The Grammatical Variation between Standard Bangla and Mymensingh Dialect

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Abstract: Bangla is an Eastern Indo-Aryan language which belongs to Indo-European language family. Bangla is the national language of Bangladesh. Regional variation in spoken Bangla is a very common phenomenon. The native speaker of Mymensingh practice Bangla in their everyday communication and Mymensingh dialect has a clear discrepancy from Standard Bangla with regard to grammar. This study explores the extent of variations of Mymensingh dialect from Standard Bangla in terms of grammar. To collect data, the researcher visited the different areas of the target area. The respondents were different kinds of people such as ward leaders, religious leaders, farmers, teachers, housewives etc. The language of print and electronic media has been considered as Standard Bangla.
Keywords: Standard Bangla, Mymensingh dialect, grammatical variation.

INTRODUCTION

Bangla is the official language of Bangladesh. It is an Eastern Indo-Aryan language. Bangla has several dialects and Mymensingh dialect is one of them. Mymensingh district is situated in the north area of Bangladesh. Sunitikumar Chatterji opines that, the Bengali dialects are satisfactorily grouped under four main bodies or four historical divisions: 1. Rarhi, or West Bengali, which includes dialects of extreme West Bengal and Central West Bengal (the latter includes the metropolis and naturally is the basis of the 'ChalitBhasa', i.e. Standard Colloquial Bengali; 2) Varendri, or North Central Bengali (falling partly in India and partly in Bangladesh now);

3) Kamrupi, or North Eastern Bangali (falling in West Bengal and Asam in the Indian Union, and in Bangladesh); and lastly 4) Vanga, or Eastern Bengali (EB) Dialects which prevail in Bangladesh formerly, in 1947-72, East Pakistan including the administrative districts of Faridpur, Dacca, Bakharganja, Maimansingh, Sylhet, Comilla (or Kumila, before 1947 called Tippera), Noakhali, Chittagong, and also largely in the district of Khulna" [1]. Professor Shahidullah [3] includes Mymensingh dialect within the South-East group in Islam, [2].Sen [4] classifies Mymensingh dialect into a part of Bongali group in Islam [2]. According to Poreshchandra [5], Mymensingh dialect falls into Eastern Bangio group in Islam [2].
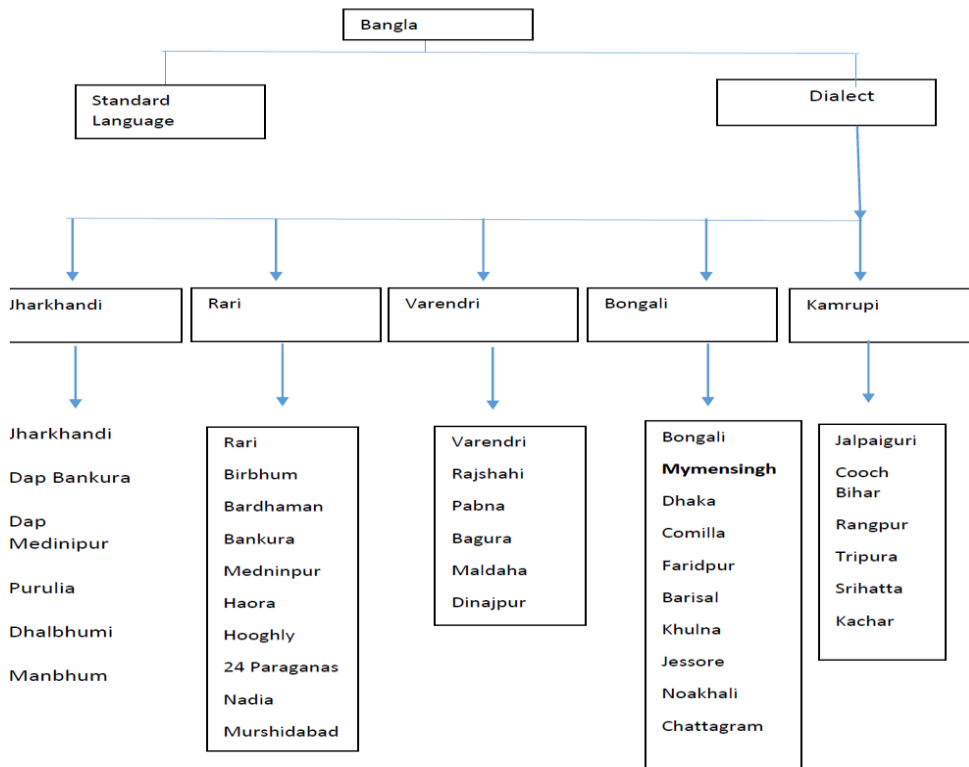
Shahidullah's classification of Bangla dialect is illustrated here (in Islam,1998).

