to empower the same people in the postcolonial period. This paradox is the fundamental subject of the thesis.

1.5 Research Methodology

For this research, I have consulted such research tools as the historical research for languages allows me. Historical research "attempts to systematically recapture the complex nuances, the people, meanings, events, and even ideas of the past that have influenced and shaped the present" (Berg & Lune 2012, 159; Webb 2020). McDowell mentions, "The goal is to produce a coherent and consistent account of historical events which will enhance our understanding of the past, whether through the discovery of new facts or the perceptive analysis of existing research" (McDowell 2014). For the research, I have sought secondhand written accounts of events and found them in textbooks, encyclopedias, journal articles, newspapers, biographies, and other media such as films or tape recordings (Webb 2020). I have also studied public lectures, talks of Bangladeshi scholars, development workers, international writers, and evaluated the historical, administrative research articles, the socio-economic documents of Bangladeshi English Studies and the Global English discourses in Bangladesh and reviewed the theorists on colonial languages from the global south and the global north. This research will contribute to our "intellectual conscience, helping in our skeptical way to sort the true from the untrue, the useful from the pernicious, the valid from the pretentious" (Elton 1976; McDowell 2014).

1.6 Context of Research: Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a split-part of Bengal. The British governed Bangladesh from 1757 to 1947. Pakistan ruled the country from 1947 to 1971. In 1971, Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign country after nine months of liberation war against Pakistan. Bangladesh is a democratic republic. In this thesis, I have written down concisely some relevant information

about the context of the research, Bangladesh, that I have deemed basic for you, the reader who does not know the country.

1.6.1 Geography and People

Bangladesh is a young independent country in South Asia. Dhaka is the capital city. Bangladesh has a network of both land & maritime borders with India & Myanmar. India is the biggest neighbor. India surrounded Bangladesh on the east, on the west and on the north and the only exception, Myanmar, exists at the southeast corner border of Bangladesh (Encyclopedia Britannica 2022a). The Bay of Bengal is on the south with the marine frontiers with India and Myanmar. The area of Bangladesh is 148,460 km^2, "a territory smaller than the U.S. state of Michigan" (WENR 2019). More than 167 million people live in a small country, which ranks Bangladesh in the eighth position in the world, and the fifth place in Asia (Worldometer 2022).

In Bangladesh, more than 25% people are considered illiterate (Macrotrends 2022) and 73.2% of people aged 7+ in this country are literate. I see that this raises questions in the scholarly debates about English literacy of the people with the capacity to read English newspapers. Very few youths are confident about English and computer skills, and female youth and youth with limited education even less so (BRAC 2018). BRAC, one of the biggest NGOs (non-government organizations) in Bangladesh, also brought up in the youth survey report that one third of the total population is youth who are between 15 and 35 years old, and more than 50% people are in working age from 15 years to 59 years old. BRAC suggested in the 2018 report that the imperative role of youth was to contribute towards the progress of our society and to raise the economic growth. Bangladesh should support, nurture the youth, and encourage their journey to independent career (BRAC 2018).

Urbanization, as in other South Asian countries, is also growing in Bangladesh (The Asia Foundation 2014; World Economic Forum 2019). 39.4 % of the people live in urban areas and the rest of the people dwell in the rural, hilly, salient-prone coastal, water-locked sandy areas. Bangladesh is a riverine country in which rivers and water bodies have infiltrated like a net (Schendel 2009; Sofhor Tourism 2020). The country retains the position of the world's largest river delta, and it has 405 rivers including fifty-seven transboundary rivers, among them, fifty-four originate from India, including the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, and the Meghna (BWDB 2014). The rivers deposit alluvial silt on both sides of the banks each year and keep the lands fertile which makes Bangladesh an agrarian country. Because of the wet climate, the ancient architecture did not survive the erasing of time (Schendel 2009). Bangladesh also has few UNESCO heritage sites. UNESCO declared the Somapura Mahavihara, a renowned intellectual center until the 12th century, also known as Paharpur Buddhist Monastery; the Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat and the Sundarbans are other two cultural heritage sites (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2022a; UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2022b; UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2022c).

As per foreign policy, Bangladesh holds friendship to all countries. "The State shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes, and respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter" (MOFA 2018). Foreign policy proclaims the moderate principle of "friendship towards all, malice towards none" (Hussain 2022). Since its independence, the country has been maintaining peace with all its neighboring countries, and Bangladesh has never been involved in conflict with any other country of the world since its independence.

1.6.2 Culture of Bangladesh

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (1972) stands on "the high ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism" (Laws of Bangladesh 2019). Its Constitution pledges, "it shall be a fundamental aim of the State to realize through the democratic process a socialist society, free from exploitation a society in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice, political, economic and social, will be secured for all citizens" (Laws of Bangladesh 2019). The people should enjoy their own harmonious cultural heritage. UNESCO proclaims that Bangladesh is a unique instance of a multicultural state where along with the 98% Bengali people, there are at least forty-five small ethnic groups who practice different cultures like their own language, food habits, dress, music etc. (UNESCO 2013). Bangladesh claims to be "the melting pot of races" (Embassy and Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh 2022).

People have a taste in fashion that makes a mixture influenced by the East and the West. They like colorful dresses. Men traditionally wear *panjabi*, *fotua*, *lungi* as casual wear, and on formal occasions, they dress in shirt-pants, *panjabi,* and suits. Young women wear *salwar kameez* and women are traditionally seen in *saree* (Mahamud 2016; WhatsAnswer 2017; Virtual Bangladesh 2020).

People belong to different religions e.g., Sunni-Islam (83.3%), Hinduism (10.3%), non-Sunni Islam (5.4%), Buddhism (0.6%), Roman Catholic Christianity (0.3%), Sikhism, Protestant Christianity, and other Beliefs (0.1%) (WorldAtlas 2017). Religions have a huge influence on education, lifestyle, dresses, and social festivities. "The state religion of the Republic is Islam, but the State shall ensure equal status and equal right in the practice of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other religions" (Laws of Bangladesh 2019). Further, the State declares religion as the fundamental right, "Every citizen has the right to profess, practice or

propagate any religion" (Laws of Bangladesh 2019). Interracial relationships are broadly friendly. "Hindu-Muslim relations in Bangladesh in general and in rural Bengal in particular are by and large cordial" (Chakravarty and Narain 1985, xv).

The State pledges to ensure "free and compulsory education to all children" (Laws of Bangladesh 2019). The national education system always fosters a humane message towards all young students:

> Efforts have been made to raise, starting from the level of moral and humanistic values down to awareness on history and tradition, the spirit of the Liberation War, passion for art-culture and literature, patriotism, feelings for nature and equal dignity to all irrespective of religions, caste, creed, and sex. Efforts have also been made to apply science in all spheres of our life to build a nation advanced in science (NCTB 2013).

The nation celebrate many traditional, national colorful joyous festivals and international events e.g., *Pahela Falgun* (February 13, first day of Spring as Bangla Calendar), the *Ekushey* February (February 21, International Mother Language Day), International Women's Day (March 08), the Independence Day (March 26), *Pahela Baishak* (April 14, the first day of Bangla calendar year), May Day (May 01), birth anniversaries of Rabindranath Tagore (May 07) and Kazi Nazrul Islam (May 25), the Martyrs' Day (December 14), the Victory Day of Bangladesh (December 16), which are beyond the boundary of religions (Schendel 2009; Bangladeshe 2011). People from all walks of lives participate in these generalized secular cultural programs and they own these festivities as their own.

1.6.3 Economy

The economy of Bangladesh depends by and large on agriculture, natural resource, manufacturing export, and remittance (Alam et al. 2009; Akhtar 2005; WorldAtlas 2018b). The rural people make a huge contribution to the economy through their agricultural activities,

which produce sufficient foods, and vegetables for its people (Miah, Hasan, and Uddin 2020). The country has extended its trade liberation policy since the 1990s (Raihan 2008; Manni and Afzal 2012). Its economy is rapidly expanding because of industrialization, which targets both the domestic and foreign markets and transforming from the traditional agrarian economy to an industry and service-driven economy. Its industry sectors are ready-made garments, export-oriented manufacturing, telecommunications, shipbuilding sectors, chemical fertilizers, information, and communication technology (ICT), electronic industry, pharmaceuticals, tea, footwear, paper yarn, fish, leather, headgear, plastic articles (Rahman et al 2019; Workman 2021). These industries have been the main driving force for economic growth.

Bangladeshi economy places itself in 2017 as the 44th largest economy in terms of nominal GDP and the 32nd in the world in terms of purchasing power parity (BHC 2020). The major natural resources are natural gas, coal, hard rock, forest, fisheries, land, and water. Of the 148,460 km^2 country area, 130,170 km^2 is land area and the rest (18,290 km^2) water (Index Mundi 2021). Eighty percent of the workers in the garment industries in Bangladesh are women (Philipp 2020). Bangladesh exported products equivalent to USD$47.2B and imported products equivalent to USD$55.6B in 2019 (OEC 2021). Bangladeshi people work in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Singapore, UAE, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Bahrain (ADB 2016), and in other countries of the world. They send remittances each year. In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Bangladeshi workers sent remittances of $18.2B to Bangladesh (Arab News 2020).

1.7 Debates on English and English Studies

I have identified internal debates in other academic writers' writings on English Studies in the country and these issues are the reasons for initiating this historical thesis work. The disagreements have the deep roots in the Bangladesh society and these causes are contributing to the poor status of English Studies in the country:

Firstly, English lost its official position and it fell into a weak status as a foreign language in Bangladesh since the year of independence, 1971. Bangla is the only national language in the country. The education system of Bangladesh was set free from the British education system in the 1970s and the 1980s through eliminating English from education. I see these initiatives as the movements for making the English language weak. The first (Muhammad Qudrat-i-Khuda) Education Commission in 1974 prioritized Bangla as a medium of instruction in all levels of education and removed the colonial language, English, from primary and tertiary education to deemphasize its studies to decolonize the education system (Chowdhury and Kabir 2014). The result of the 1974 Education Commission was "a drop of English proficiency among the learner community" (Rahman et al. 2019). Along with that strategic drive, in the 1980s, the nation turned the schools and colleges textbooks into Bangla to promote the national language and to uphold the glory of the Bangla language at all levels of learning (Kabir 2017). The country marginalized English education because of its strong Bangla favoritism and the nation believes that the seed of their independence is in the glorious 1952 language movement, which led to the 1971 liberation war (Nur 2018). Thus, the country has shown a clear manifestation of the postcolonial puzzle towards English education and the puzzle is the result of the two opposite notions of decolonization and globalization (Nur 2018). These initiatives created a delicate situation for English education for two decades from 1971 to 1991.

Secondly, after two decades of weak teaching, Bangladesh has been reinstating English as a compulsory subject since the 1990s at all levels of education using communicative approach (Anisuzzaman and Akan 2006) in English Learning and Teaching (ELT), which has listening, speaking, reading, and writing skill-based development (Whatiselt 2018). Many English teachers are not trained in the communicative approach in ELT. The gap in two

previous decades from 1971 to 1991 created a lack of trained English teachers that leads to weak teaching in English (Imam 2005). Another reason is that from the 1830s to the 1980s, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the classical teaching method for foreign or second language (Mambrol 2020), was used for teaching and learning English in Bangladesh and teachers had training in GTM. All on a sudden in the 1980s, Bangladesh introduced the ELT method and stopped teaching English through the GTM method. The reason for changing the teaching method was that the British Council sponsored ELT method and denigrated the use of literary texts in English education of Bangladesh (Alam 2018). Further, in the 1980s the Government of Bangladesh initiated notably unplanned quantitative expansion in the national education system. The ELT failed to replace the older GTM method to achieve the goal. Eventually, teachers taught reading and writing skills in the classroom which did not "improve their language skill" (Anisuzzaman and Akan 2006). The students received less exposure to oral language in classrooms than they required. The result is that the students are not proficient in English (Anisuzzaman and Akan 2006). Besides, the concern exists in the gap between their bookish knowledge and the communicative competence, which has kept the business workers away from getting the full benefit from the advantages of the language (Roshid and Webb 2010; Chowdhury and Sarkar 2018). The change of teaching method and the lack of trained teachers in ELT are responsible for the insufficient development in English Studies.

Thirdly, English Studies has been expensive since the 1990s because of privatization. The Government has been permitting the establishment of private English schools and private universities since the 1990s. This strategic step for establishing an English school is concentrated on the urban areas. The medium of instruction of the private schools is in English. Moreover, English training centers are increasing all over the country (Iqbal and Rabbi 2009) because the demand for efficient English speakers is growing because of the introduction of

the open market economy since the 1990s. In the open market economy, English has become "a supreme concern in maintaining economic growth and developing a skilled workforce" (Rahman et al 2019). This demand and the gap became the business opportunity for the private institutions. Private English schools, English training centers and private universities sell English as a product. Only certain privileged sections of society can access the fruits of the strategic initiatives of the Government. Urban and rural low-income and poor people do not have entrance to the private English schools. The students at public schools and non-government schools (a non-government school is not a private school, and the government pays 100% basic salary of teachers in a non-government school) are in general severely lacking the skills of English (Alam 2018). Alia Madrasas, a type of Muslim religious school, from the 1980s have been providing English education in the modernized curriculum (Asadullah and Chaudhury 2010). Further, Qawmi Madrasas, another stream of Muslim religious school, have introduced English in the syllabus in 2008 though the quality of English teaching and learning is sub-standard (Azam and Kusakabe 2020b). In other words, there is a concern with English teaching and learning in all public, private, and non-government schools and madrasas. In short, private English institutions are making business on the concern.

Fourthly, this colonial language is creating a social division in the society and a division between Bengali-medium students and English-medium students. Globalization has enhanced its role and threatened a cultural recolonization in Bangladesh. The World Bank has designed the strategies to promote the private school sector in Bangladesh (Imam 2005). English creates a mental distance between the students at public Bangla schools and private English schools. English students are adopting the western culture, creating psychological problems among the public-school students.

Fifthly, students in Bangladesh must learn three or more languages to prepare themselves socially, culturally, religiously, and educationally because Bangladesh is a multicultural country (UNESCO 2013). The reality is that a student has this dilemma to face in his/her early age in multicultural Bangladesh as the students of the multicultural countries face many challenges in terms of learning a foreign language (Jhagroo 2015). In Bangladesh, a young student studies Bangla as the national language, English for career development, either Arabic or Sanskrit or Pali for religious purposes. For more clarification, I am providing an example from a student of class viii. A class viii student must study Bangla and English as compulsory subjects and further, a Muslim student learns Arabic, a Hindu student studies Sanskrit, a Buddhist student does Pali (NCTB 2021; Studyhourbd 2022). In addition to the multicultural perspectives, Bangladesh does not have Language Education Policy (LEP) for a foreign language and the country does not have proper guidelines. (Saha 2014). Thus, a student does not know how to approach English as the foreign language and how to prioritize English language in their language studies.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the thesis and its context. Bangladesh has an expanding economy. This country is intricately connected with the other countries of the world, and it is developing in education, in trade, in export technology and in remittance earning. This country also is producing industrial and agricultural products which the businesspeople sell to other countries. Bangladesh was a British colony, and the spread of English resulted from the British colonial power who used the language as a tool of power. English connects Bangladesh to the globe in the postcolonial period. The nation sees that the contribution of English is in education, in international communication, in trade and commerce, in technology and industry and in

remittance earning. The nation knows that English is a must if they wish success in all those sectors. In the above discussion, it is a dilemma that the nation needs English to keep pace with the progressive activities while they indicate English as a hegemony on the local language and its culture. Thus, this research is exploring the history of English for you and for the generation to come.

CHAPTER 2: A BRIEF HISTORY OF PRESTIGE LANGUAGES OF BANGLADESH

He who knows no foreign languages knows nothing of his own.

-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

2.1 Abstract

This chapter sketches a timeline of the prestige languages of Bangladesh. Political power is the stimulus behind the rise of prestige languages in Bangladesh. The Buddhists, the Hindus, the Muslims, the Portuguese, and the British had the ruling power over Bangladesh during the various times of history. The rulers imposed their language on the people as a language of official communication in the royal courts and as a result, the ruler's language secured a position of prestige in the administration, law court, and public and academic lives of the nation. Thus, in the different centuries, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Portuguese, and English were endowed with the prestige status in society, in business and trade, in the court of law, in the religious places. Each of the prestige languages rises with the political power of its speakers. In the recent past, the rise of Bangla and English was coincidental with the fall of the Persian language. Both Bangla and English were part of the colonial power, and the British used them as colonial tools to govern Bangladeshi people during the British period. However, both Bangla and English have been participating in continual debates in the society and while Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Portuguese are outside of the contemporary debates as these languages have lost their political, business, and cultural significance with the passage of time.

2.2 Introduction

English is a prestige language in Bangladesh. For centuries, this country has been a contested ground for languages. The main tool of the competition is the political force that empowers a language. For thousands of years, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Portuguese

earned the emblem "prestige" and then they suffered a fall. In the rise and the fall of other languages, our native language, Bangla, gradually grows in the liminal space of other prestige languages and keeps a low profile to survive only as the commoners' oral language. Eventually, in the recent waves of language supremacy, when English grew up as a prestige language in Bengal, the British influenced the growth of Bangla (Clark 1956). That is a historical surprise. A colonizing nation, the British, worked hugely to develop Bangla, the language of the colonized nation and simultaneously, the British used Bangla as a colonizing tool in administering Bengal.

Any prestige language in the history of Bangladesh is always associated with the power of the ruler. The political, religious, trade and commercial needs of the people earned the image, "prestige" for Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Portuguese, and English. You may have a question about what a prestige language means. The language that helps to communicate with the ruler and its administration, brings prestige to a person. In other words, the language of the ruling dynasty almost always is the language of prestige. "The language of powerful social groups usually carries linguistic prestige; and social prestige is often granted to speakers of prestige languages and varieties" (Pearce 2007; Nordquist 2020). The ruled people speak the language of the ruler to have an access with the royal court and they feel a prestige in speaking the ruler's language. The interactive interest impacts on the growth of a language as prestige. In return, the language of rulers influences the lives of common people while the ruled people take part in the administrative, cultural, and social activities. "In sociolinguistics, linguistic prestige is the degree of esteem and social value attached by members of a speech community to certain languages, dialects, or features of a language variety" (Nordquist 2020).

For better explanation, I have made a conceptual map based on the data from encyclopedia, historical writings and archives, research articles. The height of the y axis ranges

from low to high. I have placed languages on the chart based on the official use of a language, its official status, its religious acceptance, the language of ruling people, the popularity among the common people, the societal respects, availability of teaching institutions for the language. For example, presently English is used in the government, non-government, and corporate official spaces; parents, teachers, employers want to see the fluence of English in a person; the country is widely teaching English; but English is still a foreign language in the official status of Bangladesh or in other words, English does not have any position in the country though the Constitution is available in English in the official website of the Government. Whereas Bangla is the only state language; almost each office of government use Bangla as a language of correspondence, and the usual spoken language in official space is Bangla; 98% of the people speak the language. With rare exception, all educational institutions of the country teach Bangla or the medium of instruction Bangla or at least, teachers and students speak Bangla in the informal space. Nearly all religious spaces of each religion in the rural and urban, marshy, water-logged, saline prone, hilly, or sandy areas of the country spread their messages in Bangla. Bangla is enjoying the highest status since its independence. Thus, Bangla reigns higher than English in the graph.

