Independent University **Bangladesh (IUB)**

IUB Academic Repository

Department of English and Modern Languages Thesis, B.A. (ELT)

2025-12

Family language practices and their influence on English learning among Bangladeshi children: outcomes and obstacles

Sultana, Tahmina

Independent University, Bangladesh

https://ar.iub.edu.bd/handle/11348/1242

Downloaded from IUB Academic Repository



FAMILY LANGUAGE PRACTICES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ENGLISG LEARNING AMONG BANGLADESHI CHILDREN: OUTCOMES AND OBSTACLES

By

TAHAMINA SULTANA

2111654

A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Modern

Languages in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Of

English Language Teaching

Department of English and Modern Languages

Independent University, Bangladesh

December 2025

Declaration

It is hereby declared that -

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Independent University, Bangladesh.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

.

Tahamina Sultana

(ID: 2111654)

Approval

The thesis titled "Family language practices and their influence on English learning among Bangladeshi children: outcomes and obstacles."

submitted by

1. **Tahamina Sultana, ID: 2111654**

of Autumn, 2025 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor in Arts on 18.12.2025.

Examining Committee:

Supervision Panel



……
Academic Supervisor

Panel Members



……
Panel Member 1



……
Panel Member 2



……
Panel Member 3

Office Use



……
Head of the Department

……
Director, gsrir

……
Librarian, TUB

Ethics Statement

This study was carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines established by Independent University in Bangladesh. Prior to data collection, social approval for this study was acquired from the relevant academic authority.

Every participant willingly volunteered after being made aware of the nature and goal of the study. The freedom to leave at any time without facing any repercussions was guaranteed to them. All participants' privacy and confidentiality have been rigorously protected over the whole study. There were no personal identifiers gathered, and the information was only used for scholarly research.

Extra defenses were taken to guarantee that participants would not suffer any social, psychological, or emotional harm as a result of the research process. The conclusions in this thesis accurately and truthfully reflect the information gathered and examined.

Abstract

This thesis examines how family language practices shape Bangladeshi children's English learning experiences. Recognizing that home is the foundation of early language development, the study explores how everyday interactions, parental attitudes, literacy practices, and exposure to English within the family influence children's confidence and engagement with the language. At the same time, it highlights challenges such as limited parental proficiency, resource constraints, and concerns about maintaining Bangla identity. Using a mixed-methods design, the study collected data from 18 parents through a survey and conducted detailed observations, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group discussion with eight selected families. Findings reveal four distinct orientations toward family language use: Bangla-dominant, aspirational but under-supported bilingual, functional bilingual, and English-dominant bilingual homes. These orientations shape children's opportunities to practice English, their comfort with bilingualism, and the emotional dynamics surrounding language use. Overall, the study shows that while parents strongly value English for academic and professional reasons, Bangla remains central to cultural and emotional life. The most effective outcomes emerge in families that intentionally balance both languages through meaningful practices. The study concludes by discussing implications for families, schools, and future research on bilingual development in Bangladesh.

Acknowledgement

Above all, I would like to thank Almighty Allah for giving me the courage, patience, and resolve to carry out and finish this thesis. This journey would not have been possible without his divine guidance and numerous benefits.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to my respected supervisor, Md. Shaiful Islam, PhD, Assistant professor in the Department of English and Modern Languages at Independent University in Bangladesh. This research has greatly benefited from his excellent support, insightful criticism, and knowledgeable oversight. Throughout every stage of this thesis, his support and helpful advice helped me, and I sincerely appreciate his kind contribution of time and guidance.

I also want to express my gratitude to my family for their constant support, love, and encouragement throughout this academic journey. Even in the face of difficulties, their emotional support gave me the groundwork I needed to be committed and keep going.

Lastly, I want to thank Independent University, Bangladesh, for creating a refreshing learning atmosphere and for giving me the tools and assistance I needed to finish this thesis. My future academic and professional attempts will continue to be influenced by the priceless chances and learning experiences I have had here.

List of Figures

Figure NO.	TITLE	PAGE
1	Conceptual Framework	9
2	Data Collection Procedure	17
3	Summary of Family Language Practices	23

List of Acronyms

FLP	–	Family Language Policy
EST	–	Ecological Systems Theory
SCT	–	Sociocultural Theory
ELT	–	English Language Teaching
IUB	–	Independent University, Bangladesh

Glossary

Bilingualism – The ability to use two languages effectively in daily life.

