

English-Medium Education and Out-of-Class Learning: A Study of Effective Learning in the Perspective of Humanistic Approach

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Abstract: In Bangladesh, the Bangla language is the mother-tongue, and the general people of the country are very comfortable in using Bangla. Now, the world becomes a global village and English becomes a popular language for its global and economic importance, but the reality is fully English-based education is a complex issue in Bangladesh, especially for the new students in schools. Usually, students are staying in schools for few hours but they spend maximum time at their home. So, most of the students do their out-of-class learning at home in Bangla. But, recently, most of the urban parents are trying to give their children in English-medium schools instead of Bangla-medium schools in predicting their better future. This attempt is dangerous. We cannot ignore mother-tongue based multi-lingual education (MTB-MLE) concept because recently all over the world contemporary educationists are trying to focus this MTB-MLE concept for giving proper education to the students. This article is going to highlight some significant issues of humanistic approach regarding the out-of-class learning through mother-tongue and will show some complexities in using English language as the medium of instruction in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Mother-tongue, Education, Student, Learning, Humanistic Approach.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh got its independence in 1971, and, of course, the love towards the Bangla language by the common people of the country played a vital role to get this biggest achievement. Actually, Bangla is not only our mother-tongue but also our pride and identity. All the festivals and customs of this country are associated with this language. As Bangladeshi, it is not possible to ignore Bangla in our daily life,

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though we know that to compete with other countries or to develop our country in this 21st century - we need English. This is fact but recently the ignorance of using Bangla properly is visible among the middle and upper-middle income families of urban cities. Specially, majority of the urban parents are running towards those educational institutions where English is the medium of learning. For this reason, English medium schools are becoming so popular in urban cities of Bangladesh. But, the question is “Are we ready for this?”. As a result, slow progress and limited cognition of human faculty are apparent among the newly going school students. But, the parents are not convinced about these complexities, they feel that getting education at an English-medium school is a matter of prestige. Because of this false social status mainly the little kids are finding learning as a difficult task. We need to change our mentality regarding this issue, and we need mother-tongue based education system for the betterment of our students at the initial stage.

2. The Context of the Research

Bangla is used almost everywhere in Bangladesh, actually it becomes the sole language of the country. Some sectors, for example banks, multi-national companies, English-medium educational institutions, courts etc., are using English for communication. There is no doubt that without knowing English the future progress or success will be hampered. The fact is we need English to maintain good communication with other countries which is also a global need. But, one thing we should keep in our mind that without knowing the right usage of Bangla, we cannot learn English properly. Mother tongue is very essential for developing language skills for any nation. Our school-going students are not learning Bangla properly, without knowing mother tongue they face difficulties in learning English. Out-of-class learning in Bangla, because at home most of the parents are using Bangla for communication, and in-class learning in English make the students confused. For this reason, they cannot learn any of these languages effectively.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Issues and Opinions regarding Out-of-Class Learning

Benson and Reinders (2011) highlights that out-of-class language learning activities can also take place in school and are common, for example, in Hong Kong schools, where ‘English-only’ days, debates, public speaking competitions, performances, and school magazines are popular English language activities. Because ‘out-of-school’ learning only refers to location, the term might also reasonably be applied to attendance at private tutorial schools after the school is finished. Benson and Reinders (2011) also find that the teaching and learning takes place in classrooms, tutorial lessons can be considered as ‘out-of-school’ activities from the perspective

of the main location of the students' learning. A more clear-cut example of out-of-class learning can be found in the one-to-one tutorial lessons that younger students often take from older students in the home. To take Hong Kong as the example once again, many university and senior secondary students help to finance their own studies by offering one-to-one English tutorials to younger students.

We know that learning can be formal or non-formal or informal; actually, non-formal and informal contrast with 'formal' learning. Basically, non-formal education often refers to classroom or school-based programs that are taken for interest and do not involve tests or qualifications, while informal education refers more to non-institutional programs or individual learning activities. In this issue, Livingstone (2006) defines informal learning as 'any-thing people do to gain knowledge, skill, or understanding from learning about their health or hobbies, unpaid or paid work, or anything else that interests them outside of organized courses', a definition that fits well with our understanding of learning beyond the classroom. According to Benson and Reinders (2011), language learning beyond the classroom does not necessarily imply the absence of tests and qualifications (many students study for a qualification independently of educational institutions), or the absence of teaching, which is more or less implicit in any form of learning.

In understanding the role of teaching in informal learning, the concept of public pedagogy (Giroux, 1994), which has received little attention in language learning research, may prove useful. Sandlin, Schultz, and Burdick (2010) describe public pedagogy as being concerned with informal spaces of learning such as popular culture, the internet, public spaces such as museums, and parks, and other civic and commercial spaces, including both old and new social movements. In this issue, Benson and Reinders (2011) claims that when we think of learners learning foreign languages independently while watching television or movies or while using the internet, public pedagogy refers to the sense in which they are also being 'taught'.