The same conceptual data is used for the evaluation of other language since 950 CE to the present. For explanation, Sanskrit is another example. Sanskrit was the second language during Pala Dynasty. Hindu high officials and Hindu religious scholars of Pala Dynasty revered the language hugely and Pala Kings allocated funds the Sanskrit scholarship. In the Sena Dynasty, Sanskrit enjoyed the highest respect in the ruling court as the official language, the corresponding language, the religious language, the language of educational institutions, the language of privileged groups. My discussion on languages in this chapter will give you the sense how the chart has been made.
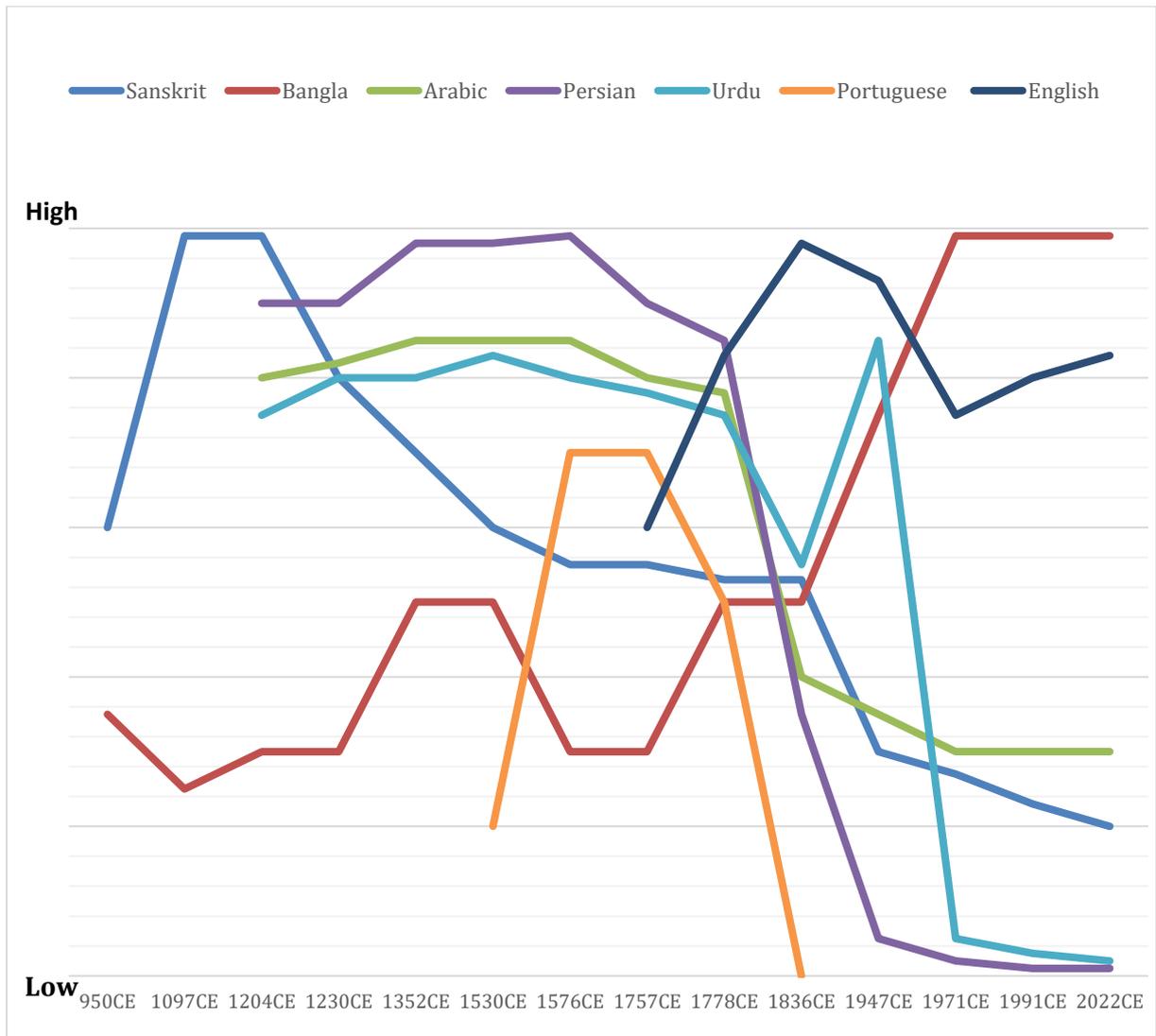
Figure 1: A Conceptual Wave of Prestige Languages in Bangladesh

2.3 Bangla from a Language of Commoners to the National Language (950 -2022)

Previously, Bangla was the language of Bengal commoners. Presently, Bangla is the national language of Bangladesh. I have written a separate chapter for Bangla in the thesis so that you can have a good historical view of the language. I have brought Bangla in this chapter to show you how Bangla had interacted with other prestige languages of Bengal in older time. From the mid-eighth century to the twelfth century, the Pala Dynasty, the Buddhist, ruled Bengal for four centuries. The later kings of Pala Dynasty treated Bangla language well in

Bengal as one of the languages of the royal court (Encyclopedia Britannica 2021a; Encyclopedia Britannica 2021b) and the Buddhists wrote their religious songs in Old Bangla. So, Bangla enjoyed a respect at the royal court. As soon as the dynasty fell, Bangla language fell too. The next Sena Hindu Dynasty from the south part of India, Karnataka, occupied Bengal, and they used Sanskrit as the language of communication and administration. During the Sena Dynasty, Bangla did not have an opportunity to prosper, and it lost its importance and so it carried a low profile as the language of the commoners. Then, the Muslim occupied Bengal partially in 1204 and Bangla was province of the Delhi Sultanate. During the initial period of the Muslim rule, Persian, Arabic and Urdu assumed the role of the prestige languages while Bangla kept its low profile till 1352. In the middle rule of the Muslim, Bengal was an independent state. During the Bengal Sultanate, Bangla was moved again up to an official status from 1352 to 1576. The independent sultans of Bengal encouraged the local Hindu commoners to practice Bangla literature (Bari 2019). Under their rule, Bangla shared its official status in the royal court along with Persian, Arabic and Urdu. Further, in the last period of the Muslim in the Moghul rule, Bangla could not prosper from 1576-1778 in the Bengal region, and Persian, Arabic, Urdu, and Sanskrit occupied the central interest as languages of prestige and as languages of study. In the 1760s, Bangla was in the lowest of social esteem as a language of industry workers and commoners (Clark 1956). In 1778, Halhed focused Bangla as a language of administration for the East India Company (Halhed 1778; Clark 1956) and that was the turning point of growth for Bangla as a prestige language (Barman 2020). Today in 2022, Bangla owns the highest status as the only state language of Bangladesh.

2.4 The Rise of Sanskrit as a Prestige Language (1097-1225)

The Sena Dynasty (1097-1225 CE), as I mentioned already, treated only Sanskrit with reverence. Though Sanskrit held its prestige during the Pala Dynasty, many of the court poets,

the ministers and officials of the Pala kings were Hindus and a large portion of the grants from the Pala kings was meant for Brāhmanism, the Hindu rulers raised its status to an undebatable position. King Hemanta Sena, the founder of the Sena Dynasty, was originally a high official of the Pala Dynasty (Encyclopedia Britannica 2021a; Encyclopedia Britannica 2021b) and he brought more prestige to Sanskrit language. You know that the kings of the Sena Dynasty were from the south part of India, and they practiced the orthodox Hinduism and used only the Sanskrit language which made Buddhist followers insecure in Bangladesh. Sena kings were very much attached to the Brāhmanism. They neglected the Buddhist monasteries and universities built during the Pala Dynasty (Sajalmegh 2015). Further, King Ballala Sena (1160-1179) revived the Hindu caste system e.g., Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, to discriminate people. The Buddhist people were outside the Hindu caste system. During the Sena period, they used Sanskrit as spoken language and as the language of administration. The Sena period is the golden age of Sanskrit. After the fall of the Sena Dynasty, Sanskrit retained its prestige as a language of study, a language of religion. The people of Bengal treated the Sanskrit pundits with high reverence for centuries. In Bangladesh, Sanskrit is a language of study in schools for religion and moral development (NCTB 2021).

2.5 The Rise of Persian during the Muslim Period (1204-1757)

The rise of Persian along with Arabic and Urdu was sudden. Muslims suddenly occupied Bengal in 1204. The three periods of Muslim rule, as I mentioned early in this chapter, lasted for more than five hundred years in Bengal till the British took control in 1757. During the Muslim rule (1204-1757), Muslims spoke Persian, Urdu, and they respected Arabic and considered these languages superior to the languages of Bengal Kingdom. The Muslim invaders destroyed the Buddhist universities (e.g., Nalanda) established by the Pala Dynasty (Maddison 1971).

The Persophilia central Asians brought Persian during the 12th century, and Persian played a role very similar to the one English does in modern India (Papi 2017). The rise of Persian as a prestige language depended on the following factors. Firstly, the Muslim soldiers of the Delhi Sultanate (1204-1352) were from Turkey, Iran, Afghans, Turkmenistan. Many Muslims from the greater Iran, which also included Iraq, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan (Novakov 2017), entered important cities of Bengal and they spoke Persian. Thus, Persian "held sway as a language of administration and high culture across the subcontinent" (Papi 2017). Secondly, Persianate societies were the Delhi Sultanate who ruled Bengal from 1204-1352 and the Mughal Empire ruled Bengal from 1576-1757. In the middle of the two periods, the Bengal Sultanate (1352-1576), which was not Persianate, also had Persian as an official language (Novakov 2017). They took pride in speaking Persian poetry and literature. Thirdly, in the year of 1206, Bengal experienced the migration of Persian and Central Asian poets that resulted in the assimilation of Persian literary trends into the Indian cultural landscape (Bari 2019). Fourthly, Persian was the diplomatic language of Bengal and had the social prestigious glory under the Nawabs (Clark 1956). Even in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Persian retained its prestige. Sir William Jones (1746-1794), the founder of the Asiatic Society and the father of Orientalism was a great scholar of Persian literature. Raja Rammohun Roy was an editor and writer of a Persian (Farsi) newspaper (Papi 2017). In the 1830s, the British banned Persian from the administration, and from the justice court (Clark 1956; Schendel 2009; Kumar 2017) and Persian was no longer the diplomatic language. The President of the Council of India passed the Act no. XXIX of 1837 on 20 November 1837 to discontinue the official language status of Persian in India.

2.6 Arabic, a Prestige language in Bangladesh

Arabic was used as a lingua franca in southern ports of India and the Arabs dominated the maritime trade in the Indian Ocean till the arrival of the Portuguese (Saldanha 2022). The Muslims conquered the western Indian province, Sind in 711CE and this was the substantial contact point of Arabic in India (Rahman 2014). After 1204CE, Arabic grew its influence in Bengal during the Muslim rule. Arabic, the language of the holy book, Quran, was the language of study and they revered Arabic literature. The rulers of Delhi Sultanate as well as the Mughal period patronized the scholars of Arabic and Islamic studies though the court language was Persian or one of the Indian languages. Arabic received a setback during the British period when the secular arts and science became the focus of learning (Rahman 2014). Since then, the best value of Arabic is liturgical in Bangladesh and all Muslim religious schools are teaching Arabic in the present day. "Arabic was not propped up by Muslim political power while Persian was. Hence, Persian disappeared quickly after the fall of the Muslim rule, but Arabic remained and gained more strength over the years" (Khan 2013). Currently, while Arabic is not used for business and communication, it does have a prestige status to the Muslim population in Bangladesh.

2.7 Portuguese: A Lingua Franca in Bangladesh

Portuguese was the lingua franca from the late sixteenth century to the eighteenth century. During the period, the Portuguese established their control over different parts of the Indian shoreline and on different seaports in India. In 1528, they arrived in Bengal, and they started to settle in Chittagong, Bangladesh (Steel 2015). Mahmud Shah, the Sultan of Bengal allowed the Portuguese to rule the vital center of trade and seaports, Chittagong, and Satgaon in Hooghly district. In the 1530s, they were authorized to run their customhouses on those ports, and they controlled Chittagong and Satgaon custom duties for more than a century (Dutta

2019). In the 1580s, the Portuguese expanded their inland business and set up a trading center in Dhaka. From the seventeenth century, other European nations e.g., the Dutch, the French, and the British started business in Dhaka. In 1610, Dhaka became the provincial capital of Bengal of the Mughal empire. In the 1650s, the Dutch founded their business center in Dhaka, the British in the 1660s and French in the 1680s. In 1666, the Mughal empire took control over Chittagong and drove out the Portuguese. Though the Portuguese people were losing control inside Bengal, Portuguese in these centuries was the tool of communication between the other European nations and the businesspeople in Bangladesh. Even the British traders used Portuguese for business purpose in Bengal. Portuguese is said to have been the language in which Robert Clive, the Chief of the British East India Company communicated with the native troops under his command the battle of Plassey in 1757 (Steel 2015).

The Portuguese had planned a dominion on Bangla language. A Portuguese missionary, Manoel da Assumpcam, wrote the first Bangla Grammar book in Portuguese in the 1740s with the Romanian alphabet (Qureshi 2016; Muaaz 2022). They did not use Bangla alphabet in writing the grammar book and they wrote it to promote their own language. This approach was a hegemonic approach towards Bangla language, this is an instance of threat over Bangla. Eventually, the rise of the British power in Bengal started to diminish the hegemony of the Portuguese and their language.

2.7 The Rise of English as a Prestige Language in Bangladesh (1757-2022)

The increase of British power immediately diminishes the status of Portuguese and Persian in Bengal. This thesis has concentrated on the history of English language in the rest of the writing. However, this paragraph will show the historical point of time in which English emerged to make its way up in the Bengal Kingdom. In 1757, the British set forth to forge their

control over Bengal through the local language, Bangla. But, in 1835, English was declared as the official language of Bengal. This year was the most significant time in the history of English language to gain the full status of prestige language in Bengal. In brief, since 1757, English enjoyed and still in 2022, English enjoys, a huge social esteem in Bangladesh. During the whole period, English has gradually received public interest. Even during the Pakistan period, English retained its official status, social dignity and currently it keeps its prestige in the Bangladeshi society.

2.8 Urdu as a Prestige Language in Bengal (1947-1952)

The spoken language of Muslim soldiers was Urdu, a Persianized register of the Hindustani language (Bari 2019). "The word Urdu itself means *Lashkar*, derived from the Turkish language meaning armies." In another explanation, the word "Urdu" is derived from the Turkic "Oordou," meaning "camps" (Abbas 2002). These Urdu-speaking people in Bengal, who were usually influential individuals, occupied the land, the administration, and the authoritative power over the Bengal common population. In the 1930s, the Muslim League named Urdu as their official language though Muslims in Bengal opposed the move and preferred to retain their own language, Bangla. After 1947, Urdu rose as the language of prestige because the Pakistani rulers declared that Urdu should be the official language of Pakistan while the residents of East Pakistan struggled to gain an official status of Bangla language. The ruling privileged groups of East Bengal, who were Urdu-speaking, favored Urdu language because the West Pakistan ruling people was Urdu-speaking. Other local politicians of East Pakistan also felt a pride in speaking Urdu, and they tried to uphold Urdu in public offices. In 1952, Urdu was declared as the state language and Pakistani rulers selected the Urdu language as a symbol of Muslim identity (Bhattacharya 2006). Pakistan declared to make Urdu as the only state language (Rahman 2017; Alam 2021a). There was a movement to make Urdu

as the lingua-franca from Pakistan government to replace English (Islam and Hashim 2019). The tenure of movement did not sustain because the rule of Pakistan ended in 1971. After 1971, Urdu also lost its significance in the independent Bangladesh. However, "the dominance of Urdu-oriented West Pakistan created a new emphasis on Bangla-oriented nationalism" (Pennycook 2021).

2.9 Conclusion

This short historical chapter shows a wave of rise and fall of prestige and popular languages in Bangladesh. Once Sanskrit, Persian, Portuguese, Urdu, and Arabic occupied a favorable position in Bangladesh. In this country, the political power of different nations influenced the growth and the fall of the languages. This chapter also shows that power alone cannot sustain a language. The Sena Dynasty only revered Sanskrit and Muslims made Persian as the language of diplomacy. Thus, Sanskrit, Persian and Portuguese were erected in the high position of Bengal society through political power. Politics changes their pathways, and these languages are no longer in the debates today as they lost their political significance, and their playing ground of competition. The history of the prestige languages is relevant because it shows the point of time when English has been gaining its power to rise as a prestige language in Bengal society. Both English and Bangla are spoken and used widely in this country. If English remains only as a language of prestige or as a language of privileged or as a language of elitist, the historical events, which happened to other languages, do not predict a bright future for English in Bangladesh. Along with that, I have referred to these prestige languages many a times while discussing the history of English in the later chapters.

CHAPTER 3: A BRIEF HISTORY OF BANGLA LANGUAGE

Our pride, our hope. My beloved Bangla language.

-Atul Prasad Sen

3.1 Abstract

This chapter gives a brief history of Bangla, and the reason is that the growth of Bangla as a modern language closely is connected with the history of English in Bangladesh. The British influenced the development of Bangla in the eighteenth century when Bangla was a language of the commoners (Halhed 1778; Clark 1956). Though Bangla has high medieval literary resources, the privileged Urdu-speaking Muslim treated Bangla as a language of the subjects (Ali 1971). Since the 1770s, the British administrators and Christian missionaries were the main driving forces to revive Bangla as a modern administrative language. This chapter writes the history with the facts that worked as the forces behind to grow Bangla as a national language.

3.1 Introduction

Today Bangla is the only national language of Bangladesh, and the nation also takes pride in speaking in Bangla. The nation connects itself with Bangla as the national identity. However, Bangla has travelled a path of thousand years of history. Bangla suffered setbacks in its path before it rose as a national language. I quoted Clark here to show how Bangla was treated in the 1760s: "the status of Bengali in Calcutta in 1760 and for many years afterwards was very low, though it was the mother tongue of the majority of the population. The pandits, engrossed in Sanskrit, still regarded Bengali as a 'barbaric' dialect, as they had done for centuries" (Clark 1956). The recent rise of the Bangla language started to happen during the initial period of the East India Company (EIC) in the 1770s when Halhed advised their officials to learn Bangla because the common people of Bengal and the industry workers of EIC spoke

Bangla (Halhed 1778). In the early 1800s, the Hindu pandits and the few Muslim *munshis* in the Fort William College and especially Christian missionaries and the British civil officers promoted Bangla. However, even in the 1830s, the elite Muslims could not accept Bangla as a language of administration or as a language of the court of law because they were Persian- and Urdu-speaking people (Ali 1971). Thus, this history talks about the political power of the British that worked for Bangla favorably. Currently, the language has more than 265 million speakers in the world (Roy 2022).

3.2 The Growth of Old Bangla during the Pala Dynasty

Bangla was one of the official languages during the Pala Dynasty (750-1162 CE), and it was nurtured and well-treated (Encyclopedia Britannica 2021a; Encyclopedia Britannica 2021b). The Buddhists kings of the Pala Dynasty used Bangla for administration. The vocabulary of Bangla is derived both from Sanskrit and Prakrit (Anderson 1920). Prakrit was spread in Bengal from the fourth century (Schendel 2009). Bangla is an Indic or Indo-Aryan language stemmed from Prakrit during the four hundred years of Pala administration (Encyclopedia Britannica 2022c). According to Taraknath, a Tibetan historian, the founder of Pala Dynasty, Gopala, belonged to a Kshatriya family of Pundra Vardhana (Bengal) in Bogra district (Ranjan 2022, 30). The majority people of Pala Dynasty were Buddhists who molded the Old Bangla.

The important literary documents of the Old Bangla of the dynasty are the *Charyapada* written "by various Siddhācaryas recording the religious and socio-political situations of the Pāla dynasty" (Sajalmegh 2015). In other words, these Buddhist mystic songs, the *Charyapada* from the 10th and 11th centuries, signify that the people of Bengal also treated Bangla language with reverence. In addition to the *Charyapada*, the Pala kings of Bengal used Bangla for the demarcation of landed property (Shahidullah 2014, 41). The Pala Dynasty established several

Maha Vihara (universities) in Bangladesh including Sompura Maha Vihara, Vikram Puri Maha Vihara, Jagaddal University, and other many learning centers in Bangladesh. They taught Buddhist texts and other secular texts e.g., medicine, political science, arts and crafts, fine arts, and architecture (Sajalmegh 2015). The *Charyapada* signifies that Old Bangla was also practiced in those Maha Vihara.