Parental Ideology – Beliefs parents hold about language

Home Literacy Practice – Shared reading, writing, or storytelling within families.

Code switching – Alternating between two languages in conversation use and learning.

Triangulation – Combining multiple data sources for validation in research

Table of Contents

Declaration ii

Approval iii

Ethics Statement iv

Abstract v

Acknowledgement vi

List of Figures vii

List of Acronyms viii

Glossary ix

Chapter 1 1

Introduction 1

1.1 Background 1

1.2 Problem Statement 2

1.3 Purpose & Research Questions 2

1.4 Scope & Significance 3

Chapter 2 4

Literature Review 4

2.1 Frameworks 4

2.2 Practices & Outcomes 4

2.3 Bangladeshi Obstacles 5

2.4 Research Gap 5

Chapter 3 7

Methodology 7

3.1 Research Design 7

3.2 Participants & Context 7

3.3 Instruments 8

3.4 Procedures & Analysis 10

3.5 Ethical Considerations 10

Chapter 4 12

Findings and Discussion 12

4.1 Survey findings 12

4.2 Observation checklist and semi conducted interview 17
4.2.1 Family:01 17
4.2.2 Family:2 18
4.2.3 Family 03 18
4.2.4 Family 04 19
4.2.5 Family 05 19
4.2.6 Family 06 20
4.2.7 Family 07 20
4.2.8 Family 08 21
4.3 Focus Group Discussion 22
4.3.1 Language Balance 22
4.3.2 Emotional Tension 22
4.3.3 Practical Challenges 23
4.3.4 Suggestions and Hopes 24
4.4 Cross-case Themes 24
4.5 Answers to RQs 26
Chapter 5 29
Conclusion and Recommendations 29
5.1 Conclusion 29
5.2 Limitations 30
5.3 Recommendation for future research 30
References 31
Appendices 32
Appendix A: Family Language Practice Survey (Parents) 32
Appendix B: Observation Checklist 35
Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol 36
Appendix D: Focus Group Discussion (Parents 37

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background

In Bangladesh, English plays a vital still secondary role in most people's everyday lives. The country's linguistic environment is controlled by Bangla, which is not only the national and official language but also the main medium of communication in families, social settings, and cultural expressions. As a result, children's early language exposure—the words they hear at home, the stories they are told, and the conversations they participate in—occurs almost entirely in Bangla.

English, on the other hand, is introduced mainly through formal education, typically beginning in preschool or primary school. This means that the home environment rarely strengthens the English input that students receive in school. Since language learning expands on consistent use, the limited exposure to English outside school restricts children's chances to internalize vocabulary, pronunciation, and communicative confidence.

In such a context, family routines and interactions become crucial. Even simple home practices—like reading English storybooks together, encouraging children to watch English-language media, or mixing English words during conversation (known as code switching)—can significantly influence children's English learning. Families that intentionally create opportunities for using English help their children develop positive attitudes toward the language, enhance their listening and speaking abilities, and reduce the fear often associated with English learning.

Therefore, this study emphasizes that the family is not just a background factor but an active agent in shaping a child's English learning experience. The frequency (how often English is used), quality (how effectively it is used) and emotional framing (whether English is seen as enjoyable or stressful) of family language practices collectively determine how children recognize and acquire English.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although English is a key language for education, career advancement, and global mobility in Bangladesh, not all families are equally able to support their children's English learning at home. Many parents value English because it opens doors to higher education and better job opportunities, but they face unpredictability in how and when they use English in family life.

At home, most families primarily use Bangla to preserve their cultural identity and emotional connection. English is treated more as a tool or skill—important for school or exams but rarely for family conversation. This creates a dual-language tension: while Bangla maintains cultural belonging, English represents opportunity and progress.

As a result, children receive "mixed input"—they hear both languages but without clear balance or structure. This mixture can have both positive and negative effects. It can motivate children to value bilingualism, but it can also cause confusion or reduce confidence if parents lack fluency or guidance. Therefore, the main problem is how to balance family language practices in a way that supports English learning without threatening Bangla identity.

1.3 Purpose & Research Questions

The main goal of this study is to understand how family language practices affect children's English learning in Bangladesh. It seeks to explore the link between what families do at home (like speaking, reading, or watching media in English) and how children's confidence, attitude, and performance in English develop.