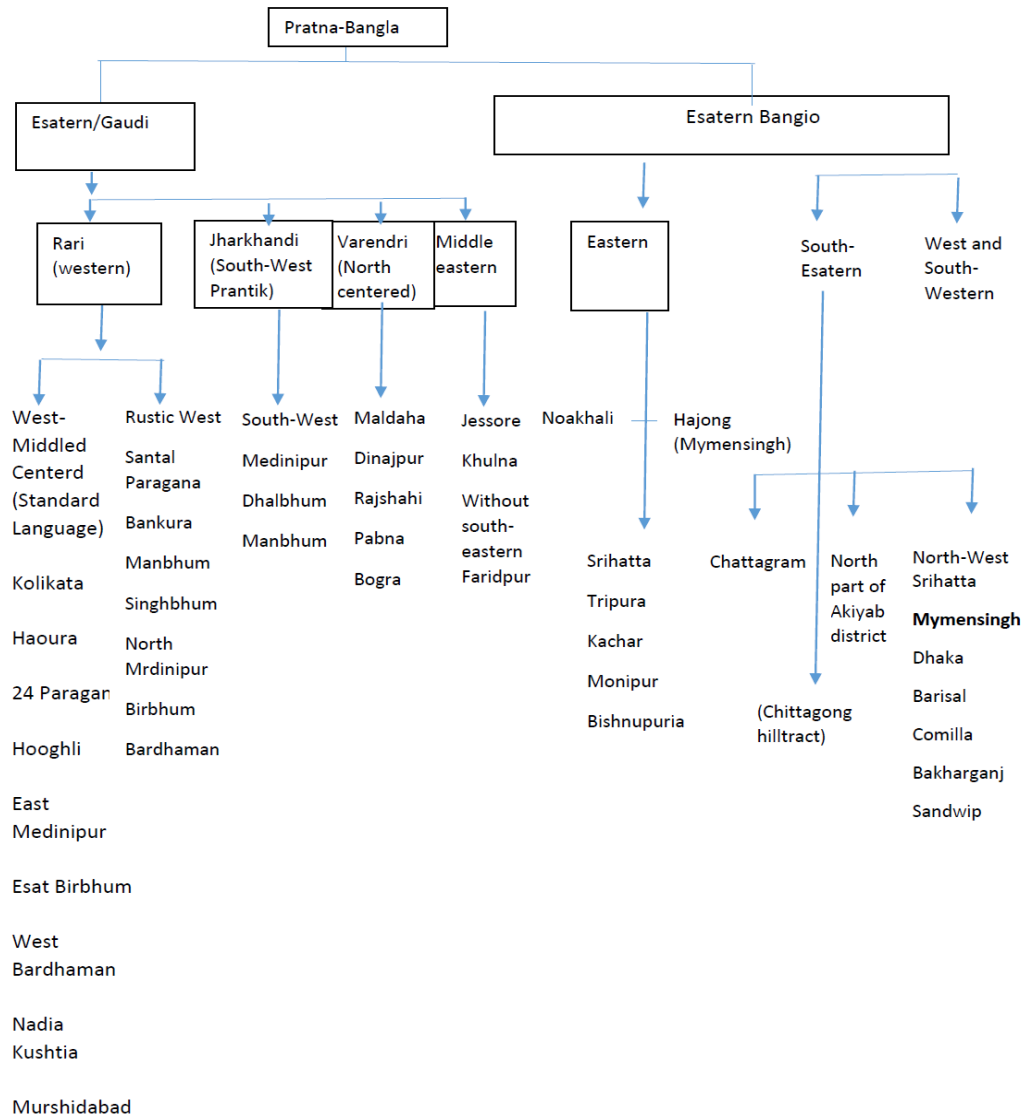**Figure 2.2.4.3: Dialect classification by Shahidullah**