3.3 Bangla during the Sena Dynasty (1097-1225) and the Delhi Sultanate (1204-1352)

Bangla did not prosper during the Sena Dynasty, who were rulers from the south part of India, Karnataka, and the same situation continued under the Delhi Sultanate during 1204-1352. The Muslim rulers of Delhi occupied Bengal partially and the Sena Dynasty had control over some parts of Bengal. Bengal was a province of the Delhi Sultanate, but not an independent state. The Sena, Hindu rulers, used Sanskrit. Both Muslim rulers and Hindu rulers in this period held a hostile view towards Bangla. Further, in 1204, when a Muslim Turkish General, Ikhtiyar Uddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji defeated Bengal King, Lakshmana Sena, and captured Nadia, the then-capital of Bengal, this General destroyed the universities and learning centers based on Bangla and developed during the Pala Dynasty (Sajalmegh 2015). Sajalmegh writes, "The Khilji not only killed the monks, but destroyed the Buddhist arts and architectures and burnt the large number of books in the libraries. It is said that the libraries had been burning for 3 months" (Sajalmegh 2015). In the ravage, this Turkish General burned more than 9 million manuscripts of the library. In the history of Bangla language, this time is called transitional period (Sajalmegh 2015).

3.4 The Flourish in the Middle Age of Bangla Literature (1352 CE- 1576 CE)

The Sultans of the self-reliant Bengal Sultanate had a different approach towards Bangla and towards the Bangla poets and they created an interaction between Bangla and

Arabic-Persian languages. Under the Bengal Sultanate, the Sultans declared Bangla as the official court language and Bangla became the vernacular language of Bengal.

Many literary works are available from the period. I can refer some of the medieval Bangla literary works from the age to show that the independent Muslim Sultans of 15th and 16th centuries were active patrons of Bengali literature (Bari 2019). The Bangla poet, Chandidas (1370-1430), wrote *Sri Krishna Kirtan* (songs in praise of Krishna) (Hussain 2020), which were over 1250 poems related to the romantic affairs of Radha and Krishna. Chandidas used many Arabic and Persian words in composing the *Kirtan* (songs). Along with Chandidas, Lochan Dasa Thakura (1445-1540), Narottam Das (1466 - death unknown) composed *Padavali*, the lyrical story of Radha and Krishna (Huq and Rahman 2014). Ramai Pandit wrote *Shunya Purana* (Void Story), and *Dharma Puja Bidhan* (Laws for worshiping God). Krittibaj Ojha (1381-1461) translated *Ramayana* in Bangla known as *Krittivasi Ramayana*. Shah Muhammad Sagir composed *Yusuf-Julekha* in Bangla and introduced Arabic-Persian words in the poem (Huq and Rahman 2014). *Sri Krishna Vijaya* (Triumph of Lord Krishna), the earliest Bangla narrative poem, a translation of the 10th and 11th cantos of the Sanskrit *Srimad Bhagavad*. Jashoraj Khan composed *Sree Krishna Vijay* (the Victory of Krishna). Kavindra Parameswar, a court poet of Bengal Sultanate translated *Mahabharata* in Bangla, and wrote *Pandab Bijay* (the Victory of Pandab), a Bangla version of the *Mahabharata*, Bijay Gupta's *Manasa Mangal Kavya*. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1533 CE), a 15th-16th century Indian saint, had an enormous influence on the literature of the period. Vaishnava poetry and the biography of Sri Chaitanya flourished. In this period, the translation of Mahabharata into Bangla continues. Important development in *Mangal Kavya* (welfare poems) tradition is also seen in this period. Govinda Das (1535–1613), a *Vaishnava* poet wrote devotional songs to Sree Krishna. The Sultanate encouraged the local Hindu commoners to practice Bangla

literature. Bangla flourished while the practices of their royal court forced the "Bengali chiefs in mastering Persian" to sustain themselves in the job (Bari 2019). Both the Muslim poets and the Hindu poets contributed to the medieval Bangla literature (Muaaz 2022).

In 1576, Bengal lost its independence to the Mughal Empire. Bangla did not hold any official status till the British showed an interest in Bangla for accessing local Bengal people and governing the native with their local language, Bangla. In other words, the British used Bangla to understand their colonized Bangladeshi subjects and to rule them directly.

3.5 The Rise of Bangla as a Modern Administrative Language (1757-1800)

Bangla was shaped as a modern administrative language during this brief period. Initially, the ruling East India Company did not have a concern over the languages of Bangladesh. The English officers learnt Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit, and they studied the Muslim law in Persian and Arabic, and the Hindu law in Sanskrit to sit in the Judiciary seats. In the 1760s, Bengal people learnt Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Urdu, English, and Portuguese (Clark 1956, 457; Raj 2011, 61). I repeated the status of Bengali in Calcutta in 1760 incredibly low (Clark 1956). However, you may have a question how Bangla became important to the Bengal people by the end of the eighteenth century. This is a mystery. I presented the following quotation to reveal the mystery:

> The case for extending the use of Bengali and applying it to the conduct of government and commerce had therefore to be presented from outside. It was Halhed who first urged upon British civil officers the necessity of acquiring a knowledge of it for the efficient transaction of their duties (Clark 1956).

The reason was that it was imperative for every British civil servant to learn Bangla in late 1770s. In 1778, few important revolutionary things happened in the history of Bangla. Firstly, in 1778, Nathaniel Brassey Halhed published a Bengali Grammar, "A Grammar of The Bengal

Language." This book was the first ever systematic grammar book for any Hindustani language (British Library 2021). The East India Company (EIC) purchased all 500 copies of the book for English officials, and the second printing of the book was done in the same year (Barman 2020). Secondly, Charles Wilkinson and Panchanan Karmakar, who helped Halhed, created a font-face for the Bangla alphabet to publish the grammar book language in the printing press. This Bangla grammar and the printing press with modern Bangla typeface changed the pathway of Bangla greatly and, since 1778, the printing press published many surviving Bangla literary works. Thirdly, as the above quotation signifies that Halhed recommended the EIC to use Bangla in administering the people of the Bengal Kingdom (Halhed 1778). It is Halhed who identified that the British Company officers needed translators to communicate to the local industry workers and common people. Halhed's advice for Bangla took the attention of the EIC and the company civil servants started to learn Bangla and use the Bangla language in administering the Bengal Kingdom. This endeavor was the commencement of Bangla language study in Bengal. Fourthly, the first calendar with Gregorian, Hijri lunar and Bengali year dates was published in 1778. Consequently, the EIC published official documents in Bangla from the 1780s onward.

The official use of Bangla in the company administration, and their intervention in Bangla were very important to motivate the Bengal people to turn their views towards Bangla and the Bengal people took themselves to promote Bangla. The Bangla language and literature took its space in the official existence. In 1795, William Carey commenced teaching Bangla in a missionary school in Malda district, West Bengal, India. Carey is an important personality for Bangla language, and I have mentioned his name many a time in the thesis whenever he is relevant to the discussion. Bangla education was institutionalized in schools through the initiative. Alexander Duff of the Baptist Missionary Society published the first Bengali weekly

newspaper, *Samachar Darpan* on May 23, 1818, and the press name was the Baptist Mission Press, and the place of publication was Serampore, West Bengal (Jain 2005). Carey published the first Bengali-English dictionary in 1812. In one sense, the modernization of Bangla started from 1778 through the publication of Halhed's Bengali Grammar, and the year, 1778 was the most momentous time in the history of Bangla language to flourish it to its modern form. However, the Bangla scholars treated the year 1800 as the starting point of the Modern Age for Bengali (Kopf 1961)

3.6 Bangla Renaissance

The establishment of Fort William College is considered as the landmark of modern Bangla language. Fort William College was established in 1800 by Lord Wellesley to teach Indian Languages, but the College was aimed at educating the British Civil Servants working for the East India Company (ForumIAS 2020). In 1801, Carey established the Department of Bengali at the Fort William College in Kolkata to teach the Civil Servants Bangla. In the meantime, the British conquered the majority of the Indian sub-continent in the 1810s. Local reformers from Bengal society started to collaborate with the British educators and administrators to work on Bangla language. In the meantime, few other English scholars wrote other Bangla grammar books after Halhed. The English missionaries established more than 100 elementary missionary schools throughout the province of Bengal including North Bengal, Dhaka, Chittagong by 1835 (Laird 1968). The medium of instruction was Bangla (Laird 1968, 104). Bangla got official approval to be a language of study in schools in 1835 (Clark 1956).

Bangla was instituted in all schools from the 1840s. Together the British scholars and the Bengal reformers made voluntary efforts to motivate the local schools to accept Bangla as a language of study. In 1854, Sir Charles Wood's Dispatch prescribed Bangla and other vernacular languages at school level. Again, since 1854, Bangla was treated as a vernacular

language to be a regular subject of teaching in schools of Bengal, and the development of Bangla was prompted in educational institutions.

Roughly, Bengali Renaissance started from the 1800s to raise Bangla Studies to the central attention of the people. The renaissance was based on the British-India capital city, Kolkata. Bangla literature was enriched with an in-flow of dramas, novels, short stories, epic poems, short poems, and songs which impacted on the Bengali culture and nationalism. There was a rush for establishing theaters and cultural venues in which Bangla language was practiced. By the end of the nineteenth century, every school of Bangladesh started to treat it as a language of study and society treated the language with respect. Ironically, during the movement against the British in Bengal, many Bangla poems, songs, dramas, novels were written to instigate the activists against British rule. Bangla became a way of motivating the revolt against the British. Ultimately, the British gave in and agreed to leave the Indian subcontinent. They created geographical division in Indian subcontinent on the basis of Hindu and Muslim majority. The Muslim minority people in the Indian sub-continent feared subjugation and subordination under the Hindu majority and demanded a separate state for them as Pakistan (Ali and Rehman 2001). The British split Bengal into West Bengal and East Bengal. They attached East Bengal (Bangladesh) to Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

3.7 Bangla During Pakistan Period

Bangla continued as a language of study during the Pakistan period. Bangla suffered a blow in this period because Pakistani rulers treated Bangla as a regional language, and they did not endorse Bangla with national reverence. They imposed Urdu on East Bengal people who did not find value in Urdu. The people of East Bengal were disheartened because they thought that they were self-dependent, and they were a part of the ruling Pakistan. They could use their

own language, Bangla but they experienced a new imposition on them. They did not comply with the ruling people, and they claimed a status of Bangla in the office of Pakistan.

Bangla did not get the recognition in Pakistan immediately and the language was a cause of debate and contention and of a movement against the ruling people. The East Bengal people in general became aware of the discrimination towards Bangla. They initiated a movement in the newly liberated state, Pakistan in the same year of liberation, 1947 from the British. The movement was for earning the official status of the language. Principal Abul Kashem, a leader of the Language Movement said in an interview: "there were various discriminatory practices against Bangla, such as using only Urdu and English in postcards, money order forms, rail tickets and currency and omission of Bangla from the syllabus of Pakistan Central Public Service Commission" (Kamal 2022). The movement was for the right of language, Bangla. "Pakistan's attack was not confined to language alone. It attempted to undermine the literary heritage of the Bengali people" (Chakravarty and Narain 1985, xiv). Initially, at the demand for the province in 1948, the Assembly of East Bengal provided recognition for Bangla as the official language and as the medium of instruction in the educational institutions but not for the central government (Kamal 2022). In 1952, Urdu was declared again as the state language, and this sparked the Language Movement once more. The movement created Bangla nationalism in East Bengal, that simultaneously depreciated the religion-based Pakistani nationalism (Sofa 1997). The demand for Bangla as an official language of Pakistan caused the bloodshed on 21 February 1952. Ultimately, in 1956, the parliament recognized Bangla as one of the official languages of Pakistan. Bangla created a nationalism during the period and led the nation towards the liberation movement. The following quotation might help you to understand more:

Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation through the process of a national liberation movement, which had begun in 1952 to protest against the imposition of Urdu as the official language of undivided Pakistan. Gradually this movement had taken the shape of a nation-wide struggle against the economic exploitation of the people of East Bengal by the West Pakistani based rulers (Chakravarty and Narain 1985, xi).

3.8 Bangla as the National Language in Bangladesh

Bangla was selected as official languages in different periods of history, and it had passed through tribulation too. In the independent Bangladesh, the nation treats Bangla as their national identity, made it the only state language and Bangla has finally roused as a language of national importance and Bangla had never earned such a prestige as it enjoys now. The powerful people of Bangladesh believe that Bengali nationalism eventually played a key role in influencing the independence of Bangladesh (Shamsuddoha and Akhtar 2017). The first government with its educationists has initiated the steps to bring Bangla Studies to the forefront of the people's lives. Currently, the nation's identity is connected with Bangla culture, tradition, and etiquette, which are necessary for the development of a nation. The government has institutionalized and internationalized the Bangla language movement as International Mother Language Day on 21 (*Ekushey*) February which makes people promise to use the mother language, Bangla more. The month of February has become a point of celebration for Bangla through *Ekushey* Book fair and other many cultural programs e.g., song, drama, poetry festivals in Bangladesh. All educational institutions participate in these programs to revive the spirit of Bengali culture. Now, 98% of people in Bangladesh speak Bangla.

CHAPTER 4: HISTORY OF ENGLISH IN BANGLADESH

> The English language is nobody's special property. It is the property of the imagination: it is the property of the language itself.
>
> Derek Walcott

4.1 Abstract

This chapter talks about the history of English in Bangladesh. English is a colonial tool. The British introduced English in 1835 side-by-side with the indigenous languages. English did not replace the Indigenous languages. Over centuries, English has penetrated the society in a way that English seems to have a sure footing in the education system of Bangladesh. However, English suffered setbacks in different historical periods. On those perspectives, I have divided Bangladeshi English history into five ages which are i. the Initial Period of English (1757 to 1834) ii. English during the British Period (1835 to 1947) iii. English under Pakistan Rule (1947 to 1971) iv. English under decolonizing effort (1972 to 1991) v. Global Englishes from the 1990s.

4.2 Introduction

In the introduction, I write few historical facts towards the establishment of the British power before I present the history of English language and English Studies in Bangladesh. In 1608, the English ambassador and the British East India Company (EIC) representative, Sir William Hawkins, anchored in India. He arrived at Agra in 1609 to have formal approval for the establishment of an EIC factory and had the honor of an interview with Emperor Jahangir. The emperor bestowed favors to Hawkins, and he had a two-years-prolonged stay as an emissary, till November 1611 (Amruta 2022). From 1614-18, Sir Thomas Roe was an ambassador to India, and he was also received in a good manner by the emperor. Sir Roe "furthered the fortune of the East India Company" (Encyclopedia Britannica 2021d). "The embassy of Sir Thomas Roe (1615–18) to the Mughal court secured an accord by which the

English secured the right to trade and to establish factories in return for becoming the virtual naval auxiliaries of the empire" (Encyclopedia Britannica 2022d). Then, the EIC Company had been trading in Bengal since the early 1650s and found that Bengal muslin and raw silk sold well in Europe. The EIC established their business center in Dhaka in the 1660. The next history till 1757, the British had a continuous struggle for occupying land in Bengal. They were ousted from Bengal, and they repeatedly regained the trading permissions.

Thus, the English language did not gain its attention in Bengal from 1609 to 1757. The British people also used Portuguese during the period to correspondence with the Bengal native people. As I mentioned earlier during the battle of Plassey, Robert Clive used Portuguese to communicate with the native soldiers. Since 1757, the British were in state power and the English language had a favorable climate to grow in, even though from the 1770s, the language of the rulers started to get more attention of the people in general.

4.3 The Initial Period (1757-1835)

The chief feature of this initial period (1757-1835) is the struggle between the Christian missionaries who promoted the spread of English education with a civilizing mission and the East India Company (EIC), which did not allow the spread of Christianity and English from 1757 to 1813. The EIC emphasized the monetary profit from occupying Bengal, and it was not in favor of the Christian missionaries to work for Christianity or for the English language. The Company did not even influence the establishment of English and English Studies because it believed that the missionaries would hamper their commercial interests and would create a conflict in society. Frykenberg mentions, "Company authorities stood ready to summarily expel any missionary, and to punish any overly zealous officer whose tactless actions provoked social unrest. Christians had little place in this growing Empire run by a Company whose motive was profit" (Frykenberg 2005, 109). Macaulay also writes about the Englishmen in the

initial stage and the picture of EIC administration was severe, immoral, and indifferent extortion to the helpless native Bengal people,

> The superior intelligence and energy of the dominant class made their power irresistible. A war of Bengalees against Englishmen was like a war of sheep against wolves, of men against daemons. The only protection which the conquered could find was in the moderation, the clemency, the enlarged policy of the conquerors. That protection, at a later period, they found. But at first English power came among them unaccompanied by English morality… a servant of the Company was simply to wring out of the natives a hundred or two hundred thousand pounds as speedily as possible (Macaulay 1841).

The EIC gained a share of Bengal political power in 1757 and became the *de-facto* ruler of Bengal after the Battle of Buxar in 1764. The EIC was permitted the right to collect taxes in Bengal on behalf of the Mughal Emperor in 1765. In more explanation, these two factors, the victory in the Battle of Buxar in 1764 and the right of collecting taxes in 1965, assisted the EIC to establish their single administrative control over the Bengal Kingdom. It was the point when the English language got its escalation while the local privileged individuals and the businesspeople communicated for administration, taxes, exporting goods and the language was a way to develop a relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. They understood more in the 1770s that the English language was valuable as money (Clark 1956). The English language had several other paths e.g., newspapers, schools to infiltrate into public life from 1778. The English printing press was brought into Hooghly, West Bengal, India. An Irishman, James Augustus Hicky, founded the first newspaper, the *Bengal Gazette* in 1779 in Calcutta and the first issue of the newspaper appeared from March 11, 1780 (British Library 2022). In

1789, the Christian missionary established the first English school, St. Thomas' School in Kidderpore, Kolkata (Puronokolkata 2014).

After 1813, the missionary people and the native colonized privileged people both worked together to initiate English education in Bengal. The year 1813 is important for the history of English because the British parliament passed the Charter Act in 1813. But the missionaries moved their initiatives for English few decades early. In the 1790s, Charles Grant, a British Anglicanist social reformer, a politician, and a missionary, became the chairman of the EIC and initiated a move on the Company to permit the Christian missionaries in India. "Grant argued that the method for civilizing India in regard to society, morality, and religion would be for the Company to allow Christian missionaries into India along with Christianity's legal establishment" (Wmcarey 2005) though "not until 1813 was the Company's ban broken" (Frykenberg 2005, 109). Because of Charles Grant's initiative, the British parliament passed the Act in 1813, and allocated 100,000 rupees for the education of the Indian people from the EIC fund. Till 1813, the British politicians, the Christian missionaries and the local reformers had worked on the individual efforts and to expand English Studies in Bengal, though the Company at this stage still did not publish any definite educational policy (Mondal 2021; Ramana 2012, 81). However, by the Charter Act of 1813, the British missionaries were granted permission to promote literature, morality, and science in British India. Citing 1813 Act, the website Jagranjosh.com publishes, "Charles Grant and William Wilberforce, who were missionary activists, compelled the East India Company to give up its non-intervention policy and make way for spreading education through English in order to teach western literature and preach Christianity" (Jagran Josh 2020). The renowned British reformers supported the English education, "The utilitarian, James Mill, for instance, when voicing his opinion in the matter of instructing Indian students attending government-supported colleges in India, maintained that

the primary objective in such instruction should always be 'useful knowledge' as opposed to 'Hindu knowledge'" (Cutts 1953). The main aim of this period for English Studies was to educate Bengal people in western education and to civilize them.

However, the allotted money in 1813 remained unspent till 1823 when the General Committee of Public Instruction was formed over a debate whether Indian prestige languages e.g., Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic or English would be the language of instruction. While the debates continued in the 1820s, the Hindu upper-class people already established English schools in Kolkata, the capital of British India in the 1820s (Walsh 2011). In the East Bengal territory, Rajshahi Collegiate school was established in 1828 in Rajshahi, and Dhaka collegiate school established in 1835 in Dhaka. These schools were pioneer English seminary schools in Bangladesh.