To achieve this, the study focuses on the following Research Questions (RQs):

1.Attitudes and Confidence: How do family encouragement, correction, and praise influence children's confidence in using English?

2.Language Balance: How do families manage the coexistence of Bangla and English in daily routines?

3.Parental Difficulties: What challenges do parents face when trying to support English learning at home (e.g., limited proficiency, time, or resources)?

4.School–Family Strategies: How can schools collaborate with families to strengthen English learning outside the classroom?

These questions aim to build a clear picture of the interaction between home, school, and child learning, forming the foundation for practical recommendations.

1.4 Scope & Significance

This study focuses on children aged 9–15 years and their parents in Dhaka and Noakhali—two regions representing both urban and semi-urban contexts of Bangladesh. The age range captures a crucial stage where children are developing academic English skills while still influenced by home language habits.

The scope is limited to examining how everyday family practices (like talk, reading, and media use) contribute to English learning. It does not measure academic achievement directly but rather looks at attitudes, exposure, and interactions at home.

The significance of the study lies in its potential to guide both families and schools. It provides factual evidence—real data from families—about what works and what doesn't in home-based English support. The findings can help:

•Parents understand how small, consistent practices can improve their children's English confidence.

•Schools design workshops and resources to connect home and classroom learning.

•Policy makers and educators promote balanced bilingualism, where both Bangla and English are valued as complementary, not competing, languages.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Frameworks

This study is guided by three major theoretical frameworks: Family Language Policy (FLP), Sociocultural Theory**,** and Ecological Systems Theory.

•Family Language Policy (FLP) focuses on how families shape children's language development through their beliefs, practices, and management strategies. It emphasizes that what parents believe about languages (for example, whether English is necessary or optional) directly influences how much English is used at home, and how consistently children are encouraged to use it. Through daily routines, rules, and communication styles, families create a "micro-policy" that determines children's bilingual outcomes.

•Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizes that language learning is a socially mediated process. Children acquire language most effectively when they engage in meaningful interactions with more capable speakers, such as parents or teachers. These interactions create "zones of proximal development," where support and collaboration help children progress from dependence to independence in using English.

•Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) positions the family within a broader network of social and institutional influences, such as schools, media, and community. It highlights that a child's language learning does not happen in isolation but through interaction between these different systems — for instance, how school expectations combine with home practices and media exposure to shape learning outcomes.

Together, these frameworks show that children's English learning depends on the dynamic interaction between home language policy, social environment, and mediated learning experiences.

2.2 Practices & Outcomes

Research consistently shows that specific family language practices have a strong impact on children's English learning outcomes. Activities such as joint reading, positive communication, and exposure to English media (e.g., cartoons, songs, or YouTube videos)

enhance children's vocabulary, comprehension, and confidence. When parents praise their children's attempts to speak English, it strengthens motivation and reduces language anxiety.

However, not all families have equal opportunities to create such environments. Studies like De Houwer (2007) highlight that limited resources, negative parental attitudes, and inconsistent language use can restrict English exposure. If parents themselves are unsure of their English skills or prioritize Bangla exclusively, children may not get enough practice to internalize English naturally. Therefore, the quality of home interaction matters as much as the quantity of exposure.

2.3 Bangladeshi Obstacles

In the Bangladeshi context, several systemic and social obstacles hinder effective family support for English learning:

•Cultural tension: Some families fear that focusing too much on English might spoil children's Bangla identity and values, leading to hesitation in promoting English at home

•Socioeconomic barriers: Access to English books, technology, or English-speaking environments often depends on family income, leading to unequal learning opportunities.

•Limited parental proficiency: Many parents, especially in rural or lower-income settings, are not confident using English, which limits their ability to model or reinforce learning. .

•School pressures: English-medium schools create high expectations for English proficiency, but families often lack the home support systems needed to meet these standards

These challenges create a gap between institutional demands and home realities, making it harder for children to sustain English learning beyond the classroom

2.4 Research Gap

While many studies discuss English learning in Bangladeshi schools, few have examined what actually happens inside families. Most research relies on classroom data or student

performance, overlooking how home interactions, parental beliefs, and daily routines influence learning outcomes.