The terms 'self-instructed', 'non-instructed' and 'naturalistic' learning contrast with 'instructed' language learning on a dimension concerned with the role and types of pedagogy involved in language learning beyond the classroom. The term 'instruction' is understood here as a particular kind of pedagogy, involving formal processes, such as sequencing of material, explicit explanation, and testing. When learners watch, for example, a TV soap opera in a foreign language, we are likely to say that the show is 'teaching' them the language, but not that it is 'instructing' them. If they turn the channel to a program that is specifically designed to teach the

language, however, then we would say that instruction is taking place. In this sense, self-instruction and naturalistic learning lie at two ends of a pedagogical continuum that is situated, by definition, beyond the classroom. In self-instruction, specially designed books or television and radio broadcasts take on the role of classroom instructor and there is a strong intention to learn on the part of the learner, while in naturalistic learning, there is no instruction or specially designed materials and, in principle, no intention to learn. Naturalistic learning may be a hypothetical state, however, and elsewhere I have described the more typical process of ‘self-directed naturalistic learning’, in which the learner sets up a naturalistic learning situation with the intention of language learning, but once engaged in the situation, switches the focus of attention to communication, enjoyment or learning something other than the language itself (Benson, 2011).

We can say that ‘classroom language teaching’ is not necessarily synonymous with ‘instructed language learning’. In this issue, Van Lier’s (1988) suggests that a classroom is a situation in which one of the participants assumes the role of instructor, and also informs that the act of instruction may, in itself, turns a space into a ‘classroom’. It also suggests that instruction (other than self-instruction) is, in principle, incompatible with language learning beyond the classroom. Instruction is not the only type of pedagogy that takes place in classrooms. The fact that pedagogy is part of learning inside and outside classrooms, together with the fact that classroom language teaching often aims to emulate naturalistic processes that occur outside the classroom, means that any comparison of their effectiveness is likely to be muddied by variables along the dimension of pedagogy (Benson and Reinders, 2011).

Lastly, the terms ‘independent’, ‘self-directed’, and ‘autonomous’ language learning refer to a dimension concerned with the locus of control in learning and teaching. At times these terms are used to signify learning without a teacher, but the wider usage refers to who makes the major decisions about learning and teaching – the learner or someone else? In order for learning without a teacher to be ‘autonomous’, for example, the decision to do without a teacher must, in principle, be made by the learner, who might equally well opt for a taught or instructed course. In practice, the initial decision to participate or engage in language study is often not made by the learner, especially for younger learners of English and other world or regional languages that form part of the compulsory school curriculum in many parts of the world. In some cases, school and university students choose to study foreign languages and the particular languages they study – although having once made this

decision, their options become limited. For adult learners, foreign language learning is often a matter of self-improvement or recreation, in which they have far more room for man oeuvre. The underlying conditions for locus of control in language learning are, therefore, highly variable (Benson and Reinders, 2011). They also asserts that there is a clear relationship between language learning beyond the classroom and locus of control, in that non-classroom setting often demand that the learners make many of the decisions about their learning. This observation also provides us with an example of how the four dimensions of location, formality, pedagogy, and locus of control interact. One way that many learners shift the locus of control away from themselves in out-of-class settings is by option for self-instructional materials which have a high level of formality and instructional content. Locus of control shifts back to learners when they gain confidence in their ability to learn in more naturalistic, informal ways (Benson and Reinders, 2011).

3.2 Bangladesh and Asian Perspectives

At present Bangladesh becomes a multilingual country slowly and here Bangla, English, and regional languages have been used side by side by the citizens. Though Bangla is the mother tongue but English language is given priority by the educated citizens to achieve success, and for this reason, competence in Bangla is in danger because now young citizens are using it wrongly. Actually, we need to make a balance between Bangla and English. In Bangladesh, basically, we are using two languages, Bangla and English, for giving education to students. Classroom education is popular in Bangladesh but out-of-class language learning is rare in this country because of many reasons such as poverty, lack of support from the family members, lack of learning suitable environment and parents' illiteracy. During an international seminar on "*Language Documentation and Multilingual Education*" held on 22-23 February 2017 at International Mother Language Institute, Dhaka, Dr. Mahendra Kumar Mishra says that language and culture come from home and the community must play the role of developing culture and language. It is very clear that to make out-of-class language learning successful – we need the support from our own community (family, friends, relatives etc.). Dr. Mishra (2017) also says aim of education is to explore culture and language of the country. In that seminar, Dr. Mishra highlights that life and language learning go together in Orissa, India, and the local Orissa students do 3D wall paintings at the outside walls of their village houses, and students learn this kind of rare paintings from out-of-class. It is a unique example of learning beyond the classroom. So, we can apply different activities in Bangladesh to explore language learning among the young learners as out-of-class learning. The reality is we are highly dependent in classroom for any kind of