4.4 English, the Official Language (1835-1947)

The main feature of this period is that English was made the official language in India. In 1835, English was officially instituted through the parliamentary recognition by the Minute on Indian Education of Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay, a member (1834 to 1838) of the Supreme Council of India and through the approval of this Minute by Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General (1828 to 1835) of India (Azam and Kusakabe 2018). Macaulay had to win over other British Orientalist politicians and educationists e.g., Horace Hayman Wilson, James Prinsep, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, who preferred Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic as the language of education for India (Kumar 2017). By this 1835 Act, English gained the right on administration, academy, and on the court of justice. "Use of English as medium of instruction in public education was announced as a formal policy. As a result, a good network of English high schools and colleges were established in Bengal, mostly due to government initiative and

support. The new high schools demonstrated a fairly high standard of instruction in language and literature" (Ramana 2012, 82).

From the year 1835 onward, the British renovated English Studies policies in Bengal at various times. The next important year is 1854. In that year, Sir Charles Wood prescribed an educational policy popularly known as *Wood's Dispatc*h which was considered as the Magna Carta of English Education in India (Jagran Josh 2020). *Wood's Dispatch* is also called the foundation of a modern educational system in India (Ghosh 1975). The education policy, *Wood's Dispatch*, accommodated a comprehensive plan for the spread and the development of education in Bengal because Charles Wood planned to start a secular grant-in-aid education system at high schools. Grant-in-aid system scholarship scheme for students of all levels and the creation of Department of Public Instruction resulted in appreciable expansion of secondary education in Bengal (Ramana 2012, 82-83) and English came to the forefront to be in the mainstream of language studies (Walsh 2011, 137, 143). As per *Wood's Dispatch*, the vernacular language, Bangla and the British language, English, were the languages of primary education in Bengal. English was the medium of higher studies. The clause 13 and 14 of *Wood's Dispatch* mentions,

> "It is neither our aim nor desire to substitute the English language for the vernacular dialects of the country...The English language should be taught where there is a demand for it; but such instruction should always be combined with a careful attention to the study of the vernacular language of the district...We look, therefore, to the English language and to the vernacular languages of India together, as the media for the diffusion of European knowledge" (The General Council on Education in India 1854).

Both the British and the local reformers were encouraged through the policy to create more social movement towards English in Bengal. Charles Wood's "policy ultimately enabled the

government to withdraw from the field of educational activities and shoulder the responsibility upon the Indians" (Ramana 2012, 82-83). This education policy was a democratic effort that every district in Bengal should have at least one government English seminary school. By the 1860s, English schools were established in all (Jessore, Khulna, Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla, Bogra, Rangpur, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Barisal, Mymensingh, Pabna, Faridpur) districts of Bangladesh.

In the 1870s, George Campbell's Reform in education policy and in 1882, William Hunter's Commission (1882-1883) intended towards developing education in India. The Hunter Commission "addressed the issue of secondary education at a great length. The government accepted its recommendations to transfer all government secondary schools to private bodies and to establish a model government high school in each district headquarters" (Ramana 2012, 83). In 1901-1902, there were 3,097 English schools in India and nearly half of them were in Bengal. Since Kolkata was the capital of British India, English Studies movement and development was centered on the capital city.

There were literary movements towards English in the late nineteenth century as Bangladeshi writers started to write literary works e.g., stories, poems, novels in English. Kashiprashad Ghose published a poetry book, *The Shair and Other Poems* in 1830. Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) wrote two poetry books, *The Captive Lady,* and *Visions of the Past*. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838—1894) authored a novel *Rajmohan's Wife*. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was a poet, dramatist, novelist, short story writer, and writer of nonfictional prose, especially essays, criticism, philosophical treatises, journals, memoirs, and letters. Tagore composed *Gitanjali*, a translated English book of Bangla lyrical poems, and he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 (Poetry Foundation 2022) for *Gitanjali*. Rokeya

Sakhawat Hossain (1880-1932) wrote Sultana's *Dream*, a novel. Thus, there were some instances of movements towards writing literary works in English.

In 1905, Dhaka was made the provincial capital of Eastern Bengal and Assam and the status of Dhaka was revoked in 1911 and it again became a district. In 1912, the capital of British India transferred from Kolkata to Delhi. The administrative importance on Dhaka though for a shorter period (1905-1911) influenced the Muslim people of East Bengal (Bangladesh), who previously did not participate in English Studies, started to engage in English Studies. Lord George Curzon (1899-1905) "arranged a special aid program for Muslim students such as scholarships at every level of education and provision of free places in government aided schools for eight percent of Muslim students" (Ramana 2012, 84). Lord Curzon's initiative was hugely responsible for creating scope or opportunities for these people and democratizing English Studies at higher education in East Bengal. English Studies continued in the mainstream education till the end of the British Rule in 1947.

4.5 English as Functional Language during Pakistan Period (1947-1971)

English during the Pakistan period played the role of a functional link language between two wings of Pakistan (Banu & Sussex 2001; Alam 2021a) because two parts of Pakistan had two different popular languages: Urdu was the language of West Pakistan and Bangla was the language of East Pakistan. English was functioning as a communication tool for the people, and it remained as the official language of Pakistan. English was important for any official job in Pakistan. English was taught as a compulsory subject at all levels of education. "When we, in East Bengal, became part of Pakistan, English continued to have its distinctive place, for there was no question in anyone's mind that it was the language of administration, and that teachers at all levels needed to learn the language for access to further learning as well as advancement in offices and business" (Alam 2021a). English remained the medium of English

at the tertiary level in Pakistan (Islam and Hashim 2019). Thus, English Studies remained in the priority and prominence in the universities during the Pakistan period. The textbooks in schools were in English. Pakistan decided to keep English, the symbol of British imperialism, as an official language for 20 years through Article 214 of the constitution of Pakistan (Khatun 1992, 85; Islam and Hashim 2019).

During the Pakistan period, English had already achieved international status and was an invaluable medium of communication all over the world (Islam and Hashim 2019, 249). In the 1960s, the government decided to teach functional English rather than English literature at the secondary level of education in Pakistan. During the Pakistan period, more than ten daily newspapers and a few periodic English magazines were published in English (Islam and Hashim 2019, 249). Radio and television had broadcasted English news and other English dramas or movies. However, in the 1950s and the 1960s, there was still an anxiety because they believed that there was a considerable decline on the quality of English Studies during the Pakistan period (Islam and Hashim 2019, 250).

4.6 English without an Official Portfolio in Independent Bangladesh

In the independent Bangladesh, the main features are that English lost its official status, it got a status of foreign language as well as it faced the marginalized efforts (Nur 2018). There was an effort right after the liberation in 1971 to defocus English Studies from the education system of Bangladesh. The policymakers attempted to eradicate the memory of the British master. The first education policy in 1974 disowned the language to free the country because English is a colonial language (Ministry of Education 1974). The first decisive step, which embodied a government linguistic policy, would marginalize English in independent Bangladesh in the 1974 Qudrat-i-Khuda Education Commission (Alam 2021a). Textbooks of

college and secondary levels were translated and revised to Bangla in the 1980s (Kabir 2017). English was taught only from class vi to class xii. Ali writes in his thesis,

> The withdrawal of the compulsory study of English for tertiary level students in 1980 and the 'Bengali introduction Law' of 1983 made it clear that Bengali was to be used in all spheres and at all levels of government purposes except in case of communication with foreign governments, countries, and organizations' (Ali 2011).

Though English Studies remained as a compulsory course from class vi to xii, English was deemed as a barrier towards the quality education delivery at primary and tertiary levels and Bangladesh had followed the intellectual development through the native tongue. English Studies was set drastically aside from primary education. "Educational policies and their implementation closely follow the political ideas of the nation" (Khatun 1992, 9). Later in 1988, the Ministry of Education re-introduced English from class iii in primary education (Ministry of Education 1988). Thus, there was an indecision over English, and it impacted on the whole education system. "The net result is that English is, on the whole, taught poorly in our schools and colleges at this time and hardly prepares students for the kind of skills undergraduates require for advancing in English languages and literature courses at the university level" (Alam 2021a).

In the tertiary level, English was made absent as much as possible. Students of commerce, social sciences, humanities of the universities were primarily dependent on translated Bangla texts. For sciences, the texts were in English, but the teaching method was Bangla. "Except in English departments and a handful of the really good Bengali ones, and a few specialized centers of learning, the medium of instruction in universities soon became Bengali" (Alam 2021a). English studies remained cornered in academia in the 1970s and the 1980s. Politically during this period, Bangladesh went under the autocratic, military

dictatorships with sporadic periods of democratic governance. Many of their decisions were sudden and they did not understand the people and involve the demands of the people in decision making process. In 1991, people restored democracy in the country.

4.7 English as Global Englishes in Bangladesh from the 1990s

The main impacting feature of the Global Englishes age is that English is no longer treated as a language of one native nation (Pennycook 2022, 8). In this age, English Studies has been reviving and expanding after twenty years of independence. In the 1990s, the Bangladesh government reconsidered the importance of English for its people, and they have decided to teach English at all levels of education, and they have reintroduced English from class one of primary school to the undergraduate level. English Studies has been compulsory in the academia since 1992 and now in 2022, each child studies English from the nursery school as a compulsory subject (Ara 2020; The University of Winnipeg 2021). In the 1990s, the Government took another strategic step; they have founded English version schools, which deliver text-materials in English and teach all subjects in English. Other development initiatives of the Government are to encourage English Studies e.g., national-wide projects (EIA, TQI-SEP) for teacher development, curriculum changes, creative writing-based syllabus and so forth (ADB 2002; English in Action 2018). These initiatives, as it seems, have been making changes in the scenario of English Studies. Further, from the 1990s, the Government has been permitting the privatization of higher studies and the private English schools in Bangladesh. "It was expected though in undocumented way at the time of enacting the Private Universities Act, 1992, that the medium of instruction of these private universities would be English to make the graduates competent for the global market" (Chowdhury 2018).

Thus, these English Education institutions e.g., private universities, English version school, English Medium school, and English Learning Centers (ELC) have been working in

the urban areas to promote English studies. The democratic government in the 1990s worked towards the restoration of English education in Bangladesh. "After democracy had returned to the country in the 1990s to encourage private universities to flourish; almost overnight (so to speak), Bangladesh witnessed the birth of over a hundred universities" (Alam 2021a).

Further, the private entrepreneurs have established English private schools following the British, Indian, Canadian, American, Australian, Turkish, and Singaporean curriculums, and the children in Bangladesh are studying varied Global Englishes in their own country. The new Global Englishes, which is not centered in any one specific place, continues to be accessible to and administered by a select group of privileged people (Iqbal and Rabbi 2015).

Almost all schools, madrasas and universities in Bangladesh are teaching English. In 2010, BANBEIS (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics) conducted a survey on English-medium schools and revealed that there were 442 English-medium schools (Mousumi and Kusakabe 2017). In 2015, the number of public and private primary schools in Bangladesh (class 1 to class v) was 122,176; the number of public and private schools (class vi - class x) 20,297, colleges (class xi-class xii and undergraduate courses) 4113, Madrasas (religious schools) 9319 (Fashiullah 2015); the number of government universities 51, the number of private universities 109 (UGC 2022). All these institutions offer compulsory English education to the students of Bangladesh. The private and public universities, colleges, schools, Aliya, and Qawmi Madrasas are also accommodating, adopting, revising the texts, curriculum and promoting English Studies and they are currently including a global academic approach. This education system hugely contributes to keeping the English language alive in Bangladesh. The nation has a conviction that they can participate in the global economy through English Studies (Seargeant and Erling 2011). In the 2010 Education Policy, English is referred to as a

possible method of instruction in schools. Currently, more than 19 million (12%) people in Bangladesh speak in English.

In the Global Englishes age, there is also a movement in creative writing in English and a trend towards translation works that have been started in Bangladesh. Writers are translating Bangla novels, stories, and poems into English. Some expatriate Bangladeshi e.g., Adib Khan, Monica Ali, Tahmima Anam, Zia Haider Rahman and Bangladesh residents e.g., Kaiser Haq, Niaz Zaman, are writing in English.

> I can mention a new generation of English language writers coming into prominence such as Kazi Anis Ahmed, who writes noteworthy fiction, Shazia Omar, who has had works published in India, and Saad Z Hossain, who has been picked up by American publishers but is also based in Dhaka (Alam 2021a).

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the major historical features of English and English Studies in Bangladesh. The history of English education in Bangladesh is more than two centuries old. This chapter shows you how English has been evolving from its initial period to the present. The role of governance, the role of power people always importantly works for English in Bangladesh. The British political power once made English the official language and it continued from the British period to the Pakistan period and the same type of political power in a different point of history stripped off its official status in the independent Bangladesh. Still today, English does not have a status in Bangladesh but the government, as I referred to governmental strategic steps towards English Studies since the 1990s, has indirectly or directly been patronizing English and the language retains its position as language of study in the entire education system of Bangladesh.

CHAPTER 5: THE PROBLEM OF LINGUISTIC HEGEMONY

A different language is a different vision of life.

-Federico Fellini

5.1 Abstract

English is a problem in the context of Bangladesh. English in Bangladesh is a colonial language. Social theorists speak about the hegemony of colonial languages on the indigenous languages. They point out that the nation risks the national identity if people favor English. English bears the cultural hegemony, its impact on the indigenous language, its danger for the nation and creates an inequality in Bangladesh society. Simultaneously, the theorists understand that English is important to the nation and English is the measurement scale of the quality of education, personal development and accessibility to job opportunities, and the achievement of skills. English gives a voice to the voiceless, an access to the powerless to the authority, and many scholars take the examples of connecting Bangladesh to other nations around the world. The problem of the language lies in its contradictory positions. Both aspects are strongly reflected in academic writings, discussions, and lectures. This analysis brings the initial context from the early nineteenth century to expose the reality and the discussion includes both the historic and the contemporary aspects of English Studies. Further, the discussion compares the present perspectives of English and English Studies of Bangladesh with some other former British colonies. This discussion does not take a position for solving the problem rather than delineating both sides of the argument.

5.2 Introduction

English carries the danger of dominion on the indigenous languages as other colonial languages such as French, Spanish did in their colonies. Social theorists, e.g., Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Michel Foucault, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Ania Loomba, Homi Bhabha, point out that a colonial language is a real problem, bears the western superiority, and is a conveying agent of cultural hegemony on the local language in the postcolonial country. The British

Empire had established English as a medium of instruction in the educational institutions with an aim to govern the people in Bengal (Arafat and Mehnaaz 2020) and simultaneously, the local reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy from Bengal supported the initiatives of introducing English Studies in Bengal (Loomba 2015).

These theorists have viewed the danger of the English language. The problem lies in English language and literature that transfer the British colonial custom, culture, etiquette, history and tradition over the local people, and English at each level influences individual, social, corporate, and national lives.

But English is also an international language, a lingua franca that creates personal opportunities and brings individual empowerment, facilitates studies in foreign countries while English contributes to the national economy through facilitating export-import business and through skilled workforce export. In addition, the privileged group in Bangladesh is always going to associate themselves with English. The language makes a separable division between the privileged group and the underprivileged group in the society. In other ways, English is good for a person though English does not have a one-to-one relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Both the danger of cultural hegemony and the reality of necessities exist together. A Bangladeshi scholar, Kabir, mentions the conspiracy of psychological innovation by the British over the Bangladeshi nation, whereas he further gives a sense of urgency of studying English and appeals the young people of Bangladesh to gain the skills in English (Kabir 2017).

5.3 The Initial Context of Introducing English

English was compelled over the British Orientalists' objection and Macaulay, the British politician, took the legal means to install English in Bengal administration. The problem of English started. Macaulay showed his conviction in English language and literature held

English as a superior language over Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit and valued European education more than the Indian education system. Macaulay moved enormously by the Education Act 1835 for the Indian Education to impose English on the native of Bengal. He upheld his civilizing motive which the British Anglicanist scholars, missionaries and the Indian reformers initiated the movement towards Western education. Macaulay compared India and Indian languages with the low state of the English language in the fifth through tenth centuries and justified how English as "old dialects of England" took assistance from the superior writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans and the British pushed its position up from the association of Greek and Latin (Macaulay 1835). He proclaimed that the native of India would get benefits from English Studies as his English ancestors had been enriched from the languages of Cicero and Tacitus, Greek and Latin and his ancestors did not confine themselves to the old dialect of England only. Macaulay addressed the Council about the superiority of English education with a desperation, "I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" (Macaulay 1835). Above all, Macaulay targeted the Indian loyalty to British rule and pronounced the remarkable following words:

> I feel with them, that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population (Macaulay 1835).

Macaulay did not force English education for everyone of Bengal and his goal was to establish English education for the privileged people of the society, who in turn would provide English education to "a great native population, helpless, timid, accustomed to crouch under oppression" (Macaulay 1841). English was for their allies and partners, and it created a division and problem when the process of English education was called the "filtration" method of creating a new class of educated people who would act as interpreters between the British and the million natives (Macaulay 1835; Kumar 2017). In Bhabha's words, Macaulay's English education system created a section of people to represent the British and these educated native people would serve only the rulers, and these people from the colonized India would never serve the interests of their own native people (Bhabha 1994). Bhabha criticizes, "the aim of the plan anticipates, almost to the word, Macaulay's infamous 1835 'Minute on Education': 'to form a body of well instructed laborers, competent in their proficiency in English to act as Teachers, Translators, and Compilers of useful works for the masses of the people'" (Bhabha 1994. 105-106).

Further, Macaulay's Minute, which is a written decision after "a long series of propaganda articles written over a period of more than half a century," sustained as the essential education policy for the British Raj and required to deliver all college courses in English as the medium of instruction (Cutts 1953). The erection of barrier, which an Indian aspirant for a college degree needed to achieve by studying a foreign language, was "seemed right and proper, not only to Macaulay and Bentinck but also to the vast majority of Christian missionaries in India and evangelical leaders in England" (Cutts 1953). Cutts' arguments mean that English created a barrier for the local aspirants for higher studies. Through the "series of propaganda articles," over education policy before Macaulay did his systematic advocacy for English in India. Macaulay envisioned the bright future of English as English was spreading

through different continents and he sees the practical implication among the communication of different nations in the future (Macaulay 1835). Though Macaulay had to face criticism while he imposed English in India, the result is that English has created its empire in Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and all other former British colonies. English remains and sustains as a problem in the postcolonial era because the colonized people speak the language of their former master.

English is a problem in the sense that the same sense of imperialism is applicable to the French language. French had their colonies in Africa and the people of former French colonies in Africa e.g., Cameroon, Haiti, Benin, Congo, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and other French colonies speak French.

5.4 English as a Problem from the Social Theorists

Social theorists are criticizing every imperial language. The Kenyan author, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, sees the politics of imperialism in the European language because language is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture and people use the language to explain the world and to explain themselves to the world. English is a "cultural bomb" in Africa (Ngũgĩ 1986). This phrase shows the danger of hegemony over an indigenous language. Fanon sees that language is the vehicle of the colonizers' culture towards the colonized people and imposes their world views on the colonized. Fanon links language with power: "A man who has language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language… Mastery of language affords remarkable power" (Fanon 1967; Buttigieg 1999) and the more the colonized gained the efficiency in the colonial language the more the colonized would lose their own culture and leave their origin. "Fanon describes as 'the death and burial of its local cultural originality'" (Fanon 1967; Buttigieg 1999). Michel Foucault has noted that the civilizing motive of the colonizer in general is integral in the shaping of knowledge, and those,

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who hold power, have the authority to mold perceptions of the world as it suits their interests (Johnson 2009). English is carrying the knowledge of the Occidental to the Oriental as English has been the European education to the people of Bengal. English bears the hegemony of the Occident over the Orient. In "Orientalism," Said quotes Disraeli about the superior culture of the West,

> Oriental lived in their world, 'we' lived in ours. The vision and material reality propped each other up, kept each other going. A certain of intercourse was always the Westerner's privilege; because his was the stronger culture, he could penetrate, he could wrestle with, he could give shape and meaning to the great Asiatic mystery" (Said 1978, 45).

We see that English also bears the role of hegemony in England over other nations of the British. The hegemony of culture through language innovation becomes obvious when Loomba refers to James Kelman to make us understand the imperial mentality of the Great Britain and the same feature of cultural imposition on Bangladesh emerges evidently, "We are speaking about the dominant culture within England; the culture that dominates all other English-language based cultures, the one that obtains within the tiny elite community that has total control of the social, economic and political power-bases of Great Britain" (Loomba 2015).