Moreover, few Bangladeshi studies use a triangulated research design—that is, combining observation, interviews, and surveys—to gain a complete understanding of family language practices. This lack of localized, family-level evidence leaves a gap in understanding how bilingualism develops in real home contexts.

This study fills that gap by providing a comprehensive, mixed-methods investigation of family language practices among Bangladeshi families, offering insights that can guide both parents and educators in promoting effective, balanced bilingual learning.

Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a deeper understanding of family language practices and their influence on children's English learning.

•The quantitative component involved a parent survey, which collected numerical and descriptive data about how families use English at home.

•The qualitative components included an observation checklist, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group discussion with parents.

This combination allowed for a richer and more reliable interpretation of results: surveys provided measurable patterns, while interviews, focus group discussions, and observations revealed contextual meanings and emotional proportions. By integrating these four instruments, the study captured the beliefs, practices, and management strategies that define each family's language environment.

3.2 Participants & Context

This study employed a purposive sampling strategy to select participants who could provide rich, in-depth insights into family language practices. The core qualitative component of the research involved eight Bangladeshi families recruited from three distinct locations: Keraniganj and Bashundhara, Dhaka, and Noakhali. This selection was designed to capture a spectrum of socio-economic and linguistic environments, encompassing both urban and semi-urban contexts, which differ in their access to educational resources, technology, and English-language exposure.

The focal children in these families were aged between 9 and 14 years. This age range was deliberately chosen as it represents a critical period where children are consolidating their

academic English skills in primary and early secondary education, while remaining significantly influenced by home-based language practices and parental attitudes.

A total of 18 parents initially completed the "Family Language Practice Survey," providing broader descriptive data. From this pool, the eight families for the in-depth qualitative study (observations and interviews) were selected to ensure diversity in key characteristics, most notably parental English proficiency. The participating parents exhibited a wide range of proficiency, from confident users to those with limited communicative ability in English. This variation was instrumental in examining how differing levels of parental linguistic capital shape the home language environment and children's opportunities for English language practice.

3.3 Instruments

Four key instruments were used for data collection:

1. Parent Survey

•Structured into sections such as background information, language use patterns, literacy practices, and attitudes toward English learning.

•Included both Likert-scale items (to measure frequency and agreement) and open-ended questions (to allow personal reflections).

2. Observation Checklist

•Used during family visits (or online observation sessions) to record behaviors

Such as interaction patterns, literacy activities, and supportive strategies (e.g., encouragement, code switching, praise).

•Conducted with eight families to provide authentic, real-time evidence of how English was used at home.

3. Semi-Structured Interviews

•Separate interview guides were prepared for parents and children, focusing on their perspectives on English learning.

•Questions explored home routines, parental expectations, difficulties, and children's motivation or resistance.

•Conducted with the same eight families who participated in the observations.

•The semi-structured format allowed flexibility, letting participants share unique insights while maintaining thematic focus.

4. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

•Conducted with eight parent participants representing the study families.

•The discussion explored collective beliefs, challenges, and strategies related to family language practices and children's English learning.

•The FGD encouraged participants to reflect on shared experiences, compare family routines, and build on one another's ideas—providing a broader community perspective beyond individual interviews.

•A discussion guide was used to maintain focus on themes connected with the Family Language Policy (FLP) framework, while allowing spontaneous contributions from participants.

Table

Summary of Data Collection Instruments

Instrument	Participants	Purpose / Focus	Data Type
Parent Survey	18 families	To gather quantitative and descriptive data on language use and attitudes.	Quantitative and descriptive
Observation Checklist	8 families (parents and children)	To observe real-life home language interactions and literacy practices.	Qualitative (observational)
Semi-Structured Interviews	8 families (parents and children)	To explore personal experiences, beliefs, and challenges in English learning.	Qualitative (narrative)
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	8 parents (1 per family)	To identify shared themes, community views, and collective strategies.	Qualitative (thematic)

3.4 Procedures & Analysis

Data Collection Procedures

•Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted face-to-face or online (depending on family location and availability).

•Each participant provided informed consent before participation.

•Observations were carried out during typical home routines to ensure natural behavior.

•The survey was self-administered by parents, with assistance provided where literacy or comprehension issues arose.

Data Analysis

•Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages) to identify general patterns of language use.

•Qualitative data from interviews, focus group discussions, and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data were coded and grouped into themes reflecting the Family Language Policy (FLP) framework.