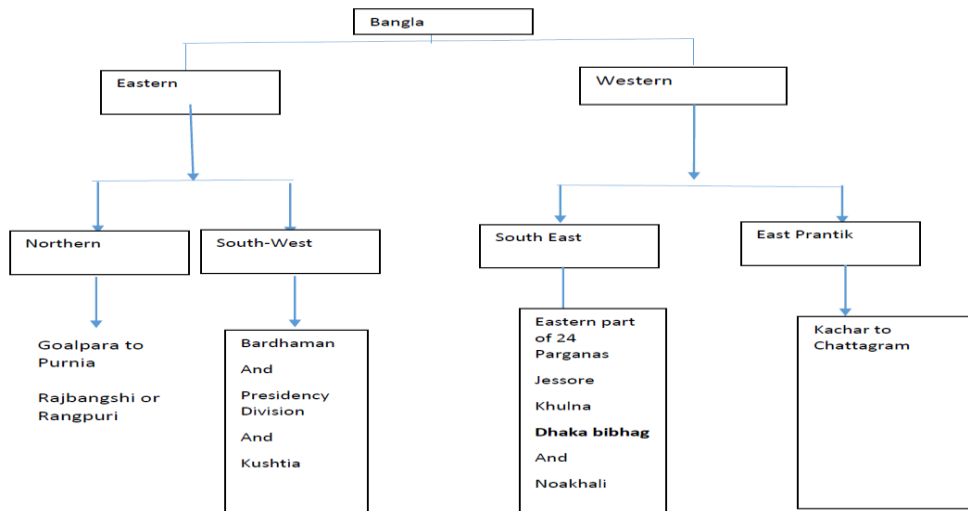
Sukumar's classification of Bangla dialect is illustrated here (as cited in Islam,1998).