Fanon experienced the hegemony of the French while he worked in Algeria. Fanon saw a psychological bond of attachment and resistance, a troubled conscience between the colonizer and the colonized people. The colonized people assume the role of the colonizer and leave their own culture; that is what we see happened during the inception of English education. About the psychological bonding, Fanon writes in his book, *Black Skin, White Masks* that the colonized people consider themselves slaves to the colonizers and they dream to wear the colonizers' dress, to speak their language, to grab the cuisine, and to embrace the colonizers'

culture. They aim to merge their own identity with the superior identity of the colonizer (Fanon 1967).

The Bengal reformers believed that the English language carried the superiority over the languages of India and the subjugated Orient is looked on as inherently inferior as Jai Narayana, one of the local reformers in Bengal, in 1818 handed over £1,800 to Daniel Corrie, an evangelical chaplain of the East India Company ``to raise up his fellow countrymen from the deplorable state into which they had fallen'' (Cutts 1953). The then-existing languages of India e.g., Sanskrit, Arabic-Persian education were thought as inferior, and thus the imposition from superior European language through colonialism acts as an enabling influence that is perceived as a kind of civilizing mission in which the British and the local reformers collaborated each other to establish superiority of the English language over the Bengal languages during the colonial rule. The colonized Bengal people sacrificed their own native culture to assume the role of the colonizers. They value the superiority of the British colonizers and assume the colonizers' culture good and consider their own culture menial and filthy and they do not value their own culture and society, whereas they do not belong to the colonizers' society and culture (Fanon 1967). In Foucault's words, the state education system "is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and powers it carries with it" (Foucault 1972). Fanon seems true while he writes that in the process of acquiring the superior goal, the colonized simultaneously lose their own culture and values because they view their own culture and values inferior (Fanon 1967).

5.5 Consolidating Rulers' Supremacy Backed by the Local and the British Reformers

The British established their supremacy over the Bengal people through the English language and the local reformers created the ground for Macaulay to establish the English language as the official language in Bengal during the British rule. The establishment dictated

theoretically a consolidation of the rulers' supremacy over the local Bangladeshi and the local privileged people supported to pass the Act of 1835. The local reformers also funded the British officials, the English missionaries, and English educators to strengthen the position of English so that the European education system could quickly spread in Bengal.

The British and the local reformers of the Bengal Kingdom worked together towards English Studies and the support from the local reformers helped the colonizers consolidate their power over the Bengal people. Firstly, the British perspectives were that the British had the three reasons for connecting India e.g., i. free trade, ii. evangelical social reform and iii. Philosophic radicalism on intellectual basis with sciences, commerce, and governance (Strokes 1959, xiv). "The missionaries of English civilization in India stood openly for a policy of 'assimilation'. Britain was to stamp her image upon India" (Strokes 1959. xiii). Secondly, the popular local reformers had an interest in spreading the "superior" knowledge, and culture of the West (Paranjape 2013) against their own vernacular education system. "The bright morning star of the new India," Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Jai Narayan, Raja Badrinath Rai, and other anonymous Hindu of means, extended support to establish English schools and colleges in Bengal in the 1830s (Cutts 1953; Strokes 1959. 52). Cutts writes,

> Another pressure group whose arguments Bentinck used to defend his adoption of the English-language program also developed from the original evangelical source. This was the Hindu group of advocates of English-language instruction whose most influential spokesman was Ram Mohan Roy. In the second decade of the nineteenth century, wealthy Hindus began to make cash endowments for the foundation of schools and colleges in which the instruction would be in the English language and the courses of study drawn chiefly from the European curriculum (Cutts 1953).

Roy wrote a letter in support of English Studies to the Governor-General Lord Amherst in 1823 that Sanskrit and Arabic-Persian education would serve only to "keep [India] in darkness" (Loomba 2005). This letter from Roy to the chief of the colonial administration had a promoting role while the British chief was indecisive whether they kept Sanskrit and Arabic-Persian education, or they would introduce European system of education in India. Appearing before a parliamentary committee, Roy supported the British settlers in India, "from motives of benevolence, public spirit and fellow feeling towards their native neighbors, would establish schools and other seminaries of education for the cultivation of the English language throughout the country and for the diffusion of a knowledge of European arts and sciences" (Cutts 1953). The Education Act in 1835 in Bengal impacted the immediate result of the establishment of English schools, colleges, and higher education institutions in the Indian subcontinent. British settlers in India engaged in establishing and developing those English institutions. As Paranjape thinks, the result of Roy's Occidentalism is that "both India and the West emerge through a continuous engagement and therefore are contingent and relational" (Paranjape 2013).

Consequently, the British dropped Persian from the official use in India (Schendel 2009, 64). The local reformers and the British at this point of history were obliterating the existing Sanskrit, Arabic-Persian education system of Bengal and establishing their "superior" English education system. In brief, we can summarize the reasons. Firstly, the local reformers often worked against their existing education system. Secondly, the supportive statement of Raja Roy before the British parliament showed the attachment of a colonized man in India. Thirdly, Bhabha's hybridity and mimicry or Fanon's theory of domination appears in people of Bangladesh even when they use English effectively in social and official environments. The theorists have apprehension of losing the local culture and tradition to the English people while

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the colonized behave competently like the colonizer. Fourthly, Loomba views that the end of physical presence of the colonizers does not mean the end of the colonization (Loomba 2015), and she apprehends the presence of culture on the colonized people in the postcolonial period. English is the colonial legacy that continues still in the globalization age. As Ngũgĩ mentions English as a 'cultural bomb,' the fear of erasing indigenous cultures from the mind of Bangladeshi children is also a concern.

5.6 English in Bangladesh as a Legacy of the West, the Occident, on the East, the Orient

English bears the up-hand position from the British colonial legacy as I introduced the legacy aspect through the citation of Edward Said. English is the cultural vehicle of the West that brings support, innovation, interruption, competition, combat, cruelty, and maleness in the East countries like Bangladesh and the superior British had brought suffering on the nation through language change and economic deprivation while they infused the English education and governance. In one sense, Bangladesh is a helpless country, and the British or other developed countries of the West are helping the Bangladeshi nation through English education aid programs. There are NGOs and global aid programs through UNICEF, Department of International Development (DFID) and presently, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom, and the World Bank to improve the condition of English Studies in Bangladesh. There were some big budget projects such as Primary Education Development Project-II (PEDP-II), Teaching Quality Improvement (TQI), English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP), English in Action (EIA) which aided the quality of teaching and learning of English Studies in Bangladesh (Hasan 2012). These are some programs so that English can sustain in Bangladesh.

The European colonialism on the Orient is not mere military subjugation, and the West has created plural proliferation of discourse that legitimizes the colonial subjugation of the

East. The Western journalists, fiction writers, and scholars have helped to build up a prevalent and hostile image of the eastern cultures as inferior, stagnant, and degenerate (Said 1978). In Edward Said's sense, the West, through an encounter between an Occidental male and an Oriental female, assists to give voice to the dumbness, strength to the helplessness, the maleness to the female submissive nature of the east. If the West is treated superior, the East inferior, if the West is considered mature, the East immature, if the West at the pinnacle of civilization, the East at the bottom of barbarism (Said 1978). "Karl Marx identified the notion of an Asiatic economic system in his 1853 analyses of British rule in India and then put beside that immediately the human depredation introduced into this system by English colonial interference, rapacity and outright cruelty" (Said 1978, 153). Orientalism is as a way of thinking of the Occident, the West, about the Orient, the East, and the strange way that the West portrays the East as an entity which is a complete opposite or the other to the Occident. The Occident represents the masculinity and the Orient the femininity.

> Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. He spoke for and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was "typically Oriental" (Said 1978).

Said finds the combative view in the English writers, "Romantic writers like Byron and Scott consequently had a political vision of the Near Orient and a very combative awareness of how relations between the Orient and Europe would have to be conducted" (Said 1978, 194). Bhabha has identified a real anxiety in "a tradition of English 'cultural' authority," "a culturally

and linguistically homogeneous English India," and "a central plan of education for instruction in the English language" (Bhabha 1994).

In Bangladesh, English is considered as a threat to the local culture. People, who use and work for English effectively in social and official perspectives, are usually called as the agents of the British. In other words, when the Bangladeshi people use English language, its pronunciation and intonation properly as English language requires, the Bangladeshi nationalists consider that these people are imitating the British or the North American culture. English has the risk to be viewed as a recolonizing agent on the country from the outer and theoretical perspective. The same notion resonates in the above theories. In brief, English Studies has always been the language of domination and power as Fanon believes. Said protested the attitude of superiority and the European has always tried to establish their superior culture and tradition on the colonial people. Foucault thinks that language has its own materiality, solidity, and its own patterns, which carry through culture, history and civilization and language is not, only a carrier of transparent truth (O'Farrell 2011). Fanon's apprehension was that the colonizer's language caused the death of local culture. Many of the postcolonial discourses were in protest to the past colonial rule. Shashi Tharoor discusses, "I used Oxford's reparations motion to raise the issue of the moral debt, Britain owed her former colonies, not a financial one" (Tharoor 2016). The Britain has been criticized repeatedly for its colonizing role.

5.7 English as a Centre of Distrust in Bangladesh

The early nineteenth century reflects the contortion Muslims were going through as they left English education behind, and they pivoted to the Arabic-Persian education while Hindus were trying to bind themselves to the British administration through English Studies. English created a division between Hindus and Muslims. Muslims blamed a conspiracy that the British introduced English to destroy their Islamic learning and they "declared their

resistance against the enemies of Islam like the Company and missionaries" and Muslims kept themselves aloof from the Western education in fear of Christian missions (Altaf and Rizvi 2018, 47-50). Muslims were suspicious against the motive of English education and scared of losing their faith in Islam. Very few Muslim families allowed their children to be educated in English. Previously, during the Muslim rule from 1206 to 1757, Bengal was a cosmopolitan society and had cultural relationship among Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus and the East India Company destroyed the homogeneity of the society (Altaf and Rizvi 2018, 50). It may be true that the British Raj used English education in the "Divide and Rule" policy to make a separation among the Indians to run India effectively (Ramanathan 2014, 292). The British patronized the passion of Hindus and did not initially encourage the Muslim people to enter English Studies. The key point is that the discontent Muslim deniers were purposely lowering their profiles and were out of the spotlight.

Muslims might have a reason as Bhabha has detected a mystery when he discovers that the English language had a hidden agenda of teaching the Book, the Bible, to the people of the British India. Bhabha writes, "The immediate vision of the book figures those ideological correlatives of the Western sign- empiricism, idealism, mimeticism, monoculturalism- that sustain a tradition of English 'cultural' authority" (Bhabha 1994, 105). Bhabha apprehends English hegemony to spread the Christianity. "The European missionary believed too much in his mission of conquest not to communicate it in the languages most readily available to the people" (Ngũgĩ 1998, 101). However, Muslims were cut off from the mainstream as they were not able to accommodate themselves with new realities.

Muslims in Bengal apprehended that English Studies would have jeopardized their Islamic learning. I mentioned that in Bengal, William Carey, who was a Christian missionary and established the Department of Bengali at the Fort William college in 1801, translated the

Bible in Bangla, Hindi, and other Indian languages by the 1800s for the native people of India (Christianity Today 2022; Hedland 2022). The missionaries directly used the Indian languages and might be different from Ngũgĩ's African context, in which the missionaries used one of the colonial languages. In Bengal, Carey also started a missionary school in Malda, in which he taught Bangla, Hindi and Sanskrit. The Christian missionary used English, Hindi, and Bangla as tools of teaching the natives in Bengal (Laird 1968, 104).

However, the distrust and division prevailed between Hindus and Muslims communities over English Studies. Hindus immediately accepted the rule of the British and their language because the Indian Hindus were deprived from power and authority from the previous Muslim administration. Muslims, who were immediate predecessors of the previous ruling class, rejected English. "The Muslim nobility here was Persian-speaking and decoupled from the Muslim rank and file which spoke Bengali. Since the British were displacing Muslim rule, the Hindu majority was favorably inclined towards them" (Kochhar 2011). The British treated the Hindu as their Aryan brethren, created a new Hindu social class who achieved wealth, social prestige, and leadership in return through its attachment with the Europeans, and the Muslim leaders remained in the past proud ancestry and were unfamiliar with new financial system (Kochhar 2011). The Hindu students accepted English as an opportunity, and they became the pioneers in English Studies and the companions of the British. The British continued the *divide and rule* policy till towards the end of the nineteenth century, they felt Hindus as a threat to the British Raj. Then, the British motivated Muslims to enter English Studies and they established Muslims as a rival to Hindus. Along with that, with the movement of Muslim reformers e.g., Syed Amir Ali, Abdul Latif, Hazi Mohammad Mohsin, the children of the Muslims started to join English schools later in the nineteenth century in 1870s. Lord

Curzon (1898-1911), as I mentioned in the earlier chapter, created funds to make space for the poor Muslim meritorious students.

5.8 English as a Paradox in the Society of Bangladesh

English is still a paradox in Bangladeshi society. In some academic writings, the positive aspect shows English as a prestigious language in the present Bangladeshi society and the society values English highly and considers English Studies important for personal, educational, and professional development. English is good for a person and is "important as a symbol of socio-intellectual elitism and prestige" (Chowdhury and Kabir 2014). Bangladesh is a "third-world" country, has a comparatively weak economy and it has to do global business with other developed countries. In Bangladesh, English is a technical tool, which occupies a primary position towards higher studies, international communication and business, career, and professional development. The economic, industrial, technological, and agricultural progress, workforce export of Bangladesh might expose new realities in the history of English in Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi workers, and officials, who are engaged in export and import, corporate business, banking, and industry sectors, use English as a language of communication. The parents ponder the sustainability of their children with the effective skill in English. The parents accept extending an extra cost for their offspring in case they deem more support necessary for their development in English Studies. The government and the people perceive that any private or public institution, which provides a good standard of educational services in English, is in great demand in this country and this fact is something undeniable. In the 2020s, the common people still experience the inevitable position of English Studies, and the foremost responsibilities of the parents ensure a place of their child in an English school in case the government fails to provide the services.

The dark side of English is revealed while they mention English and its colonial origin. The negative is that English schools are creating a cultural division in the society. English functions as a way of segregating classes, and its institutional commodification (Iqbal and Rabbi 2015). In scholarly debates, English Studies is creating a division in the society and the culture of English schools differs from Bangla schools. The fellows of two different schools e.g., Bangla school and English school cannot mix in a social and educational situation (Sultana 2018). English schools in Bangladesh infuse Western culture in the English medium students as Fanon mentions, "To speak a language is to take on a world, culture." Language is not naked without culture and power (Fanon 1967; Buttigieg 1999).

Some writers spoke on both sides. They are talking highly about English and its prestige, and simultaneously they are remembering English with the British domination who introduced the British education system to prolong their rule in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh society, English at the first sight is well-accepted. However, while there is a deeper discussion on English education, the writers usually find "a conspicuous continuity with the colonial period" (Chowdhury and Kabir 2014). In present days, many writers discuss its "paradoxical position of English" because of its colonial past (Shamsuzzaman 2017). Bangladeshi nationalists have the high perception of imitating British culture, and they use English language, manners, and ideas imitating the British. "The British colonizers have met their ultimate goal of mental subjugation not with weapons but with chalk and blackboard" (Akther and Siddiqua 2016). In the introduction, I have mentioned that Ekram Kabir finds English Studies as a tool of colonizing the psychology of the people, "We have been learning English since the British became successful in colonizing this land and its people. The physical colonization can be more cemented when one can colonize a population psychologically through a cultural transformation...Language was the vehicle to win the colonized lot

psychologically" (Kabir 2017). Then, Kabir mentions, "English enjoys an elite status...No matter what, we need English in almost all spheres of life in this country" (Kabir 2017).

Rabindranath Tagore did not see any conflict between English and Bangla and its culture. Tagore is still today the most celebrated man of Bangladesh, a Bangla Renaissance man – poet, philosopher, social reformer, author, playwright, composer, and painter (Poetry Foundation 2022). Tagore, a Nobel laureate of Bangla literature, speaks, "If the study of Bangla and English language and literature gets united with each other like that of the confluence of Ganges and Yamuna, then for the Bangla students the premise will be like that of pilgrimage…Thus, the achievement of English language and literature can never be denied" (Rahman 2012; Akther and Siddiqua 2016). Tagore saw a bridge between the two languages. "Bengali is our sweet home, and English is our world" (Askari 2015). English swings a paradoxical role between a beneficial position and a dangerous agent for eliminating local culture and language.

5.9 Conclusion

English is a paradox. So are the Bangladeshi writers: they remember the colonial past and they simultaneously urge the learners to study English. English bears the European superiority and the colonial danger in eliminating the Bengal native culture. Fanon, Said, Bhabha, Spivak and other social theorists are studied to understand the Bangladesh situation from their views. Colonial administration has left Bangladesh long ago. The influence of the imperial power arrives in a new appearance as aid and development projects and these aid programs work on English teaching and learning development for years specially in the less developed countries. "Third World countries inherited from colonial times, and considers how well 'aid', in the form of support for educational development and English learning in particular, has served the interests of the receiving countries and the donors, and assesses whether it has

contributed to perpetuating North-South inequalities and exploitation" (Phillipson 1992, 1). The social theorists' views can be taken as caution words though they understand the supremacy of the West imposed on the East, while Bangladesh as a third world continues English Studies in the society through its education system because this discussion sometimes implies that English is a power tool to survive in the global connected world.

Thus, English in Bangladesh has two different contradictory fronts e.g., i. beneficial appearance and ii. eliminating agents. Each side has supporters and critics because English was accepted with mixed reflection in British India. Hindus worked to promote English Studies and Muslims kept themselves far away at first but joined the education system a few decades later. English has become the most popular international language. The contention between the Muslim and the Hindu brought the former people less competent in English. English education is creating an unequal division in the regions. Bangladesh has a dilemma because of English. This country has predominantly Muslim population and they historically grabbed English Studies loosely and English Studies ultimately remains still in the weak category in this region. Because of the contradictory position, Bangladesh becomes the more stressed region.

CHAPTER 6: THE HISTORY OF DEBATES ON ENGLISH STUDIES

You can never understand one language until you understand at least two.
-Geoffrey Willans

6.1 Abstract

This chapter presents the history of debates on English Studies. The period covers from its inception to the present day and narrates that English Studies has been keeping its pathway advancing ahead among the debates. This discussion also refers to few other commonwealth countries in the context of debates. Primarily, I see the intellects' sky-high views on English side, poor opinion on Bangla side or vice versa while they fight for establishing their arguments in favor of their move towards the language they choose for the debates. The problem is that Bangladeshi scholars contradict their own position and their action sounds louder while they in Bangladesh seek permission to speak comfortably in English to deliver an academic lecture on the strategic steps for the better usages and implementation of Bangla at different levels of education. That is fascinating leadership from the scholars. Simultaneously, the speakers show language nationalism for Bangla, but they favor English for their children. Others disown English for its association with the colonial power and blame English that it is marginalizing Bangla. They point out conclusively the necessities of English in Bangladesh, prefer both Bangla and English inclusively and advise to avoid a clash but they do not have a unified idea how to accommodate both languages in the lives of the nation. The scholars play a cat-and-mouse racing game with English and Bangla and the consequence is that they are casting doubts in people's mind. The nation is pushed backward laagering in English Studies. Bangladesh does not have a straight guideline to English Studies while scholars have been debating continually for centuries.

6.2 Introduction

English is a source of debates that were initiated even before the official start of English education in Bengal when the scholars had been debating whether Arabic-Persian, Sanskrit or English education could be suitable. The British policy makers were divided and hesitant over establishing their education system in Bengal. The Anglicanist and the Orientalist British scholars opposed each other. The Orientalist scholars favored Persian-Arabic, Sanskrit education and the Anglicanists advocated towards English education in Bengal. Simultaneously, the native privileged Hindus argued in favored of the colonial education in Bengal and their support provided a morale to the British colonial administrators to initiate top-down approach and to declare English legally as the official language in Bengal. Opposing the movement, Muslims differed to Hindus, they held their religious sentiment against the then new education system and so, they were trying to grasp Arabic-Persian languages through the Madrasa education and Muslims were losing the shield of colonial education and its power.