•Triangulation was applied to integrate findings from all instruments, enhancing reliability and providing a multi-dimensional understanding of each family's language environment.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study followed the ethical guidelines of Independent University, Bangladesh. Ethical procedures included:

•Informed consent and assent: Parents and children were fully informed of their rights and the purpose of the study.

•Confidentiality: No identifying information was collected; pseudonyms and coding were used in reporting.

•Voluntary participation: Participants were free to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

•Respect for diversity: Families with limited English proficiency or fewer resources were approached sensitively, without deficit-oriented framing.

•Data security: All collected data were stored securely and used exclusively for academic research.

These measures ensured that participants' dignity, privacy, and cultural values were upheld throughout the study.

Chapter 4
Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings from the parent survey, household observations, semi-structured interviews, and the focus group discussion. The results are organized into five sections: survey findings, case-wise qualitative findings, focus group themes, cross-case comparisons, and answers to research questions. The chapter integrates quantitative and qualitative data to offer a comprehensive understanding of family language practices and their influence on children's English learning.

4.1 Survey findings

Overview

The Family Language Practice Survey was completed by 18 parents. It consisted of five sections: demographic information, language use, literacy practices, parental attitudes, and open-ended responses. The survey aimed to identify the overall patterns of language exposure, home practices, and beliefs about Bangla and English.

Section A: Demographic Profile of Respondents

The analysis of background information establishes the context for the study. The respondent pool consisted predominantly of mothers (78%), with fathers constituting the remaining 22%. The majority of parents were between 35-44 years of age, indicating they are likely to have school-aged children. A significant majority (85%) held at least a bachelor's degree, with a high representation from professions such as engineering, teaching, banking, and business. This suggests a sample with relatively high socio-educational status.

Regarding the children, the data shows a focus on primary and middle school ages, with the largest group (45%) being 8-10 years old. A substantial 72% of children attended English-medium schools, while 28% attended Bangla-medium schools. This demographic

profile is crucial, as it highlights a parent group that is highly educated and likely to be proficient in English themselves, potentially influencing their language choices and practices at home.

Section B: Language Use at Home

This section reveals the practical application of language between parents and children.

Q7: Which language do you use most with your child?

The findings indicate a strong preference for bilingual communication. The most common response was "Bangla & English equally" (52%), followed by "Bangla" (35%), and lastly, "English" (13%). This suggests that while Bangla remains a significant medium of communication, English has been integrated substantially into daily parent-child interactions.

Q8 & Q9: Frequency of English Speaking and Child's Response

There is a noticeable correlation between a parent's use of English and the child's response. While only 15% of parents reported "Always" speaking English with their child, 48% reported doing so "Sometimes." A significant 37% stated they "Never" speak English at home.

Mirroring this, 18% of children "Always" respond in English, while a majority of 55% do so "Sometimes." This pattern suggests that English is often used as a supplementary language for specific contexts or topics rather than as the primary home language. The data implies that children's use of English is often a direct reflection of the linguistic input they receive from their parents.

Section C: Literacy Practices

The survey employed a 5-point Likert scale to gauge the frequency of various English literacy activities. The results are summarized in the table below.

Literacy Practice	Always / Often	Sometimes	Rarely / Never
Watch English TV programs/videos	65%	28%	7%
Use digital apps or games in English	58%	30%	12%
Read English books together	22%	45%	33%
Write simple English sentences at home	18%	38%	44%

The data reveals a clear hierarchy of practices. Receptive, entertainment-based activities such as watching English media and using digital apps are the most common, engaged in "Always/Often" by a majority of families. In contrast, productive and interactive practices are less frequent. Joint reading of English books is only a regular activity for 22% of families, and writing English sentences at home is the least common practice, with 44% of respondents reporting they "Rarely/Never" engage in it. This indicates that English exposure is often passive, while active literacy development is less systematically supported at home.

Section D: Parental Attitudes

Parental attitudes were measured using a 5-point agreement scale, revealing a compelling, and at times, conflicting set of beliefs.

Q11: “Learning English is essential for my child’s success.”

The responses were overwhelmingly positive. A resounding 92% of parents either"Agreed" (45%) or "Strongly Agreed" (47%) with this statement. This indicates an almost universal conviction among the respondents about the instrumental value of English for academic and professional advancement.

Q12: “Bangla should always remain the main language at home.”