Figure2.2.4.4: Dialcet classification by Sukumar

Pareshchandr's classification of Bangla dialect is illustrated below (in Islam,1998).

Figure 2.2.4.5 Dialect classification by Pareshchandra

The print and electronic media generally use complete Standard Bangla. The usage of dialect in the everyday speech of rural people is a common feature as Mizan [6] says, "In the rural and also in many parts of urban area, people speak using dialect and Standard Colloquial Bangla. People who do not come to know the Bangla Alphabet at all they use the phonemes and morphemes from their natural environment and this type of language is evidently called original dialect (learn from nature). It is the product of individual's geographical and class origin." The natives of Mymensingh also use the phonemes and morphemes from their natural environment in their own way.

There have been several studies with regard to Standard Bangla and dialects of Bangladesh in the past but we do not have enough study regarding Mymensingh dialect. Rashel [7] conducted a study between Standard Colloquial Bangla and Chatkhil dialect on the aspects of phonological features. A cross sectional study was done by Mizan [6] to describe and analyze the phonological components of Standard Colloquial Bangla and Netrokona Dialect. Shuchi [8] made a study on the consequence of Bangla dialect on English language teaching.

Definition of Terms

In this research, some technical terms are used in order to specify the discussion. The brief definition of the terms is presented here.

Language

Language is the human ability to communicate with one another. It may be a system of words or signs that people use to understand one another. According to Reed [9], language is "recognized primarily as a complicated system of signaling facilitated by the mechanism of the voice. It is acquired over the years by contact with other people and not without considerable effort (p.1)". Wardhaugh [10] syas that "a language is what the members of a particular society use". It is a distinguishing characteristic of man as compared with other animals. It may include verbal and non-verbal communication.

Standard Language

A Standard language is used by the government, media (both electronic and print), school, college and universities. Standard language is a variety of an idealized form that is acceptable in many social situations. Standard language eradicates inconvenience, misunderstanding, confusion, vagueness, hesitation, uncertainty. It is a proper mood of communication. On the other hand, nonstandard variant of a language is called dialect. It is spoken in a particular part of a country by a particular group. It is thought that dialect is used by low status groups.

Dialect

Language is a mix of dialects as Reed [9] opines that "languages normally consist of dialects, or special varieties of usage within the range of a given linguistic system, according to the social or geographical disposition of its speakers."Geographical distance is not an only criterion to define a dialect. There are many other factors must be concerned to define a dialect than geographical ones as different social or economic classes use different languages according to their own requirements.

Vocabulary

A person's vocabulary is the body of words used in a particular language. The term lexicon is closely associated with the term vocabulary. But the term lexicon has two meanings: "the words of a language and one's mental storehouse for these words" [11].

Grammar

Grammar is a level of linguistics which is the set of rules concerned with the composition of clauses, phrases, and words in any given language. Grammar is "a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language" [12]. It may include morphology, syntax, phonetics, phonology, semantics, and pragmatics.

Morphology

It studies the forms and structures of words in a language. Palmer [13] opines that "Morphology is essentially the grammar of words and deals with the forms of words" (P.99).

Syntax

It deals with "the way in which words are combined to form setences" [14].

Noun

Richards *et al*. [12], defined that noun is " a word which (a) can occur as the subject or object of a verb or the object (complement) of a preposition (b) can be modified by an adjective (c) can be used with determiners" (p. 196).

Pronoun

It refers to a word which can replace a noun.

Preposition

Richards *et al.* [12] defined that preposition is "a word used with nouns, pronouns and gerunds, to link them grammatically to other words."

Inflection

The way a word adds an affix is called inflection.

Case

Case is the category that shows the grammatical function of a noun or pronoun. There are different kinds of cases, such as, nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive case. Nominative case occurs when the noun phrase function as the subject of a noun phrase. Richards *et al*. [12] presents accusative case as "the form of a noun or noun phrase which usually shows that the noun or noun phrase functions as the direct object of the verb in a sentence". Dative case refers to the indirect object of a sentence. Genitive case occurs when a noun modifies another noun.

Research Questions

This study focuses on some questions to investigate the extent of variations between Standard Bangla and Mymensingh dialect in relation with grammar. The research questions are in the following:
- Does the Standard Bangla differ from dialect in terms of grammatical variation?
- If there are differences in terms of grammar, how do they differ from each other?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Participant Observation

The participant observation method is followed by the researcher to collect data. Kothari [15] opines " Observation becomes a scientific tool and the method of

data collection for the researcher, when it serves a formulated research purpose, is systematically planned and recorded and is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability (p.96)." The researcher acts as an avid observer in this research. The researcher acts as a member of the subjects of the study while observing and recording speeches of the natives. The Sony ICD-PX333 digital flash voice recorder has been used to record the speeches of the speakers of Mymensingh dialect. Its frequency range is 20 to 20000 HZ.

DATA COLLECTION

The data collected for this research are from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data are compiled straightforwardly from the native speakers of Mymensingh. The speech in daily life of the people of Mymensingh is used as primary data to conduct the research. The researcher had to record the surreptitious speeches of the natives. Secondary data are collected for this study from different sources: books on dialect studies, published articles, and different grammar books regarding Bangla language studies.

Data Collection on Grammatical Variation

Observation data are transcribed from Bangla to English for comparative analysis. The recorded speeches of Mymensingh dialect have been compared with that of Standard language on the basis of variation in grammar.