This chapter goes back and forth in the times to study the historic facts to present how the nation operated English during the colonial project and how they are operating English in the postcolonial period. I have explored the linguistic history of Bangladesh as the history of political power rather than the history of language. Languages here are almost always associated with power and it is not the language that drives the power, but language is a tool of administrative power, and this power is running through the whole history of Bangladesh.

In the discussion of academic text, scholars have a duality in dealing with English that sends a very unclear message to the nation and the result of the debatable roles is that the nation does not have a straight way towards English education. For instance, one group of scholars speak against the hegemonic nature of English impacting on the Bengali culture, and they are mentioning that the empowering English means the obliterating Bangla from the nation. On

contrary, other scholars emphasize that the nation necessitates English Studies more than ever and they associate it with the quality of education. They are valuing its efficiency and they connect English Studies to social upward access and the development of the nation. The debates are vibrant and full of logics and the people listen to them with an intent ear and mind and clap wildly to the great debaters. Their speech gives the audience nationalistic counsels to oversee the two sprawling languages, but the debaters as always ensure the very best English schools for their offspring. This hypocrisy existed early in the nineteenth century and their persistent role still continues in the contemporary Bangladesh. This double position sparks the debates throughout the history.

Strangely, both groups of scholars remember the reality of English hegemony on the Bangla language, but at the same time, they inform the nation that English is lingua franca and mention how the global power or business evaluates it. They agree that people, who have a command over English, can become "a part of the global community," and they have compromised while considering the realities that English plays the roles of empowerment, employability, and communication (Rajwan 2012; Roshid 2018). They do not come to a consensus to create an equal access for every child for both language studies. Thus, English continues as an elitist language.

6.3 A Debate between the British Anglicanists and the British Orientalists (1757-1835)

In 1835, the British Anglicanist scholars won over the British Orientalists through the legal procedure while the debating parties met a draw through the voting system over the installation of English education in Bengal. The Anglicanists preferred higher education in English and the Orientalists recommended that education should be in vernacular language (Baxter 1997).

In 1782, Warren Hastings was the key planner for the Indian education on the British Oriental education program (Cutts 1953). Hastings established Calcutta Madrasa with his own money on the request of the local people and he advised that the graduates of Calcutta Madrasa should be employed as the administrators of the criminal courts and of the police (Ali 1971). "Hastings maintained that the East India Company's government ought to do as much or more than pre-British Muslim governments had done to encourage the learned classes of Hindu and Muslim society along the lines of Eastern scholarship" (Cutts 1953). Hastings encouraged the company officials to promote the British Oriental education. The famous Orientalist, Sir William Jones, a Jurist, the founder of Asiatic Society of Bengal, recognized the common origin of Sanskrit and European languages, pioneered the study of philology and wrote *A Grammar of the Persian Language* in 1771. Halhed wrote *A Grammar of The Bengal Language*. Halhed, Wilkins, Hamilton, and especially Sir William Jones among the early English Sanskritists in the Asiatic Society of Bengal in the 1770s, the 1780s, the 1790s and H. H. Wilson, H. T. Princep, the members of the General Committee of Public Instruction in the 1820s and in the 1830s advocated the Oriental education for Indians (Cutts 1953). The pioneering achievement and official patronage of Jones, Colebrooke, Halhed, Wilkins, and "their exhaustive research had ambitious goals, ranging from the initiation of the West to the vast literary of the East to the reintroduction of the natives to their own cultural heritages" (Viswanathan 1987).

On the British Anglicanist side, Charles Grant was the mainspring drive for English-language education, and he was against Hastings' Oriental education policy. He opposed from the 1780's to his death in 1823 (Cutts 1953). "Grant advanced from the belief that education was necessary to eradicate the "evil" from India to the position that this education must be in the English language" (Cutts 1953). Grant contended for the permission of Christian

missionaries and education system, but he could not bring major changes in the policy of East India Company (EIC) administration till 1813 when the British Parliament passed a Bill for EIC to allocate 100,000 rupees fund for the education of Bengal. This Bill permitted the Christian missionaries officially to work in Bengal, though the money remained unspent till 1823.

In 1823, Lord William Cavendish Bentinck prompted "his campaign to expend company money on English instead of Oriental education" (Cutts 1953) and "made a decision to implement the western educational system in India" (Altaf and Rizvi 2018). James Mill in 1824 suggested European knowledge through European language in India. Macaulay, the President of the General Committee of Public Instruction insisted on the use of the English language though he doubted India could be an English-speaking country, but he attacked the Hastings' education policy (Macaulay 1835; Cutts 1953; Kumar 2017). Macaulay supported the campaign of Lord Bentinck as the President of the Committee. "Bentinck's action in making English the official language of the British government of India had removed, all at once, the positions, which graduates of government-supported Hindu and Muslim institutions might have expected to fill" (Cutts 1953).

Princep, the Orientalist Member of the Committee, encouraged the prospective jobless Arabic-Sanskrit graduates to petition Lord Bentinck a plea that they should be compensated if the British administration established English education. In his speech, Macaulay opposed all the moves of Princep and Wilson and the prayer of the local oriental-language graduates and mentioned, "It would be bad enough to consult their [Indian] intellectual taste at the expense of their intellectual health. But we are consulting neither. We are withholding from them the learning which is palatable to them. We are forcing on them the mock learning which they nauseate" (Macaulay 1835; Cutts 1953). Macaulay also indicated the Orientalists in the Minute,

"The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is, indeed, fully admitted by those members of the Committee who support the Oriental plan of education."

Eventually, Macaulay won in the debate to establish English education. Macaulay legally made English as the official language of Bengal. Apparently, they did not replace the oriental languages with English but included English as a compulsory subject in the existing curriculum (Farooq and Hussain 2017). Arabic-Persian and Sanskrit were devalued for any official job applications. In 1844, the British decided that the knowledge of English was preferred for any position of government appointments (Ali 1971). In actual sense, English was a must requirement for the government job. Thus, there is a trail of debates over Macaulay. "'Macaulayism' is the term given to the deliberate policy of an imperial power to redirect a subject people's education in an attempt to influence their thought and self-understanding" (Rajan 2017).

6.4 Difference between Hindus and Muslims in Approaching English Education

English is a power. Hindus in Bengal viewed English as a pathway of acquiring power over Muslims who were previously in power in Bengal. Hindus understood the power of English. In brief, Hindus were using English as a tool for accessing power. Ali identified their feeling that the distaste with which the Hindus had regarded the Muslim domination made them welcome English rule with a relief, while the Muslims in their anger at having lost position and power held themselves aloof for a long time from the benefits of western education and ideas (Ali 1971).

Hindu privileged people in the early eighteenth century pursued the British colonial government and the Christian missionaries to introduce English education and they donated money to the British scholars and the missionaries so that they could establish new schools in Bengal and their children could get English education from them. The British and privileged

Hindus together established Hindu College in 1817 in Kolkata though this college was restricted only for the elite Hindu children. Hindu College later became Presidency College which did not include Muslims (Paul 2016). The supportive role of the group of local Indians such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Jai Narayan, Raja Badrinath Rai, who supported European education for the pursuit of the scientific and philosophic spirit of the West while they were putting an end to the then-existing education system. Roy wrote against Arabic-Persian, Sanskrit education and he made an in-person attestation in the British Parliament in favor of English education. These strategic steps from the local reformers made it easier for Lord Bentinck to promote English in education and governance (Cutts 1953; Clark 1956; Paranjape 2013; Loomba 2015; Sultana and Roshid 2021). Paranjape appreciated Roy's Occidentalism as "a way of studying, appreciating, and dealing with the West" (Paranjape 2013).

On contrary, most Muslim leaders were insistent on holding the Oriental education system and they reacted against the British education system. Muslim *Ulama* opposed the English education because Muslims were doubtful about losing their religion and Islamic identity by participating in the new education and they were doubtful in their approach to English education. Muslims resisted English Studies in favor of Arabic, Persian, Urdu. They persisted on the demand of separate education system. "The initial failure motivated elite Muslims to collaborate with the British towards the second half of the nineteenth century and in return demand separate educational institutions for Muslims" (Paul 2016). Some *Ulama* such as Shah Wali Ullah created reformist movements against British and declared, "India had become a place of battle" (Altaf and Rizvi 2018, 47) because the British imposed English education on Muslims, and they resented the changes in the education system and Muslims had a hostile attitude towards it. Muslims opposed against almost every move from the British as they demanded a separate education system. As a result, the British tried to revise the

curriculum to fit the taste and ideas of Muslims. Hindus did not like the favors to Muslims. "Hindus opposed the special favors and constitutional safeguards offered by the colonial state to Muslims" (Paul 2016). However, there was no establishment of trust relationship between Muslims and the British. Some Muslim *Ulama* in the postcolonial period are attacking against the British colonial power and their English education as the sense of blame has been portrayed in the academic writing, "The English left nothing unturned in destroying Islamic learning and sciences and that was the major impact of British educational polices over Muslim of India" (Altaf and Rizvi 2018, 47).

The local Hindu reformers of Bengal disregarded the suggestion of the British Oriental scholars while they were suggesting the British Oriental education for Bengal and the use of existing manpower for the education development. The Bengal people were studying a well-established education system in the 1830s (Adam 1868). William Adam, a Scottish missionary, surveyed in Bengal and Bihar, and he wrote on January 02, 1835 to Lord Bentinck about the existing education scenario of India and he found some more 100,000 education institutions that taught Persian, Sanskrit, Arabic, and Arithmetic (Adam 1868) and commented that "they are more, instructed than we suppose, and that they have institutions among them both for the purposes of common education and for the propagation or rather preservation of the learning they possess" (Adam 1868). Adam suggested the existing education system to promote with "the aid of my *Pundit* and *Moulavee* and by friendly communication with the respectable inhabitants and learned men of the place" (Adam 1868).

The approaches of Hindus and Muslims towards English education were different, and the result is that English education created a new class of educated professionals in which Muslim population were hugely missing. However, both Hindus and Muslims in Bengal worked together against the indigenous language, Bangla. The privileged Muslim families in

Bangladesh specially who were Urdu-speaking and were attached to the British colonial power against Bangla. In 1837, the British passed English and Bangla (as an indigenous language) as the official languages of the *Sardar* (main) court of Dhaka. In 1839, 481 leading residents of Dhaka including 179 Hindus filed a petition to Government against Bangla and in favor of continuation of Persian for conducting public business (Ali 1971). After many arguments, the Court decided in 1839 to continue Persian and Urdu as the languages of the Court along with English and Bangla (Clark 1956).

Because of the difference in opinions between Hindus and Muslims, the participation of the Muslim children was fewer in English education. Though the society of Hindus and Muslims in the nineteenth century was largely inclusive, the common Muslim population were in the traps of inconclusive leadership towards English education. In 1954, Charles Wood included Calcutta Madrasa into the Calcutta University system without much reform in Madrasa for English education. "A section of the Muslim community opposed separate educational institutions as it complicated the communal situation of the province" (Paul 2016). Ali showed a comparative table of Hindu-Muslim students from 1841-1856 in government English schools and colleges in Bengal (Ali 1971):

Table 1

Hindu-Muslim Students from 1841-1856 in English Institutions in Bengal

Year	Hindu	Muslim
1841	3188	751
1846	3846	606
1852	3814	796
1856	6448	731

6.5 Dilemma among Muslims

Muslims had a dilemma over English. "To a Muslim, education was always religious" (Paul 2016). The noble and elite class Muslims had a compromising attitude towards English education whereas Muslim *Ulama* opposed the English education. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was hardly any Muslim leaders who were speaking for English education. The Muslims believed in the supremacy of Arabic education and for centuries, they believed there was no difference between the religious and the worldly education (Ali 1971). English education was a worldly education for them. This attitude held them back. "Muslims did not have any commercial motive to study English, whereas Hindus were eager to learn English in order to secure jobs" (Paul 2016).

Muslims reacted against the strategic steps taken by the British administrator and tried to stick to the Oriental education. Governor General Hastings established Calcutta Madrasa for Muslims in 1782 with the British Oriental language education approach but this Madrasa did not have a college status. That was added to their dilemma. The Muslim donors also funded towards the Oriental language education. In 1806, Haji Muhammad Mohsin, a benevolent man of Bengal donated huge money to set up Madrasa in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong for further Muslim education (Baxter 1979). "Muslims were much slower to adapt to the changes brought by the British and would remain well behind the Hindus in education, commerce, and government employment" (Baxter 1997). They did not accept the proposal when Colonel Lumsden, Secretary of Calcutta Madrasa advised the Calcutta Madrasa to introduce teaching English literature and science "as the only effective means of opening the eyes of the Muslims to the defects of their own system" (Ali 1971). Muslims did not allow English inside Madrasa and even when the British proposed a Central English College for Muslims, Hindus, and other communities in 1825, the proposal was not approved (Ali 1971). Ultimately, common Muslims

felt unfortunate because the government did not provide adequate provision for their education in the British system. Further, common Muslims families mostly remained resistant towards the intentions of English education for almost a century from the 1770s to the 1870s. In brief, Muslims took a century to accept the European education.

Special curriculum was needed for the encouragement of Muslim population and the Muslim reformers worked since the 1870s. In this period, the Muslim intelligentsia realized the significance of English education (Paul 2016). It is believed that the British encouraged Muslims in English education in the 1870s while the colonial administration contemplated Hindus as a threat to the British Raj. They projected Muslims as a counter group against educated Hindus. Nawab Abdul Latif, a professor of English, played a crucial role in changing the Muslim approach towards Western education (Paul 2016). The Muslim reformers and the British administrators with financial supports encouraged Muslims to engage their children in the English education. In 1875, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, a minor official in the Mughal and British regimes motivated Muslims to join English education and founded Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (Baxter 1997). In 1875, the British government offered for the first-time a "grant-in-aid" on the concept of public-private partnership in education for a Muslim managed institution to the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh (Ivermee 2015; Paul 2016). In 1920, Islamia College was established for Muslims in which they could pursue both English and Arabic (Paul 2016). These reforms were not sufficient, and they could not include the need of rural Muslim population of Bengal. They demanded more Muslim institutions. The colonial administration accepted their demand to gain the loyalty of Muslims. In 1921, Dhaka University was established in Dhaka and centering the University, English education grew in Bangladesh. Syed Murtaza Ali mentioned the hesitation in the mind of

Muslim population which persisted as a debate and division in the Bengal society and caused a backwardness for Muslims in English Studies:

> Farsighted Rev Adams had recommended in 1835 preparation of special textbooks to suit the Muslim taste. Towards the end of 19th century passages or books objected to by Muslims were replaced and passages from Muslim authors were included. The absence of instruction in tenets of their own faith and the injurious effects of English in creating disbelief in their religion, the economic condition of Muslim peasantry in Bengal were the main reasons for the backwardness of Muslim in English education. (Ali 1971).

6.6 Debates Born from Duality of Leadership

Muslim leaders had dual approach about English education. The leaders worked against the interest of the common Muslims though they knew that English was associated with social prestige, the privileged Muslim leaders in Bengal took pride in speaking English, the language of the British, the language of the ruler. They did not recognize a value in English education for their fellow Muslim population and did not recommend English education to them. In other words, they were not interested in promoting English education for the mass Muslim people of Bengal. "Muslim intellectuals also denied English education to the rural Muslims" (Paul 2016). But they continued their stance in Persian and Urdu, as I mentioned earlier, these elite Bengal Muslims were Urdu-speaking and studied Persian-Arabic education and they learnt English for themselves to keep their path to English-speaking people and they preserved their own prestige with the British but these Muslim leaders could not reconcile with English, the foreign ruler language, or with Bangla, the language of "their subject race" (Ali 1971) although on Halhed's advice, the East India Company administration started to use Bangla in the Bengal administration. In 1775, few Hindus and Muslims for self-interest gained competence in

speaking English to qualify as interpreters in the law courts (Clark 1956). "English, being the language of the ruling race, held that same high prestige which had been enjoyed previously by Persian under Nawabs" (Clark 1956). Here, they were using English for themselves and however, prescribed Arabic and Persian for their fellow common Muslims and they existed in a duality of approaches to English education.

Further, by the early period of nineteenth century, privileged Muslims lost their political power and could not contribute to the education of the common Muslims. "As Muslim elites lost their power and position, they failed to support education for Muslim masses" (Paul 2016). The leaders could not contribute to the private-public initiatives (grants-in-aid) for establishing exclusive English institutions for Muslim children. Only the privileged Muslims sent their children to English schools whereas even Hindus with no influence also had their offspring in the schools. This is a huge blow towards common Muslim population. Kochhar commented that Muslims with privileged backgrounds considered that English education was a feather or an ornament in the cap and Hindus with no background thought that English education itself was the cap of prestige during the British period (Kochhar 2011).

When the British left, the Pakistani leaders, who were conversant in English, did not plan English education for the mass people of Bangladesh which was under Pakistan as a province. There was another language war. This time, the language war of Pakistani leadership was against English and Bangla. The elite Muslim leaders during Pakistan period (1947-1971) debated whether Urdu could take the place of English language and Urdu could take the sole national role of whole Pakistan (Murshid 1985). These ruling people despised both Bangla and English and worked against both languages. The ruling elite supporters of Urdu e.g., Khawaja Nazimuddin, who looked down upon Bangla, invited conferences to launch "their own crusade against the regional languages and English" (Rahman 1997). This movement threw another

blow to the common Muslim people. They tried to identify Urdu as a language of Muslims and tried hard to raise Urdu as an elite status. The common Muslim population experienced a deprivation in both English and Bangla. Their attitude of hate created a national movement for Bangla. Though people in East Pakistan ultimately established Bangla as a state language of Pakistan in 1956, common Muslim people largely remained uneducated in English education. "The failure of Pakistanis to give Bengali a co-equal status with Urdu as the national language of Pakistan was a key grievance leading to the civil war and division of 1971" (Baxter 1997). The independent Bangladesh eliminated Urdu from mainstream education. The net result is that all common Muslim students could not participate in English education during the British period (1757-1947) and during Pakistan period (1947-1971) because the double approach of Muslim leaders.

In the independent Bangladesh since 1971, the leadership showed a duality too towards English. The children of the privileged people were in English institutions, but they striped the official status of English. Thus, English suffered another setback. The privileged children went to few English medium schools based on urban settings continued the British curriculum. Apparently, the leadership strongly favored Bangla. Bangla becomes the only official language of Bangladesh. In the new country, the favoritism for Bangla impacted on English and deemphasized English education. English was eliminated from the primary level of Bangla medium schools. Bangla becomes the de facto functional language for the important domain of life e.g., government, education, law administration, media, entertainment, and everyday communication.

There needed a twenty-year passage from 1972-1991 to make the leadership tempered. "Post-Independence linguistic nationalism ran rampant for a short time during the Mujib period, the recognition that English as an international language, is a key to Bangladeshi

development has greatly tempered this sentiment" (Baxter 1997). Madrasa continued Arabic education till 1984. In 1985, Aliya Madrasa system had included English courses. In the 1990s, the leadership reintroduced English courses at all levels of Bangla (national curriculum) schools. They also started English version schools of national curriculum.