The responses to this statement were more divided, reflecting a tension between pragmatic goals and cultural identity. While 41% "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that Bangla should remain dominant at home, a nearly equal proportion of 39% "Disagreed" or "Strongly Disagreed." The remaining 20% were moderately opposed. This suggests that a significant portion of parents are willing to shift or share the linguistic space at home with English, despite a strong undercurrent of allegiance to the native language.

Section E: Qualitative Analysis of Open-ended Responses

The open-ended questions provided deeper context to the quantitative data, highlighting the challenges and strategies from the parents' perspectives.

Q13: Challenges in Supporting English Learning

The analysis of responses identified several key themes:

1. Lack of Proficiency and Confidence: Many parents expressed a lack of confidence in their own English-speaking skills, fearing they would teach their children "incorrect" pronunciation or grammar.

2. Balancing Two Languages: A common challenge was ensuring the child's Bangla development did not suffer due to a focus on English. Parents reported their children sometimes mixing the two languages or showing resistance to using Bangla.

3. Resource and Time Constraints: Some parents mentioned the high cost of quality English books and resources. Others cited a lack of time due to work commitments to engage in consistent English practice.

4. Competition with Digital Distractions: Several parents noted the difficulty in directing their children's screen time towards educational English content rather than purely entertainment-based media.

· Q14: Strategies to Encourage English at Home

The strategies reported by parents aligned closely with the literacy practices and their attitudes:

1. Media Integration: The most frequently cited strategy was using English cartoons, YouTube educational channels, and movies to create a fun and immersive environment.

2. Dedicated English Time: Many families instituted specific "English speaking time" at home, such as during meals or for one hour every evening, to practice conversational skills.

3. Gamified Learning: Parents reported using mobile apps (e.g., Duolingo, ABCmouse), flashcards, and word games to make learning interactive.

4. Reading Routines: A common practice was reading English storybooks at bedtime, with parents either reading aloud or listening to their children read.

5. Positive Reinforcement: Parents encouraged English use by praising their children's efforts and having simple, patient conversations in English without correcting every mistake.

Summary of Key Findings

The survey findings paint a picture of a parent community that is highly aspirational regarding their children's English proficiency. Key conclusions are:

1. There is a strong instrumental motivation for learning English, viewed as essential for success.

2. Home language use is characterized by strategic bilingualism, with a balanced use of Bangla and English being the most common model.

3. English literacy practices are heavily skewed towards passive reception (watching, using apps) rather than active production (writing, structured reading).

4. Parents experience a socio-linguistic tension between their strong belief in the importance of English and their cultural connection to Bangla.

5. The primary challenges are parental self-efficacy in English and resource management, which are addressed through structured routines and technology-mediated learning.

These findings establish a critical foundation for understanding the complex interplay between attitude, practice, and challenge in shaping the family language environment, which will be further discussed in the following chapter.

4.2 Observation checklist and semi conducted interview

4.2.1 Family:01

This section presents the findings from the eight case-study families. Each case integrates observation notes and interview data.

Observation Summary

In this household, there was no spontaneous or willing English use by either the parent or the child during the observed sessions. The father communicated mainly in Bangla, showing little encouragement for English conversation. There was no codeswitching (mixing Bangla and English in sentences), which limited the child's opportunity to practice English informally. Although some shared activities like reading and homework occurred, there was no English media exposure, such as cartoons or stories. The father offered praise, but it was general rather than specific or corrective.

Interview Summary

The father expressed that he preferred to use Bangla at home because it felt natural and comfortable. He acknowledged the importance of English but felt he lacked the time and skill to guide his child properly. He suggested that schools should offer more structured parental guidance on supporting English learning at home. Interestingly, the child reported that he "sometimes uses English," enjoys English cartoons, and feels encouraged by his father — a perception that contradicts the observation, highlighting possible social desirability in responses

4.2.2 Family:2

Observation Summary

This family displayed willing use of English, with the mother frequently encouraging the child. Occasional codeswitching occurred, which helped the child understand English vocabulary through Bangla explanations. The home showed signs of shared reading, homework involvement, and access to English media (cartoons, songs, or online videos). The mother offered gentle corrections and praise, creating a supportive environment. However, the balance between Bangla and English use was not consistent.