Grammatical variation involves two types: morphology and syntax. The researcher comprises this chapter on articles, cases, numbers, nouns, pronouns, and tenses at the level of morphology. The researcher finds no syntactic variation between Standard Bangla and Mymensingh dialect.

Variation in Articles

The articles / -ta, -ti, -khana, -khani, -guli, -gulo, -tuku/ are the nature of definite articles in Mymensingh dialect as well as in Standard Bangla. But /-ta, -ti/ are turned into /-da/ and /gulo/ is turned into /gulan/ in Mymensingh dialect. Data collected on this issue are given below:

Table-1: Article variation

Standard Bangla	Transcription	Mymensingh Dialect	Transcription
Lokti jay	/lokʈi ɹay/	Lokda jay	/loktda ɹay/
Amguli bhalo	/amguli bʰalo/	Amgulan bhalo	/amgulan bʰalo/

Variation in Numbers

/-ra/, /-era/, /-guli/, /-gulo/, /-gula/, /-sob/, /-sokol/, /-bohu/ are the usual plural affixes used in both Standard Bangla and Mymensingh dialect. Too often, Native speakers of Mymensingh use the words 'hogol', 'bybak', 'mala', 'raidzzer' to express plurality.

Data collected on the variation in plural affixes are given below

Table-2: Variation in Plural Affixes

Standard Bangla	Transcription	Mymensingh Dialect	Transcription
Sokol manush bhalo na.	/ʃɔkɔl manuʃ bʰalo na/	Hogol manush bhalo na.	/hɔgɔl manuʃ bʰalo na/
Sob manush kothay jay?	/ʃob manuʃ kotʰay jay/	Bybak manush koi jay?	/bæbakmanuʃ kotʰay jay/
Sob manush kothay jay?	/ ʃob manuʃ kotʰay jay/	Mela manush kothay jay?	/mæla manuʃ kotʰay jay/
Sob manush kothay jay?	/ʃob manuʃ kotʰay jay/	Raidzzer manush kothay jay?	/raizzer manuʃ kotʰay jay/
Sob manush kothay jay?	/ ʃob manuʃ kotʰay jay/	Bohut manuh kothay jay?	/ bohuʈ manuʃ kotʰay jay/

Variation in Nouns

According to Haldar [1], there are four inflectional cases in Standard Bangla as also in east Bengal dialect such as, Nominative /-e/, Accusative dative /-re/, /-ere/; Instrumental-locative: /-e/, /--te/, /-t/, /-et/,/-ɔt/; Genitive : /-r/, /-er/ . The native speakers of Mymensingh use all of these inflections. But the researcher finds ungrammatical use of /-e/ as an inflection in Mymensingh dialect when it is to indicate a third person singular number.

Data collected on variations in nouns are given below:

Table-3: Variation in Inflection

Standard Bangla	Transcription	Mymensingh Dialect	Transcription
Rahim jay.	/rohim ɹɑɣ/	Rahime jay.	/rohim e ɹɑɣ/
Karim bhalo.	/korim bʰalo/	Karime bhalo.	/Korim e bʰalo/

Here, we see that noun takes ungrammatical suffix /e/ in Mymensingh dialect, such as, Rahim (e) jay; Karim(e) jay.

Variation in Pronouns

According to Haldar [1], Mymensingh dialect shows peculiarities regarding some pronouns though Mymensingh dialect shares with the standard Bangla almost the same sets of pronouns. For example, declension occurs in Mymensingh dialect very prominently. Declension is the inflection of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, articles to indicate number, case (nominative, accusative-dative, genitive). Here is the details description on declensions of pronouns.

