

A Review of Language Policy Studies in Bangladesh

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Abstract: This paper summarizes the overview of the language policy in Bangladesh, using Cooper's language planning theory, based on educational planning, ontology planning and status planning. The research shows that the multi-ethnic cultural furnace promotes the government of Bangladesh, but English has penetrated in all areas of society, the language policy in Bangladesh still ignores minority languages, but the formulation and formulation of language policy in Bangladesh, Can provide some reference for our country.

Keywords: Bangladesh; Language policy; Language planning

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The People's Republic of Bangladesh, referred to as "Bangladesh", is a South Asian country, located in the north of the Bay of Bengal, with a small part of the southeast mountains adjacent to Myanmar, east, west and north adjacent to India, and a large number of enclaves on the northern border, with a total area of 147,570 square kilometers. In June 2015, India and Bangladesh reached a new border agreement, with Bangladesh acquiring 111 enclaves totaling 170 square kilometers, who were free to choose their nationality. Bangladesh was historically a British colony, once belonging to India as well as Pakistan. Bangladesh has a strong cultural heritage, and once played an important role in the ancient "Silk Road". In China's "Belt and Road" initiative and the construction of the "Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor", Bangladesh is an important participant and plays an incomparable role in other countries around China.

Bangladesh, as a country with outstanding geographical advantages in South Asia, Holding the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean, connecting Southeast Asia and South Asia, it is a key hub for China into the Indian Ocean and South Asia. At present, Chinese scholars have more and more research on Bangladesh, but less research on language policy. In terms of language policy and planning, the Haugen implemented a detailed definition of language planning in 1951. In 1969, Kloss expanded Haugen's definition of language planning and proposed "corpus planning", the concepts of language ontology, status planning, etc. In 1989, under the premise of Cooper's research, it expanded the concept of language planning, defined it as "intentionally influencing others' language behavior in language acquisition, functional allocation and language structure", and put forward the concept of "educational planning". Combined with Cooper's language policy theory, language policy is mainly composed of status planning, education planning and ontology planning. Language status planning is to divide the functions of the language (e. g., official language, etc.), determine the status of the language, and to develop the language; education planning, so-called language education policy, mainly to determine the teaching medium language and foreign language education. Therefore, in terms of language policy, Cooper's views have a wider range, and it can make a comprehensive and thorough analysis of a country's language policy and planning research. This paper analyzes the characteristics of Bangladesh language policy by relying on Cooper's language policy theory.

1. Language overview of Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a small soil area, totaling 147,570 square kilometers, but has a large population of about 165 million people. As a multi-ethnic country, its language status is complex and diverse. The main ethnic group of Bengal is 98% of the population and minorities 2% of the population. In 2010, the Government of Bangladesh introduced the Minority System Act 2010 (Act-2010) and amended the Constitution to declare people except the main population of Bangladesh "as tribal people" and "minorities". Data on the number of ethnic minorities and their population are controversial. The 1991 census identified only 29 groups. The 2001 national census also lacked specific data on indigenous groups. But the Bangladesh Indigenous People Forum claims that Bangladesh has 45 indigenous groups, while most ethnologists and indigenous leaders in Bangladesh consider 48 indigenous groups.^[1]

Most people use Bengali, and although ethnic minorities have their own language, Bangladesh remains a national lingua franca. Overall, indigenous languages in Bangladesh fall into the following categories: the first is Indo-European, which has the most users and basically the Indo-Aryan branch; the second is Sino-Tibetan; the third is South Asian; and the fourth is Darvidian. From foreign languages, it mainly includes English, Urdu and Arabic. English is a global language, and English is spoken in Bangladesh Special status as in other former British colonies.

Islam is the largest religion in Bangladesh, and Muslims constitute about 88% of the total population. Arabic is the religious language of Muslims. Arabic is taught and used as a religious language in mosques, common and religious schools as well as traditional Bengali Muslim families. In 1947, at the end of British colonial rule, the then Bangladesh territory belonged to East Pakistan. Urdu as the national language of Pakistan at the time of its rule was highly controversial in East Pakistan but is still used in the current Bihari community, Muhajir of Uttar Pradesh and Old Dhaka.

2. Language policy in Bangladesh

Bengali is a branch of the Indo-European language family, with over 250 million people spoken in Bangladesh and eastern India. Besides Bangladesh, Bengali is the official language of West Bengal in India, and the second official language of Tripura and Assam, and is also widely used in the Indian Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The success of the language movement in 1952 greatly inspired the Bangladeshi people, who united against the oppression of the Pakistani government and eventually led to the Liberation War of 1971, through which Bangladesh became an independent state. The painful experience of the language movement and the Revolutionary War became the textbook of patriotism in Bangladesh today, and February 21 was designated as Bangladesh's National Day. UNESCO declared 21 February International Mother Language Day at its 30th Congress in November 1999 to commemorate the heroic actions of the Bangladeshi people who sacrificed their lives on 21 February 1952. Therefore, the Bangladeshi language has a national character for the Bangladeshi people typical significance. At the national macro level, Bangladesh language policy clearly affirmed the status of Bengali as a national and major official language. Article 3 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh formulated in 1972 stipulates that Bengali is the national language of the country, thus determining the official status of Bengali. Article 9 of the Constitution defines "Bengali nationalism" as "unity and unity of the Bengali state, where identity comes from its language and culture. In the War of Independence, sovereignty and independence through a firm struggle for unity was called Bengali nationalism". Article 23 of the Constitution stipulates that the government should take measures to protect the people's cultural heritage and cultural heritage. We will promote and develop national languages, literature and art so that people of all levels will have the opportunity to contribute to the enrichment of national culture. The constitution of Bangladesh stipulates the Mandarin status of Bengali, but does not mention the status of English or minority languages in the country. The state does not publicly recognize the role of English in the country, which currently provides "huge economic opportunities" for English-speaking people, which is usually linked to socioeconomic status, but is only used for family and social activities in the upper class. In addition, although Article 28 of the Constitution forbids discrimination on the basis of race, religion and place of birth, neither the Constitution nor other laws of Bangladesh explicitly recognize or protect Bangladesh tribal peoples and their rights.^[2]

The Bengali language has experienced three major periods of development. 900-1400 AD is ancient Bengali period, 1400 to 1800 Middle Bengali period and 1800 present modern Bengali period. The Hindu hinona dynasty once suppressed Buddhist culture and degraded Bengali, and matured in the medieval period with flourishing culture and art. Bangladesh has undergone up to seven revisions to the National Education Policy (NEP) since its independence in 1971.

Although Bangladesh is relatively young and small, it accommodates diverse cultures of different ethnic groups. In this case, its language development has the characteristics of diversity. Although the number of languages is large, but only Bengali, English two strong languages. Because the language policy is not sound enough, a few edges are marginalized. Through the study of this paper, we should not only study the language policies of major countries, but also understand the language of small surrounding countries, and enrich the research of language policies of various countries. Since Bangladesh is an important country along the Belt and Road in China's "Belt and Road" initiative, understanding its culture from the language policy aspect can provide reference for the formulation of China's language strategy.

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