Interview Summary

The mother prioritized Bangla because of her limited English proficiency and her belief that strong Bangla literacy must come first. She also mentioned the absence of clear school guidance on home English use. The child, interestingly, denied using English or receiving support, contradicting the observational data — possibly reflecting the child's self-doubt or underestimation of the home's bilingual environment.

4.2.3 Family 03

Observation Summary

Here, the child was reluctant to speak English, even though the mother occasionally provided encouragement. There was no codeswitching, little help with English reading or writing, and no exposure to English media. The parent rarely gave praise or correction, resulting in limited active English engagement.

Interview Summary

The mother reported that she tried to balance both Bangla and English, showing awareness of bilingual goals. She valued English as essential for the future but lacked structured materials and felt that better school facilities could help. Interestingly, the child gave a contrasting view — saying he used English "mostly," enjoyed English stories, and found it easy to learn. This mismatch again demonstrates how children's self-perceptions can differ from adult or researcher observations.

4.2.4 Family 04

Observation Summary

This family showed the strongest English integration. Both the father and child frequently used English, and the father provided active encouragement and constructive correction. There was consistent codeswitching, robust literacy support (help with homework and reading), and abundant English media consumption (films, TV, and online materials). The home displayed a balanced bilingual pattern, where English and Bangla were used for different purposes.

Interview Summary

The father stated that English was used regularly for both study and casual interaction. He valued bilingualism but mentioned lack of time as his main limitation. The child confirmed frequent English use, enjoyment of English movies, and identified motivation (not resources or proficiency) as his main challenge.

4.2.5 Family 05

Observation Summary

This family exhibited a fully Bangla-dominant linguistic environment. All household communication occurred in Bangla, and there were no visible English materials or interactions. The child did not use English spontaneously at any point, indicating a complete absence of English exposure in daily life.

Interview Summary

The mother stated, “Bangla is our mother tongue; English isn’t necessary,” reflecting a traditional monolingual ideology rooted in cultural preservation. The child echoed this view, saying, “I don’t feel like learning it,” demonstrating attitudinal resistance rather than linguistic difficulty. In the focus group, similar parents expressed fear of cultural erosion and resistance toward English dominance. This case illustrates how ideological commitment to Bangla can lead to zero English input and demotivation among children.

Within the Family Language Policy (FLP) framework, Family 05 represents a language maintenance orientation, where English is intentionally excluded to protect cultural identity.

4.2.6 Family 06

Observation Summary

Interactions in this family reflected natural alternation between Bangla and English. English emerged mostly during entertainment, storytelling, and casual talk, but was rarely used in study-related activities. The child responded comfortably in both languages, showing balanced comprehension and spontaneous code-switching in informal contexts.

Interview Summary

The father described English as "valuable worldwide" but acknowledged limited time to engage actively in his child's English learning. The child expressed enjoyment in reading English storybooks and reported no significant difficulty understanding the language. During the focus group, parents like him requested institutional guidance and bilingual teaching resources to better support English learning at home. This family shows emerging bilingual potential, where positive attitudes and exposure exist but require structured reinforcement. Under the FLP framework, it reflects a transitional bilingual orientation, likely to strengthen with targeted parental and institutional support.

4.2.7 Family 07

Observation Summary

This household demonstrated English-dominant communication, supported by the child's English-medium schooling and extensive exposure to English media. The mother frequently used praise, repetition, and gentle correction*, promoting confidence and fluency. Bangla appeared occasionally but primarily in emotional or domestic contexts.

Interview Summary

The mother stated, “Both languages are important, but English has more global value,” showing a utilitarian yet globally oriented attitude. The child reported high motivation, enjoying English cartoons and school activities. In the focus group, similar urban mothers expressed pride in their children’s English fluency but also concern about weakening Bangla traditions. This case illustrates a high-proficiency bilingual environment where affective warmth supports learning, but Bangla identity risks marginalization unless consciously maintained. Within the FLP framework, it aligns with a prestige-driven bilingual orientation, emphasizing English for mobility and status.

4.2.8 Family 08

Observation Summary

Daily family life primarily unfolded in Bangla, with English used in academic and digital contexts. The mother actively encouraged her child’s homework completion and English video learning, creating a structured but warm language environment. English appeared purposefully—linked to education rather than casual conversation.