Table-4: First Personal Pronoun: /ami/, 'I'

Group	Nominative		Accusative-Dative		Genitive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Standard Bangla	Ami, /ami/	Amra, /amra/	Amake, /amake/	Amaderke, /amaderke/	Amar, /amar/	Amader, /amader/
Mymensingh Dialect	Ami /ami/	Amra /amra/	Amare /amare/	Amago, /amago/ Amagore,/amagore/ Amgore, /amgore/ Angore, /angore/	Amar, /amar/	Amago, /amago/ Amgo, /amgo/ Amagor, /amagor/

Table-5: Second personal pronoun: /tumi/ 'you'

Group	Nominative		Accusative-Dative		Genitive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Standard Bangla	Tumi, /t̪umi/	Tomra, /tomra/	Tomake, /tomake/	Tomaderke, /tomad̪erke/	Tomar, /t̪ɔmar/	Tomader, /tomader/
Mymensingh Dialect	Tumi , /t̪umi/	Tora, /tɔmra/	Tore, /tɔre/	Torare, /tɔrare/ Togore / tɔgore/	Tor, /tɔr/	Torar, /tɔrar/ Togor, /tɔgor/

Table-6: Second Personal Pronoun: /tui/ 'you'

Group	Nominative		Accusative-Dative		Genitive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Standard Bangla	Tui, /t̪ui/	Tora, /tui/	Toke, /toke/	Toderke, /tod̪erke/	Tor, /tɔr/	Toder, /toder/
Mymensingh Dialect	Tui , /t̪ui/	Tora, /tora/	Tore, /tɔre/	Torare, /tɔre/ Togore / tɔgore/	Tor, /tɔr/	Torar, /tɔrar/ Togor, /tɔgor/

Table-7: Second personal pronoun /apni/, 'you' (honorific)

Group	Nominative		Accusative-Dative		Genitive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Standard Bangla	Apni, /apni/	Apnara, /apnara/	Apnake, /apnake/	Apnaderke, /apnad̪erke/	Apnar, /apnar/	Apnader, /apnader/
Mymensingh Dialect	Afni , /apʰni/	afnara, /apʰnara/	afnare, /apʰnare/	Afnarare, /apʰnarare/	Afnar, /apʰnar/	Afnarar, /apʰnarar/

Table-8: Third personal pronoun she, /ʃe/ (ordinary)

Group	Nominative		Accusative-Dative		Genitive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Standard Bangla	She, /ʃe/	Tara, /t̪ara/	Take, /t̪ake/	Taderke, /t̪aderk/	Tar, /t̪ar	Tader, /t̪ader/
Mymensingh Dialect	He(masculine) /he/ Tai(feminine) /t̪ai/	Hara,/hæra/ Tara, /t̪ara/ Taira (Feminine), /t̪aire/	Tare, /t̪are/ Taire, /t̪aire/	Tarare, /t̪arare/ Tagore, /tagore/	Tar, /t̪ar/ Tair, /t̪air/	Tagor, /t̪agɔr/ Tarar, /t̪arar/ Tairar / t̪airar/

Table-9: Third personal pronoun she /ʃe/ (honorific)

Group	Nominative		Accusative-Dative		Genitive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Standard Bangla	She /ʃe/	Tãra / tara/	Tãke / tãke/	Taderke / taderke/	Tar /tãr/	Tader / tader/
Mymensingh Dialect	Tain / tain/	Tainra / tainra/	Tainre / tainre/	Taingo / taingo/	Taingo / taingo/ Taingore / taingore/	Taingo / taingo/

Table-10: Ordinary 'e', 'this' (The near demonstrative)

Group	Nominative		Accusative-Dative		Genitive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Standard Bangla	Iha /iha/	Egulo /egulo/	Ihake /ihake/	Eguloke /iguloke/	Ihar /ihar/	eigulor /igulor/
Mymensingh Dialect	Eita /eita/	Era, /era/ Eitan, / eitan/ Egila, / eigula/	Ere /ere/ Eitare /eitare/ Ege /ege/	Erare /erare/ Eitanre /eitanre/ Egilare /egilare/	Er /er/ Eitar /eitar/	Erar /erar/ Eitaner / eitanre/

Table-11: /ini/, 'this' (honorific)