6.7 Debates on the Difference in Choices

English is chosen language in this country. Though in official declaration, Bangla is our state language, but in reality, this is not true, Government and people like English (Bhattacharja 2018). Any wedding invitation, shop name, company name, university name is in English. This difference in choices results in the establishment of variant types of schooling in Bangladesh. English medium schools are everywhere in rural and urban settings. Government has started English version schools (Bhattacharja 2018). This difference costs to the people to an unequal access to English education and all common students are not getting the same levels of facilities. Since the 1990s, ultimately the nation has more than five major streams of education e.g., Bangla medium school, English medium school (international curriculum), English version school, Aliya Madrasa and Quami Madrasa. The leadership could not make a decision of starting one stream of schools. In 2022, all institutions are offering English education and are providing English courses at all levels of education, though many scholars share the views of concern because the facilities for English education are not same. This contributes to an intact division over English education from school level to higher level education and English education in Bangladesh is hugely suffering in quality. The academics view a concern against the quality of English education in Bangladesh. Only 10% of the student population goes to the English medium schools, and 90% of the students are going to Bangla medium schools and colleges (Sultana 2018). The private universities enforce English and prohibit Bangla in the campus. English is the only language used on campus. Speaking English

on campus gives extra value and prestige to a person (Sultana 2018). The students from Bangla medium schools get trouble when they study in an English medium private university.

6.8 Recent Debates over English education in Bangladesh

The debate is whether English can ensure the quality education. The recent debates emerge from the anxiety to give the best educational services to the nation and the scholars are yet to decide whether Bangla or English will be the medium of instruction for the best education. The Bangla medium educated people present the English medium educated people as deficient Bangladeshi and hopeless locals with limited proficiency in Bangla and on contrary, the English educated group presents themselves as dominant English-bilinguals. The educated gentry, who argue for the nation-wide use of Bangla, follow a double standard because they send their children to English medium school and spend huge money to make their offspring competent in English (Hasan 2015). Parents desperately want their children to learn English even when the babies do not know how to speak in English and create a distance from Bangla for gaining a respect and prestige, and in addition, the parents who teach their children with very limited repertoire of vocabulary and inadequate pronunciation capacity in English, guide their children to confusion (Hasan 2015). Teachers are complaining about cultural domination that English schools are impacting badly on the culture in Bangladesh. The students at English schools are living in Bangladesh but they behave as if they are living in the USA. English medium students in Bangladesh put an effort to gain "an imaginary height of excellence" by disowning their Bengali culture and heritage and attach themselves eagerly to explore culture and tradition of English-speaking countries (Rahaman, Quasem and Hasam 2019; Biswas 2019). The main reason why the road to English Studies in Bangladesh has diverged thus is primarily because Bangladesh was originated in linguistic nationalism (Alam 2021a).

Many academic writings, talk shows and lecture sessions are voicing these days loudly both positively for English as well as negatively against English education in Bangladesh. They speak English as a global language, a language of power and as hegemony, an agent of social division, the extension of colonial authority. Here are some pro-arguments for English Studies:

Firstly, English Studies carries a series of values in the postcolonial age. Bangladesh is a part of global village (Iqbal and Rabbi 2015), and the nation directly participates in global education and international business, takes their health services globally, takes part in social media and constantly uses technology and science and their economy is deeply connected with remittance and depends on efficient manpower. English carries a prestigious position around the world in our time (Berns 2009; Seidlhofer 2011; Biswas 2022). The knowledge of English bestows a status and a prestige upon an individual or a group and it carries a symbolic value in personal encounters (Berns 2009). Globalization entangles the world more closely together and English continues to play a critical role in this process (Iqbal and Rabbi 2015). English has a status of a common language for global communication among business personnel, who speak different first languages (Roshid 2018).

Secondly, English as the pathway of communication is inevitable in maintaining the growth of the country and developing globally compatible skilled workforces (Hamid 2011). English provides a path to economic emancipation, a vehicle of bilingual education, a tool of economic advantages (Iqbal and Rabbi 2015; Sultana 2018) and delineates a connectivity with the individual emancipation and the economic progress of the country (Iqbal and Rabbi 2015). English is increasingly essential for women in Bangladesh because of changing social norms and diversity in family income (Tyers 2012).

Thirdly, English education carries an economic value in Bangladesh, and the perceived role of English is the de facto (operating) language for global economic correspondence

(Graddol 2010). The Bangladeshi, who work in the private sector, the most influential sector for economic growth, cannot deny the importance of English (Hasan 2011). The foreign minister of Bangladesh in 2022 underlined the necessity for increasing English communication skills of nurses as there is a huge demand for skilled nursing staffers and caregivers in the developed world (BSS 2022).

Fourthly, English enhances opportunities for individuals and diminishes embedded inequalities (Erling et al 2012). The English language is treated in Bangladesh as a valuable resource for individual and national development (Seargeant and Erling 2011; Hamid and Erling 2016). English holds a mammoth prospect for individuals and societies for its role in human capital development (Islam 2013). The individuals, who are competent in English, become partners of the global community, and they can raise themselves up to the global opportunities. The Financial Express mentions, "It is high time the government paid special attention to develop English language skills for workers and university graduates to reduce the dependence on foreign workers in the country and many private companies employ foreign professionals and technicians for their work draining the country's hard earned foreign currency of US$ four to five billion annually" (Quazi 2017). The business of Bangladesh is dependent on garments exports, industrial products and exporting agricultural goods. English creates life-long opportunities for young people to work for the business of Bangladesh. Employers of any sector like to see competence in English in their employees (Khan and Chaudhury 2012).

However, there are also counter arguments against English education, and I present here in the following points:

Firstly, English is a colonial agent and as a hegemonic influence on Bangla culture and tradition. They fear the influence of English on the national identity of Bangladesh. English as a medium of instruction at an early age in Kindergarten is a problem and even English cannot

be used as a medium of instruction even at the tertiary level and we need to introduce Bangla even at the tertiary level because English marginalized different languages around the world e.g., in the USA, the languages of the Indian, in Hong Kong, the language of Chinese, in Basuland, the Africans (Sultana 2018).

Secondly, English is creating inequality in the society. The people, who cannot purchase English, send their children to Bangla medium schools (Azom 2018). English has been a source of socio-linguistic apartheid. English is not only creating a psychological problem but also compromising the learning opportunities of the students (Sultana 2018).

Thirdly, English makes Bangla invisible in the society. The medium of education should be Bangla, but the reality is English (Azom 2018). Bangla education does not exist in the Bangladesh education system. Bangladesh does not provide English education, but it does give some skills in English to supply skilled laborers in the international market (Azom 2018)

There have been unending debates on the medium of instruction in Bangladesh often enacted in letters to the editor of English newspapers, online Google groups, and social media (Jahan and Hamid 2019; Hamid 2022). English education unquestionably has a great widespread impact on nearly all sectors of life in postcolonial Bangladesh (Hamid 2022).

Both the difference and the unification opinions are in debates which continue. Among the cautious, the pessimistic, and the favorable views, an optimistic message conveys in the following writing of Fakrul Alam,

There were other positive developments as well that I can note in passing. One was the return of democratic governance in Bangladesh in the 1990s that coincided with the advent of globalization that has led to a booming economy and increased remittance. Certainly, our economy began growing as never before. One consequence of this was that English medium schools made a comeback at this time. The upper middle class and

the upper class increasingly began to chaperone their children with an eye to foreign education and the knowledge that English was the essential medium for them and so there was now a demand for English medium schools that was met. The best private universities could draw on these students coming to them; a few of them even ended up in the best public universities (Alam 2021a).

Bangladesh debates over both diminishing the national identity and over merging with the global economy. Bhabha has rung a caution of crossing the boundary of culture while other writers find a value in embracing and accepting new horizon to walk in ahead a new path, "'Beyond' signifies spatial distance, marks progress, promises the future; but our intimations of exceeding the barrier or boundary- the very act of going beyond- are unknowable, unrepresentable, without a return to the 'present' which, in the process of repetition, becomes disjunct and displace" (Bhabha 1994. 4). That is scary. While dealing with English as a western language, the distinction between the two parts of the world comes into existence. Edward Said says the hardened difference between the two, "If the essence of Orientalism is the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority, then we must be prepared to note how in its development and subsequent history, Orientalism deepened and even hardened the distinction" (Said 1978, 43).

6.9 Debate on Indigenized English

Another debate grows in the recent decades as English is indigenized to decolonize English in Bangladesh. The topic sometimes centers on the English medium and Bangla medium schools, sometimes on regional perspectives of Bangladesh, sometimes on the standard of English pronunciation, sometimes Global Englishes to break away from the influence of the global north English. English medium schools follow the curriculum of global north writers, English version schools, Bangla schools and Madrasa schools usually follow the

global south writers especially Bangladesh writers' books in the curriculum. English medium students gain better English accents, closer to the native users. On the contrary, the latter group of learners are using indigenized Bengali English. Hamid recognizes the inevitable position of English for postcolonial societies in an English-dominant world while he emphasizes the necessity of breaking away from its hegemony as represented by so-called native speakers or Standard English norms (Hamid 2022). Hamid argues that The ELT practitioners of Bangladesh can find new solutions to the distinct problems and that is English as a southern language deviant from the native. English grows on the foundation of Global Englishes, accepts even few Bangla words, if necessary, in English communication and the southern English is functional successfully in communicating meaning to the audience and this generosity in the audience may help English survive in linguistic regime and it also gives him a liberty. "We live in a perfect linguistic world free from linguistic idiosyncrasies" (Hamid 2022). In Bangladesh society, ESL and EFL groups distinguished themselves as English-educated elite class and they disown local and vernacular ways of using English (Hamid 2022). Hoque finds it as a deviation from the norm that English in Bangladesh is often spoken with an accent related to speakers' mother tongue, and they pay little attention to proper sound patterns of English (Hoque 2011).

Bangla medium students are having drawbacks in the usage of English when they enter into universities and their regional dialects (RD) influence on their English pronunciation (Rani and Tina 2020). Rani and Tina suggested the indigenized English as a problem, "Regional dialects create problems in the English pronunciation and the ELT practitioners of Bangladesh can find new solutions to the distinct problems identified in this research paper" (Rani and Tina 2020). Shuchi recommended arranging support to correct the pronunciation of Standard English for those students who pronounce Bangla dialectal sound in English language (Shuchi 2013). Christina apprehended the intrusion of dialects in English, "Dialect may interfere with

the child's acquisition of information and skills, and school personnel and other students may make erroneous assumptions about the vernacular-speaker's capabilities, motivation, and even morality" (Christian 1987). The authors except Hamid considered in the line of Christina's thought the dialect as a problem. On the contrary, Hamid saw a surviving space for Southern English through the indigenized formation. The sociolinguistic debate is more favorable for the English Studies as the debate encourages the more use of English in Bangladesh.

6.10 English Studies in other British Colonial Countries

The debate over English education also exists in other former British colonies. The British pulled out all together from the countries other than some Christian missionaries. The circle of Braj B. Kachru helps us to see the spread of English in the world at a glance. English has been indigenized in India as well as other countries including Singapore, Nigeria, which are referred to outer circles (Kachru 1985; Kilickaya 2009). This spread of English is connected with privatization, new regulations, and the demand of the market. Bangladesh has already privatized English education and is scared of inequality in society. "The global spread of English, whether in Bangladesh, Japan, or Colombia, cannot be understood without an understanding of contemporary inequalities fostered by globalization and neoliberal ideologies and the emphasis away from equity, welfare, and government spending towards privatization, deregulation, and the rule of the market" (Pennycook 2021).

India claims to be the second largest English-speaking country (Masani 2012). In India, English Studies are encouraged because English proficiency ensures economic and social upward mobility (Ramanathan 2016) although the use of indigenous languages was encouraged during Indian Independence movement. Many nationalist leaders after Independence stressed to organize the provincial divisions on the basis of indigenous languages. Jawaharlal Nehru, the prime minister from 1947 to 1964 did not like the linguistic divisions. In 1952, a leader

from the Telugu-speaking region of Madras Presidency died during a protest fast (hunger strike); the division of the provinces in India was immediately carried out into 14 language-based states in 1956 (Walsh 2011). In addition, English is treated as a priority in Indian society. Students' desire in India is to learn English as a second or as a first language, and there is the dramatic growth of English medium schools (Ramanathan 2016). In Indian society, proficiency in English keeps a correlation with higher education and social standard, and thus schools should inspire parents to speak English and their native languages right from the birth of the child (Karthik 2018). Though there prevail different idea, the current education system of India promotes the supremacy of English, which hinders the development of child's personality and slows down learning pace (Sharma 2021, 8). English is considered as the key to modern knowledge, and English Studies should be promoted right from the school stage (Sinha 2017). Pennycook writes,

> Ramanathan's (2005) study of English and Vernacular medium education in India shows how English is a deeply divisive language, tied on the one hand to the denigration of vernacular languages, cultures, and ways of learning and teaching, and, on the other, dovetailing with the values and aspirations of middle-class Indians. A very similar case can be made for Bangladesh: While English opens doors to some, it is simultaneously a barrier to learning, development, and employment for others, deepening divides between the urban and rural, the religious and the secular, the wealthy, and the poor (Pennycook 2021).

In Nigeria, the nationalists also feel worried that English threatens their native languages, because people from the middle and the upper classes of Nigeria speak English. Now English is the official language and Nigerian Pidgin English functions as the lingua franca in the multilingual country (Nordquist 2019). The English language is an obstacle to all

indigenous languages and Pidgin English has been the fastest growing language of the country (Gänsler 2019). Like India, English is considered in Nigeria as a language that creates access to the educated elite's world, and fluent English is comparable with wealth – "an asset that was not available for purchase in stores" (Nwaubani 2019). A Nigerian writer, Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani shared a view that Singapore preferred English over Chinese and it was a decision made by the first prime minister of the country, Lee Kuan Yew, who believed that the future depended on the command of their children on English. Lee Kuan Yew wrote that Singapore shifted its position from the third World to the first World because of English. Singapore has turned from poverty to an economic powerhouse (Nwaubani 2019). English has crossed colonial boundaries as Global Englishes and has crowned itself as the most common second language around the world in 55 countries speaking it as a second language (MoveHub 2021), and as an official language in 67 different countries (Lingoda 2022).

6.11 Conclusion

The history of debate over English Studies shows how a nation can suffer if there is no uniform decision on English education. Eventually, the nation suffers badly. English becomes itself a problem for the nation rather than a solution. Both privileged Hindu and Muslim groups in Bengal in the 1770s aligned themselves with English education though the Muslim leaders could not decide the common Muslim population. The situation continued till today in other form of debates. Through the centuries, the Bangladeshi nation remains divided over English education. In present Bangladesh, one group sees the hegemony of English over Bangla and another group sees possibilities. Sometimes, both groups agree that English is an important tool in the globalized economy and this language can give better access to the world (Bhattacharja 2018), though this research does not see that they shout in a unified voice, "Let's do it together." This colonial language is buzzing in the debates because the nation needs it now. Linguistic

history of Bangladesh says that Bangla survives even when it was hugely in a neglected status, but all prestige languages do not endure their existence in the passage of time. English is a prestige, colonial and elitist language, yet a lingua franca. In the twenty-first century, the unfortunate thing is that English sustains as a debatable topic and this lingua franca cannot create a path for the nation to follow ahead and it is only dividing the nation.

CHAPTER 7: THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH INSTITUTIONS

> The English language is so elastic that you can find another word to say the same thing.
>
> -Mahatma Gandhi

7.1 Abstract

English institutions grow in Bangladesh among the debates and now the language is a business commodity. In the recent decades, the Department of English works to decolonize the curriculum. This chapter discusses the history of English Institutions at higher education from its inception to the present in Bangladesh and this history includes relevant historical aspects of English Studies e.g., the curriculum of the English Department, the decolonizing efforts, Global Englishes, privatization. English institutions follow the global north models in establishing a university and determine the vision of the university, the role of the English Department, classroom practices etc. connecting with the global education. These English institutions are responsible for English education and are working to decolonize English. The narration gives historical details of English Studies in Bangladesh to the readers.

7.2 Introduction

This chapter explores the history of English institutions in Bangladesh and these institutions eventually ensure a place for English education in Bangladesh. This history has an inseparable connection with West Bengal, India. This narration thus starts with the history of English Studies in Bengal (East Bengal and West Bengal) and then it focuses only on the Bangladesh portion. The higher education institutions in Bengal were designed after the British colleges and universities. Historically, the number of English institutions is growing though controversies remain alive and harsh towards English education. The historical details of the sections 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 will serve as signposts for the subsequent discussion. This chapter

discusses few thought-provoking perspectives while it is narrating the history of English institutions in Bangladesh.

The British educationists designed the curriculum of English Studies during the British Raj and the curriculum continued till the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. Curriculum changes are continuing in English Studies at the Department of English at the universities in Bangladesh. After the liberation, the faculty members in a university almost secure an autonomy in designing the syllabus. In English education, there is a rise of world literature, Global Englishes, World Englishes. There are many translations works from Bengali literature to English.

Another phenomenon in the global economy in Bangladesh is that English Studies becomes a profitable commodity. English is a business. The privileged children have their destination to English institutions. All public universities in Bangladesh charge little tuition fees compared to private universities. Many English institutions are successfully selling English as products. Solvent people in Bangladesh can purchase English though many millions in Bangladesh cannot bear the cost while English is the measurement scale of quality education.

Public university teachers, who usually enjoy a kind of autonomy and better institutional facilities, are honored more than the private university. Each university in Bangladesh teaches English as a compulsory course and it is a part of degree requirement. The teachers have usually the independence to propose an inclusion and exclusion of a course in a degree program. Science degrees e.g., medical, engineering, chemistry, physics are more in English and there are not much Bangla books at the undergraduate levels. Almost each institution has the freedom to deal the language studies as these institutions are expecting to see their students in future. English is everywhere entangled. "English is expected to carry, as

a language of progress, democratic reform, religious change, economic development, advanced knowledge, popular culture, and much more" (Pennycook 2021).

7.3 Higher Studies Institutions in Bengal (1800-1921)

In Bengal, Fort William College was founded in 1800 only for training the British Civil Servants. Local Bengal students did not have access to the college. This English college had the huge impact on the modern languages of Indian subcontinent. The scholars of the college codified and wrote the rules of grammar for many of the vernacular spoken languages in India. Hindu *pandits* and Muslim *munshis* were working here as teaching assistants and tutors (Banglapedia 2021). This college translated literary works from Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Hindi, Urdu, and Bangla into English.

This college also impacted on the development of Bangla as a modern language and Bengali Renaissance. The college played a vital role in the emergence of Kolkata as an intellectual hub (Jain 2019). This college trained civil servants who were familiar with Indian languages, history, culture, and local laws. They also received training in Western languages and the art of administration (Jain 2019). William Carey, founder of Bengali Department at Fort William College earned the accolade as *the father of Bangla prose* (Baxter 1997; Chakravarty 2022). "No wonder Rabindranath Tagore called Carey 'the father of modern Bengal'" (Chakravarty 2022). "To Carey belongs the credit of having raised the language from its debased condition of an unsettled dialect to the characters of a regular and permanent form of speech, capable as in the past, of becoming the refined and comprehensive vehicle of a great literature in the future" (Chakravarty 2022). The college opened the eyes of munshis and pandits to see the need for reform in Bengal society (Jain 2019).

In 1817, the Hindu College was established in Kolkata to teach 'sons of respectable Hindus, in the English and Indian languages and in the literature and science of Europe and

Asia" (Banglapedia 2021). The college graduates were educated in English and the college was an "open center for modern education including eastern and western philosophy and science" in Bengal (Hindu School 2017). In 1856, the college was renamed as Presidency College.

The next highest English institution is the University of Calcutta. As per the suggestion of Sir Charles Wood's Dispatch of 1854, the University of Calcutta was established in 1857 after the model of University of London. Bengal people aspired to learn the western culture, history, science, medical, and engineering knowledge and motivated themselves to educate in the British system. The reason for establishing the University of Calcutta (UC) is written in the following statement:

> The establishment of the University of Calcutta by the University Act of 1857 was the logical culmination of historical forces created by the emergent aspirations for acquisition of modern education, an offshoot of the process which started with the advent of Western culture in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (UC 2004).

The University of Calcutta provided affiliation to the colleges of Bengal regions including engineering, science, and medical colleges.

Until the establishment of Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in 1875, English education was largely targeted to Hindu population. I mentioned earlier that the curriculum of English education was revised for the college students so that the Muslim students could study English. However, this college was inclusive for Muslim, Hindu, and students. Later, many other colleges for Hindu and Muslim were established. During the nineteenth century and twentieth century, the most English institutions flourished, centering Kolkata, the capital city of the British Raj. However, the initial English institutions had needed much encouragement and supports from the natives as I have presented in the earlier chapters. Eventually, these all-English institutions influenced the initial development of English Studies in Bengal.

