Relexification with English as reflected in Bangla due to contactinduced changes

Razaul Karim Faquire

University of Dhakan razaul_faquire@du.ac.bd

This study aims to chart the trend of relexification as reflected in Bangla due to the language contact (LC) with English.

In the language situation of Bangladesh, an unregulated English Language Education (ELE) system comprises a compulsory education system of Literacy-English emphasizing the practice of the four skills and an optional provision for the education of academic subjects through the English medium exists in all phases of the education system. This country-wide unregulated ELE system has created a condition for the LC between Bangla and English where English operates as a superstrate over its substrate, with Bangla instigating the contact-induced changes, which includes relexification is meant to a mechanism of language change by which one language changes much or all of its lexicon, including basic vocabulary, with the lexicon of another language, without drastically changing the relexified language's grammar.

Given the above backdrop of the language contact situation in Bangladesh, I have conducted a survey to reveal the recurrence trend of contact-induced changes. This survey reveals that one of the contact-induced change is consequent to the relexification of Bangla into in English reflected in the personal names, e.g., Sweety Das, Lovely Akhter, etc.; place names, e.g. Western town, South city, etc., as well as in the names of institutions and organizations, e.g., Green University, Southeast bank; financial institutions, e.g., Reliance Insurance; residences, e.g., Dream House, Lake view hut; apartments, e.g., Eastern Housing; and other institutions, e.g., police station, army medical college, etc.

The phenomenon of relexification is now widespread, reflected in the social interaction and linguistic landscape of the language situation of Bangladesh as follows.i) Language mixing, which varies in code-mixing, can be seen in social settings, e.g., South city-er bhaRa koto. (How much is the fare for South city?), and code-switching, e.g., Let us go to South city (Let us go to South city.). Shekha tui treat dibi (Give us a treat there.); and ii) Manifestation of awkward English jargon in the acoustic and visual linguistic landscape through various media, including signboards, billboards, and banners in the social settings.

In the language situation of Bangladesh, relexification is now promoted through the practice of translingualism with the government-run biliteracy language (simultaneous literacy of Bangla and English) education system, and this practice of relexification is now highly evaluated.