Group	Nominative		Accusative-Dative		Genitive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Standard Bangla	Ini, /ini/	Inara /inara/	Inake /inake/	Inaderke /inaderke/	Inar /inar/	Inader /inader/
Mymensingh Dialect	Ini /ini/	Enara /inara/	Enare /inare/	Enarare /inarare/	Enar /inar/	Enarar /inarar/

Table-12: Ordinary /o/, 'that' (The far demonstrative)

Group	Nominative		Accusative-Dative		Genitive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Standard Bangla	Uha, /uha/	Ogulo /ogula/	Uhake /uhake/	Oguloke /oguloke/	Uhar /uhar/	Oigular /oigular/
Mymensinh Dialect	Ou /ou/	Utara /utara/	Utare / utare/	Utarare / utarare/	Utar / utar/	Utarar / utarar/

Table-13: /uni/, 'that' (honorific)

Group	Nominative		Accusative-Dative		Genitive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Standard Bangla	Uni /uni/	Onara /onara/	Unake /unake/	Onaderke /onaderke/	Onar /onar/	Onader /onader/
Mymensingh Dialect	Uni /uni/	Onra /onra/	Onre /onre/	Onarare /onarare/	Unir /unir/	Onrar /onrar/

Variation in Tense

Haldar [1] opines that there are eight tenses in Bangla. These are Present Indefinite, Past Simple, Future Tense, Present Progressive, Present Perfect, Past Perfect, Imperative Present, and Imperative Future Tense. Haldar [1] said that the phonemic features of the tenses are divergent.

Data collected on variation in Tenses are given below:

Table-14: Present indefinite

Group	1st person	2nd Person	Inferior	2nd and 3rd Person (Honorific)	3rd Ordinary	Remarks
Standard Bangla	-i	-o, -ɔ	(i)s	(-e)n	-e, (-ẽ)	/-i/ is turn into /-ɔ/ regarding inferior person
Mymensingh dialect	-i	-o, -ɔ	(-ɔ)s	(-e)n	-e, (-ẽ)	

In this table 14, phoneme /-i/ is turned into /-ɔ/ in Mymensingh dialect regarding inferior person in the Present Indefinite tense.

In this table 15, Mymensingh dialect and Standard Bangla have total similar features regarding Past Simple Tense.

Table-15: Past simple

Group	1st person	2nd Person(Ordinary)	2nd Person (Inferior)	2nd and 3rd Person (Honorific)	3rd Person	Remarks
Standard Bangla	-I, -lam	-la, -le	-li	-len	-lɔ,-le	Totally Similar
Mymensingh dialect	-I, -lam	-la, -le	-li	-len	-lɔ,-le	

Table-16: Future tense

Group	1st person	2nd Person(Ordinary)	2nd Person (Inferior)	2nd and 3rd Person (Honorific)	3rd Person(Ordinary)	Remarks
Standard Bangla	-bɔ	-bae	-bi	-bɛn	-be	Dissimilar regarding 2nd Person (Inferior) and 3rd Person(Ordinary)
Mymensingh dialect	-mu,-bam	-bae,	-bɛ	-bɛn	-bɔ	

Here, we see the dissimilarity regarding 2nd Person (Inferior) and 3rd Person (Ordinary) in Future Tense.

In this table 17, Standard Bangla is totally different from Mymensingh dialect in terms of Present Progressive Tense.

In this table 18, Standard Bangla differs from Mymensingh dialect phonetically regarding Present Perfect tense.