7.4 English Studies Institutions in Bangladesh (1921- 2022)

The growth of English education was promoted with the establishment of the University of Dhaka. The University of Dhaka was the huge step towards educating Muslim population in East Bengal during the British period. Dhaka was the main city of East Bengal. Dhaka University was modeled after the University of Oxford and after European philosophy. This includes how the university works, and how its knowledge seekers should act.

During the Pakistan period, there were few more universities established in Bangladesh. In 1954, University of Rajshahi was established. This university is a prestigious seat of learning and creates provision for research and higher education in the neglected northern region of Bangladesh (Haque 2022). In 1966, the University of Chittagong was established, in 1970 Jahangirnagar University.

Since the independence of Bangladesh, the number of public universities has been growing steadily and in 2022, Bangladesh has 53 public universities. As I said, these public universities charge minimum tuition fees, traditionally do not have opportunities to do business with English education and generally contribute to the sustenance and development of English education in Bangladesh. Since the 1990s, government has been permitting to establish private universities in Bangladesh. Each private university is a business initiative. English is one of the major products. Currently, all public, and private universities except science universities in Bangladesh have a Department of English, and the department is involved in teaching and learning English language, linguistics, and literature. However, a position for English faculty is a de-facto academic requirement for any university in Bangladesh.

7.5 History of the English Department in Bangladesh (1921-2022)

The history of the Department began with the establishment of the University of Dhaka on July 01, 1921. Charles Leslie Wrenn was the first Head of the Department and was a famous

Old English professor. Later, Wrenn became the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon from 1946-1963 and he authored books and joint authors e.g., *A study of Old English Literature*, *The English Language*, *Beowulf with the Finnsburg fragment*, *An Old English Grammar*, *English and Medieval Studies*. This detail of Wrenn signifies that the Department of English, Dhaka University was in an able hand since its inception. When the British rule ended in 1947, A.G. Stock, a British Professor, ran the Department.

The Department has a pivotal role in protecting the ethos of academic research and dissemination of knowledge as the chief center of English Studies in this part of the world (University of Dhaka 2022). The Department mission statement explains the role of the graduates that it aims to produce highly skilled graduates who have absorbed the great tradition of writing in English, ranging from the classics of English and American literature to contemporary works in global contexts (University of Dhaka 2022). The Department teaches the traditional writing, classics of American and British literature, and applied linguistics. The Department adopts its interdisciplinary role through studying gender, environment, media, and information technology. The vision of the Department is to promote literacy—especially the ability to read, write, and think critically. The Department aspires to foster knowledge by offering a range of interdisciplinary courses. It influences students' critical thinking, presentation and writing skills and makes them qualified workers of the nation, develops within them a strong sense of identity, ethics, and individuality to be dutiful citizens (University of Dhaka 2022). Together the mission and the vision show a picture of a graduate from the Department and during pursuing an English degree, a graduate will earn skills in English to serve the nation. A graduate of English Studies usually acquires knowledge on British and American literature and develops a critical analytical ability towards other interdisciplinary literary texts from the curriculum. Eventually, an English graduate posits a stalwart status in

society because English is held at present as "a symbol of socio-intellectual elitism and prestige" in Bangladesh (Chowdhury and Kabir 2014).

Further, the Department of English at the University of Rajshahi took students in 1954. The Department of English, the University of Chittagong opened in 1966. The goal of this Department, Chittagong University is to prepare students to English professionally to interact with government, non-governmental international organizations, gain an aesthetic understand of the language, further their education, and ultimately to improve the quality of life, the community, and the country (bd.top10place.com 2022). The Department of English, Jahangirnagar University also started its academic activities in 1970 (juenglish.com 2022). Each English Department of the above four universities is historically as old as the universities and it proves that the English Department was considered always in priority. The trend of giving priority to the English Department remains in almost all other public and private universities in Bangladesh.

7.6 History of Curriculum at the Department of English (1921-2022)

The endeavors of the Department of English are to disconnect the English curriculum from the English native though the British educators developed the initial curriculum based on the British literature. These efforts aim at delinking English from its origin and ownership and to shift its center from the Global North though the Global South is not yet ready. "Neither framework provides the tools to engage with the political and theoretical delinking that is necessary to decolonize English" (Kumaravadivelu 2016; Pennycook 2021). However, the trend has started in Bangladesh. That is a new effort. The Curriculum of English Department is critical part of the history of the Department. Bangladeshi scholars have been reviewing the English Studies curriculum. Faculty members are reviewing syllabuses of the English Department of Dhaka University (DU). Professor Nevin Farida divided the syllabuses into four

periods i.e., i. between 1921 to 1951 ii. between 1951 to 1973 iii. between 1973 and early 1990s, and iv. after the mid-1990s.

The initial texts for English Studies between 1921-1951 for the English Department were canonical and classical text and English teaching usually considered the teaching of English literature and British culture (Farida 2021). Nevin Farida points out that the colonial masters developed the initial curriculum for English Studies which was inadequate. English was certainly an instrument of cultural control. The early syllabuses were "inadequate and not useful" because major authors like Lawrence, Conrad, Foster just to name a few were not taught, or even Shakespeare was neglected because just one play was being taught at that time. English was an elite; it was considered an elite subject (Farida 2021). The Department presumed that students getting admitted already had a good command of the English language. Anglo-Saxon literature was taught in Old English focused on forms but not on meaning. The policymakers during the time felt that the students in Bangladesh did not have the intellectual ability to critically understand the texts. Thus, easy, and less-interesting texts were taught like Jeremy Taylor, Aldous Huxley etc. There were no women-writers, no non-British, non-white authors, and no place for Commonwealth literature (Farida 2021).

In the 1950s, the establishment of the British Council and the American Centre influenced English Studies. The British Council emphasized the language studies and "encouraged the introduction of language courses, language teaching" (Farida 2021). Because of the American Centre, the English Department introduced a course on American literature. "The American Center began to function strongly to combat the British Hegemony, and to restrict the communist bloc. As a result, an alternative paper on American literature was introduced at that time" (Farida 2021).

Further, after the 1973 Ordinance (that ensures the autonomy of major universities in Bangladesh), the faculty members are vouchsafed a kind of autonomy in designing the courses. The curriculum designing process became a more democratic procedure. Decisions and policies on the curriculum were no longer left to the discretion of the head of the department alone. All teachers began to have their voice. Comparative and continental literature were included. Tolstoy, Dostoevsky in translation was taught. Non-white and female writers gradually began to be taught (Farida 2021). In the 1980s, there was a felt of inclusion of the ELT and language stream in the curriculum.

The Department in the 1990s started to include Global Englishes and World Englishes in the syllabus. The Department includes the Caribbean and African literature, the South Asian literature and the translation works from Bangla literature. The Bangladeshi and Indian authors who were writing in English did not previously have access to the English Department. Literature from the different countries such as American, Africa, Arabian, Indian literature have been included in the English departments in Bangladesh (Akther and Siddiqua 2016). The curriculum of the Department of English, DU evolves to keep pace with developments in academic curriculums worldwide which reflect the crosscurrents of change in sociopolitical and theoretical perspectives (University of Dhaka 2022).

The curriculum of the Department of English of public and private universities is changing though in Bangladesh, literature in the English curriculum at higher education reigns supreme (Shamsuzzaman 2017). Literature texts are predominantly the British and the writing composition texts are the American. Both public and private universities are introducing diversity in graduate streams e.g., English Language Teaching (ELT), Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). For example, the English Department, Rajshahi University provides four majors for an English graduate i.e., MA in English (Literature), MA

in English (ELT), MA in English (Media and Cultural Studies), MA in English (Translation Studies) (University of Rajshahi 2016). Further, the major Bangladeshi private universities have adopted the approaches of teaching English writing to see whether the approach is feasible to have successful transmission and integration to university students (Hasan 2011). The privatization of English Studies at higher education and commercialization are also in the development of the curriculum. Another example from private university is that the curriculum of the English Department, North South University (NSU) has a direct connection with the global north English institutions. The current curriculum in the Department of English & Modern Languages follows the most prestigious universities in the United States (North South University 2022).

7.6 Global Englishes and Decolonizing Impact on Curriculum (1991-2022)

The Global Englishes (GE) or World Englishes (WE) does not rest only in the hands to the British colonizers. GE, WE, English as lingua franca (ELF), English as international language (EIL) movements expose that English is global, variable, and multilingual. WE and ELF are seeking to decolonize English and eradicate its ownership (Pennycook 2022) and the movements have considerable influence on the Department managers to address the curriculum changes. The inclusion of the translation and Bangla literature in English Studies to decolonize the English Department (Akther and Siddiqua 2016). A graduate in English Studies does not see any "conflict" with Bangla literature. English Studies has been occupied with reverence to the mind of the local educator and the littérateur (Akther and Siddiqua 2016). However, Bangla is out of the compass of world literature (Haq 2021). So, Haq sees that there is politics involved here, of course. Bangla too is a part of world literature and if they are designing a course in BA in English and World Literature, they will design it in a way that meets their needs and addresses their cultural situation (Haq 2021). English Department, DU has made changes to

make an inclusive syllabus in 2020s and Professor Farida comments, "We have tried to make our new syllabus entangled and interdisciplinary in nature by accommodating fields of studies such as gender, environment, culture and education, media and journalism, information technology" (Farida 2021). Alam had a wish for his students to read the latest English and there should have a compulsory course on the contemporary writing, but it is necessary to work on classical English literature, and the canon, traditional canon, and have the healthy blend that should be the way forward and use English in the classroom and encourage students to do it outside (Alam 2021a). Bangladesh involves in the politics of English curriculum and tries to involve in the Southern English though the academics see it difficult to decolonize from the Northern English. However, this section proves that there are efforts going on to establish ownership of a new Southern English curriculum in Bangladesh.

7.7 History of Weak Teaching English in Bangladesh (1971-2022)

English is weakly taught in the independent Bangladesh. The inadequate English teaching has been continuing since 1971. The changes in English Studies in the last fifty-one years are frequent. Curriculum changes, shifting in teaching methods and adopting unplanned extension are seen in the English education. Further, the de-emphasizing English in education, prioritizing Bangla, the modernized English teaching system without adequate facilities, the classroom size, unawareness of students about the importance of English, load of variant language texts etc. are adding to the history of weak teaching. This study discusses few historical reasons that contributes to the bad teaching history.

Firstly, the Constitution of Bangladesh accepted Bangla as the state language in 1972 and the Constitution narrowed the use of English and resulted in severe lack of English proficiency among the people in general (Hamid and Baldauf 2014; Rahman et al. 2019). Bangla was given only official language status and the promotion of Bangla was believed to

be the demotion of English (Hamid 2011; Rahman et al. 2019). The fall of the quality of English language teaching was caused by this one language policy and planning (Hamid 2010; Rahman et al. 2019).

Secondly, the private and the public universities have large English Studies classrooms in Bangladesh, and the classrooms are difficult to manage and seldom interactive. The discomfort lies in the size of the English classroom. The teachers of English literature and languages usually expect 100 students for both undergraduate and graduate classrooms, and their approach to the classroom is usually lecture based. The size of the classroom is increasing everywhere, it is difficult to reach the students individually and seek their attention personally to identify their troubles and obstacles with learning the language. The teachers are forced to handle the classroom grossly. Alam asked how you could teach 100 plus students in the same classroom (Alam 2021b).

Thirdly, in the English Studies classroom, English is usually used as a medium of instruction. English-only classrooms are not good. As a university teacher, Sultana observed that students are constantly sufferings and are having emotional turmoil in the English-only environment of universities. They may also suffer from a sense of powerlessness and feel physically excluded from classroom discourses" (Sultana 2014. 14, 18). "One classroom-one language pedagogical straitjacket" is questioned and Pennycook suggested "rather than focusing so intently on English as the sole objective of our teaching, we can start to reimagine classes as part of a broader multilingual context" (Pennycook 2021).

Fourthly, Bangladesh has adopted the communicative language teaching (CLT) replacing the grammar-translation method (GTM) in all levels of education (Rahman et al. 2019). Bangladesh lacks adequate infrastructure facilities for speaking and listening skills and the teachers do not have available time and space to provide those necessary education services.

English teachers need to enhance their professional capacity (Hamid 2010). Further, Bangladesh did not plan well for the new English language teaching methods, and English teachers are not well prepared for handling new skills in the larger groups; there is also a lack of English teachers and the access to teachers in urban and rural areas is not equal (Hamid and Baldauf 2011; Rahman et al. 2019).

Fifthly, Bangladesh decolonized English for two decades and the effect of decolonizing efforts result in bad teaching. Teachers who studied in the 1970s and the 1980s did not have English in primary education as well as higher education. The institutions did not motivate with future implications of English Studies those pupils during the period. Along with that, English might still be nurtured in the urban areas but more unemphasized in the rural areas. These less-motivation and unequal emphasis caused the deficiency of the teachers in the country. The twenty years' gap (1971-1991) in English Studies has created an unequal difference between urban and rural areas and a crisis (Alam 2021b).

Sixthly, poor students in the present-day Bangladesh do not have access to better English schools which charge huge tuition fee that is beyond the capacity of disadvantaged people. English has been commodified for the solvent people, who can afford the private coaching centers, private tutors, private schools, private universities (Mousumi and Kusakabe 2017). Ultimately, English education is expensive and the people in general are unable to afford the cost. Only those students, who have a solvent socio-economic background, can succeed in English learning in Bangladesh (Hasan 2003; Hamid 2010).

Seventhly, the deficiency in English starts from the primary schools and continues till the tertiary level. The NCTB has prescribed the communicative approach which advocates practicing four skills e.g., speaking, writing, reading, and listening. NCTB does not provide the

listening materials to the students (Hasan 2003) and even in 2022, the listening materials are not available online. These all have created a new history of weak teaching in English.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the history of higher education institutions, the history of the English Department, curriculum changes and weak teaching. In one century, Bangladesh has more than 150 universities. Each year the nation is establishing new university and they are focusing the world literature in designing the curriculum whereas the initial focus was only the British literature. Bangladesh already accommodated the American literature in the 1950s. Since 1991, English has been embracing translation literature, Asian, African literature with a vision of decolonizing the curriculum. Even, the scholars try to make a syllabus only in Southern of English. The Bangladeshi scholars are working on the inclusiveness and widening the periphery of the English Department and they are accommodating the concepts of World Englishes, decolonization and local literature in the postcolonial period are impacting on English Studies at higher education in Bangladesh though they are facing the same situations of the privatization. It does not sound good if the English Department fails to stand before any challenges. The private universities are much younger than many public universities. Thus, private universities are young and juvenile. All universities have been facing waves of changes in English education.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Learn a new language and get a new soul.
                                            -Czech proverb

English sustains among debates for centuries. English empowers many and simultaneously, it creates inequality in society. The historical long debates have been casting doubts in the mind of people on the legitimacy on English and English Studies and polarizing the approaches. In the debates, scholars broadly bring allegation on the power of English and so, English is a problem. English is sweet while empowering individuals and tastes sour while eliminating indigenous culture. English swings in a paradox while the scholars indicate it as a dubious path for the Bangladeshi people. English and English Studies have always been under amplified claims and criticism since its inception in Bangladesh though many arguments make the nation fragile. The nation cannot yet commit their position and they feel it hard to achieve the competence though English is studied at all levels of education and there have been debates on the medium of instruction, the decolonized curriculum, the Southern English, the Northern English etc. The debates are endless and erupting with a new dimension in each age of English in Bangladesh.

Both Bangla and English are hugely debated. The thesis has identified what the people of the country are historically suffering from and how they are clueless in the postcolonial era because the scholars do not come into a symbiosis for the benefits of the nation. I experience the instant participation of the scholars on the debatable subject, which language is first whether Bangla or English. Both sides have wide arguments with reference to the public opinions which are a mixture of thoughtful, fact-finding, opinionated, judgmental claims, but a precise decisive pathway for adopting the two languages both Bangla and English together in the nation's lives, is missing. Only debates are surviving to show how intelligent the scholars are in inventing the

captivating points to attract the audience. Those are unfruitful and are breeding controversies over English, creating bars to the access to English education, unresolved decision over medium of instructions, appealing melody towards cultural hegemony, raising fear to national identity, unequal decision over curriculum changes in Bangladesh. The doubt, which was created centuries ago, still haunts the nation. Two prominent groups are always in debates about which one, English or Bangla, should be the medium of instructions.

Another net result is that English retains only the elitist status. The private English schools, private universities are still shining more, whereas the students in public schools and universities do not have access to quality English education and the unequal access is cutting them off. The privileged people without hesitation are sending their offspring to the English schools because they know that English is a power and simultaneously, the same people advocate for the promotion of Bangla for the mass people of Bangladesh. This is a historical hypocrisy over English that exists in the mind of privileged people of Bangladesh and the discriminating efforts are dismantling English from the commoners' lives. Consequently, the nation could not have a solid foundation of language education and could not proceed towards a progress with a single-minded determination. "Conqueror has succeeded conqueror; one domination has followed another; but never in all the revolutions of fame and fortune have you seen one of those nations of its own motion establish what we, from a Western point of view, call self-government" (Said 1978. 34).

English is a powerful language in the present day, and the truth is that Bangladesh as a former British colony has already developed a century-old infrastructure and mindset for teaching and learning English. The nation can use this powerful tool because English can give a voice to 167 million powerless and voiceless people. They can speak in English to be heard to the world. Proficiency in English is widely treated as a precondition leading to economic,

social, and educational opportunities and providing access to material resources (Chowdhury and Sarker 2018). In all postcolonial countries, the scholars voice the concerns of losing one's own culture and identity. English is the creation of division among the people of Bangladesh. However, the colonial tool, English, is the power for the Bangladeshi nation. The nation learns and uses English.

Let the debates continue but let these controversies not hinder the progress of English Studies and weaken English teaching and learning. Let the scholars be settled over English education. English offers an upward access to social aristocracy, and as a minimizer of the embedded inequalities between the rich and the poor. English has an explicit monetary value, and the truth is that Bangladeshi people are lacking skills in fluency and competency in English and so, the incompetency of the nation requires to pay each year more than billion US dollars to the foreign workers in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi expatriates are sending the foreign currency as remittance to the country whereas Bangladesh has to pay with the same hard-earned money to the foreign workers in Bangladesh. The realization of the facts towards English Studies has a direct relationship with public welfare and development.

Both Bangla and English are colonial tools and the British colonizers used both languages to rule the native. The domination of the native was the main factor for accommodating Bangla in British India. I narrated the rise of Bangla to the national position from the lowest status. Now Bangla is the first language and is in the sensitivity of the nation. Many writers assure that there is no wrong in studying English and Bangla together (Tagore 1941; Kabir 2017). In Bangladesh, the nation can use both Bangla and English together as the medium of higher education. Tagore quoting his elder brother has mentioned in the story of *Amar Chelebela* (My Childhood) that the foundation of Bangla is the first and then the upward

building of education in English (Tagore 1940). The streams of two languages, Bangla, and English, go together as World literature for the nation although teaching in Bengali was linked to the consolidation of national identity (Hoque 2008. 1) In Bangladesh, the significance of English has never lost its relevance because of its gatekeeping power to global education, career opportunity, and international exchanges (Rahman et al. 2019). However, the caution and the success comments from the scholars should be in the consciousness of the nation.

The truth is that Bangladeshi people can view English as a technology of communication, a skill, and a competency in English as a technological tool. English gives them an earning capability and an elegance in voice, an impetus to the economy, a pathway to individual emancipation, a catalyst to corporate business and career progress, an avenue to higher education in Bangladesh. English in Bangladesh creates opportunities for a graduate, and gives an education, grooms a graduate with the internal society, molds an inner capacity to relate its culture to other nations, prompts a graduate as a global citizen to transfer its custom, tradition, commerce to the global context in the postcolonial period. The earlier the power and the prestige of Bangladeshi English Studies is in the consciousness of Bangladeshi people the better for their own generation as well as for future generations.

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