education. If we need to learn English language properly, we need to have competency in Bangla; otherwise, learning in the class or out-of-class becomes unsuccessful. In this sense, Professor Krishna Bhattacharya (2017) asserts that socially, psychologically, and educationally – a mother tongue is the best solution for any learner to learn a language properly. During the international seminar on “*Language Documentation and Multilingual Education*” held on 22-23 February 2017 at International Mother Language Institute, Dhaka, Dr. Anvita Abbi, Padma Shri (a famous linguist from India) claims that external forces play the vital roles in language learning. In the said seminar Dr. Ganga Prasad Uprety (2017), Chancellor, Nepal Academy, Nepal, informs that in a multilingual country there will be at least three languages such as L1 (Mother Tongue), L2 (Dominant Language), and L3 (International Language) go together. At the end of the said seminar Professor Dr. David A. Peterson (2017), Dartmouth College, USA, strongly claims that effective language learning should start at home and it is an ongoing process. So, it is possible in Bangladesh to implement effective out-of-class language learning and the first step should start from home, and the support from the parents and relatives are essential to make the environment. Actually, teachers can show the right path in the classroom, but learning can be effective from the outside of the classroom like Orissa, India, where rural students can draw 3D paintings.

3.3 How Students Learn from Out-of-Class

Usually, students apply a conventional set of learning techniques to learn language(s). Such as (Benson and Reinders, 2011):

- Doing grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, comprehension, and expression exercises
- Learning the alphabet
- Learning by heart
- Writing down grammar rules
- Using dictionaries
- Taking notes in a notebook
- Assessing language progress by reference to a grade or a mark
- Using school material from previous classes
- Translating unknown words
- Translating sentences

4. Methodology

4.1 The Individuals

For doing this research, keen observation was conducted on two 4-year old kids, Samihul Quader Avhik, Play-Group student, European Standard School, Dhaka, and Mrinmoyee Datta Purba, Ankur student, Nalanda School, Dhaka. Both of them started their schools in 2017.

4.2 Background of Avhik

Samihul Quader Avhik is the only child of his parents and both of them are doing jobs. The parents of Avhik think that English-Medium School will be better for his future. But, his parents were the students of Bangla-Medium in their school life. At home, Avhik always hears Bangla language because his parents always use Bangla for communication with Avhik, but in the school he learns everything in English because European Standard School is an English-Medium School. Avhik likes English rimes and love to play with toy cars.

4.3 Background of Purba

Mrinmoyee Datta Purba is also the only child of her parents, and just like Avhik her parents are also doing jobs. The parents of Purba think that Bangla-Medium School will be better for her because in Bangladesh “Bangla” is the mother-tongue. At home, Purba and her parents use Bangla frequently, and she is studying at Nalanda School where Bangla is the medium of instruction. Purba likes to hear Bangla chora, and tries to learn folk dance.

5. Findings

It is very clear that Purba is doing better than Avhik in every activity. Even her mental and physical developments are also better than Avhik. While talking, Purba can communicate easily but Avhik feels shy while communicating with others. The body language of Purba is flexible but the body language of Avhik is rigid. As a child Purba is enthusiastic but Avhik is passive. The parents of Purba are very happy about her progress in school but the parents of Avhik are anxious about his slow progress. Avhik’s parents always try to give out-of-class learning in English. But, parents of Purba try to provide out-of-class learning in Bangla.

Table: 1

Participants	Communication Skills	Learning Bangla	Learning English
Avhik	Not Satisfactory	Not Satisfactory	Poor
Purba	Good	Very Good	Good

Table-1: Clearly shows the differences between Avhik and Purba.

6. Recommendations and Conclusion

After the research, it is clear that mother-tongue based education is very effective for the development of students in the initial stage of their schools because Bangla is our mother-tongue, and we need to provide our primary education through our own language. At least from play-group / nursery to class five - we need to give education to our students in Bangla, and after class five we can implement strategies of learning English gradually. In this way, our students will become more comfortable to acquire language(s) properly without any anxiety. There is no doubt that our students need to learn English, but we need to teach it with time. Without using mother-tongue, learning English cannot be effective. Students need to do out-of-class learning through mother-tongue for learning language(s) properly. It is essential to relate humanistic approach in education considering the practical context of life.

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