Table-17: Present progressive

Group	1st person	2nd Person (Ordinary)	2nd Person (Inferior)	2nd and 3rd Person (Honorific)	3rd Person (Ordinary)	Remarks
Standard Bangla	-cʰi	-cʰo	- cʰiʃ	-cʰen	-cʰe	Totally dissimilar
Mymensingh dialect	-tasi	-tasɔ	- tasɔs	- tasoin	-tasɛ	

Table-18: Present perfect

Group	1st person	2nd Person (Ordinary)	2nd Person (Inferior)	2nd and 3rd Person (Honorific)	3rd Person (Ordinary)	Remarks
Standard Bangla	-cʰi	-cʰo	- cʰiʃ	-cʰen	-cʰe	Phonetic difference only
Mymensingh dialect	-si	-sɔ	- sɔs	- sɔin	-sɛ -sɔin	

Table-19: Past Perfect

Group	1st person	2nd Person (Ordinary)	2nd Person (Inferior)	2nd and 3rd Person (Honorific)	3rd Person (Ordinary)	Remarks
Standard Bangla	silen /c^hilen/	silo /c^hilo/	- c^hili	-c^{hil}en	-c^hilo	Totally Different
Mymensingh dialect	-silam	-sila,	- sili	- siloin	-sil	

In this table 19, standard Bangla and Mymensingh dialect have totally dissimilar features in terms of Past Perfect Tense.

In this table 20, Standard Bangla differs from Mymensingh dialect phonetically.

Table-20: Imperative present

Group	1st person	2nd Person (Ordinary)	2nd Person (Inferior)	2nd and 3rd Person (Honorific)	3rd Person (Ordinary)	Remarks
Standard Bangla	- nil	/kɔro/	/- kɔr/	- /koruk/	- /korun/	Phonetic difference only
Mymensingh dialect	-nil	/- kɔrə/	/- kɔr/	/- kɔruk/	/- kɔrun/	

Table-21: Imperative future

Group	1st person	2nd Person (Ordinary)	2nd Person (Inferior)	2nd and 3rd Person (Honorific)	3rd Person (Ordinary)	Remarks
Standard Bangla	- nil	/koro/	/- koriʃ/	- /koruk/	- /korun/, /korben/	Phonetic difference only
Mymensingh dialect	-nil	/- kɔiro/	/- kɔriʃ/	/koruk/	- /korun/, /kɔrɛn/	

In this table 21, Standard Bangla differs from Mymensingh dialect phonetically.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

It is a stony task to define the extent of grammatical variation as Reed [9] opines, "While it is possible to comprehend the entire range of a given speaker's pronunciation by studying fairly small samples of his language, grammatical details are harder to organize". Furthermore, Reed [9] also postulated that it is particularly the grammatical aspects of language that receive the greatest attention in our schools, so that regional differences are complicated in proportion to the amount and type of formal educational influence in given areas(pp 37)." Grammatical variation includes two issues: Morphology and Syntax. The persistence of morphological diversity in Mymensingh dialect is reflected in the speech of the native speakers of Mymensingh. Different issues, such as, parts of speech, number, gender, article, case, tense, are discussed here at the level of morphology. The articles / -ta, -ti, -khana, -khani, -guli, -gulo, -tuku/ are the nature of definite articles in standard Bangla. But /-ta, -ti/ are turned into /-da/ and /gulo/ is turned into /gulan/ in Mymensingh dialect. Noun takes ungrammatical suffix /e/ in Mymensingh dialect, such as, Rahim (e) jay; Karim(e) jay.

Mymensingh dialect takes plural affix and plural number together which is also ungrammatical. The native speakers of Mymensingh use the words 'hogol', 'bybak', 'mala', 'raidzzer' instead of the standard Bangla word 'sob' to express plurality. The natives of Mymensingh use peculiar pronouns such as 'hera', 'tainra'. Regarding tense, the native speakers of Mymensingh also use distinctive verbal affix such as /-mu,- bam/.

It is found that syntactic variation is absent in Mymensingh dialect. Grammatical variation is ungrammatical as Reed [9] opines that "all grammatical changes may be regarded as legitimized errors". As grammatical errors are not allowed in formal situation, the speakers of Mymensingh region should be concerned about the usage of Standard Bangla. This research may play a fundamental role to persuade the natives of Mymensingh to wipe out their ungrammatical treatment of language in a proper ambience.

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