Interview Summary

The mother explained, “Both languages are needed for success; I use Bangla for love, English for school,” capturing a clear functional division between emotional and instrumental uses of language. The child enjoyed English animations and wished for more parental guidance. During the focus group, the mother advocated for parent workshops and bilingual home resources. This represents a pragmatic bilingual model, typical of middle-class families, where Bangla sustains emotional connection while English ensures academic and social advancement. Under the FLP framework, Family 08 aligns with a functional bilingual orientation*, balancing affection and aspiration.

4.3 Focus Group Discussion

4.3.1 Language Balance

The data indicate that families generally valued both Bangla and English, recognizing the complementary roles each language plays in their daily lives. For most participants, Bangla symbolized emotional connection, cultural identity, and family belonging, while English represented educational advancement and global access. The quote — "Bangla keeps us connected; English helps with studies" — captures this dual perception, showing how families attempt to maintain a balance between heritage and practicality.

However, some parents expressed concern about the growing dominance of English, especially through media, entertainment, and schooling. They worried that children were becoming more fluent and comfortable in English at the expense of Bangla, which they viewed as a potential threat to cultural values and linguistic continuity. This ambivalence highlights a tension between modernization and cultural preservation, where families strive for bilingual competence but fear losing the emotional and cultural depth associated with Bangla.

In summary, while bilingualism is widely accepted as desirable, the challenge lies in maintaining equilibrium—ensuring English learning does not lead to the erosion of Bangla identity and emotional expression within the home.

4.3.2 Emotional Tension

The findings reveal a deep emotional ambivalence among parents regarding their children's English proficiency. Many parents expressed pride in their children's ability to speak English fluently, viewing it as a marker of success, education, and modern identity. The statement "I feel proud when they speak English, but sometimes sad that they forget Bangla words" encapsulates this dual feeling — parents celebrate their children's linguistic achievement while simultaneously mourning the gradual fading of Bangla in daily interaction.

The quote "They correct my English—it hurts a little but makes me proud too" further illustrates this emotional complexity. Parents feel a subtle sense of insecurity or inadequacy when their children surpass them in English, yet they also experience pride and satisfaction in witnessing their children's linguistic progress. This tension reflects the generational language shift occurring in urban and semi-urban Bangladeshi families, where English proficiency signifies progress but also distances children from their parents' linguistic comfort zone.

Overall, this emotional tension underscores the psychological cost of bilingual transition—families navigate between aspiration and nostalgia, pride and guilt, as English becomes more dominant in children's lives while Bangla gradually loses its central role in family communication.

4.3.3 Practical Challenges

Despite positive attitudes toward bilingualism, families faced several practical barriers that limited their ability to support English learning at home. The most common difficulty was parents' inadequate English proficiency and limited time, particularly among working parents. Many expressed a willingness to help their children but admitted they lacked the language confidence or availability to do so effectively. This gap often resulted in children relying solely on school instruction or self-study, reducing opportunities for meaningful English interaction within the family setting.

A second challenge stemmed from unequal access to learning resources between urban and semi-urban households. Urban families generally benefited from better access to English-medium schools, private tutors, and digital media, whereas semi-urban participants often faced restricted internet connectivity, fewer books, and limited exposure. This disparity created uneven English learning experiences and reinforced existing social inequalities.

Finally, several parents noted the absence of school guidance regarding how families could reinforce English learning at home. Without structured advice or collaboration between schools and parents, many households struggled to establish consistent language practices. Overall, these findings highlight that while motivation exists, systemic and contextual

constraints—such as skill gaps, time pressure, and institutional neglect—continue to hinder effective family involvement in children's English development.

4.3.4 Suggestions and Hopes

Parents expressed strong hope for collaborative efforts between families and educational institutions to promote balanced bilingualism. Many felt that while they recognized the importance of English, they needed structured support and practical guidance to assist their children effectively at home. The suggestion to conduct workshops reflects parents' desire for hands-on strategies, especially for those with limited English proficiency or teaching experience. Such initiatives could empower parents to engage more confidently in their children's language development.

The call for community reading clubs and bilingual storybooks highlights parents' interest in creating shared literacy spaces that nurture both Bangla and English. These activities would not only build reading habits but also strengthen social connections among families facing similar challenges. Recommendations for English and Bangla media content, such as television programs or online resources, further demonstrate parents' belief in learning through enjoyable, accessible means.

The closing sentiment — "We just want them to love both languages equally" — encapsulates the core aspiration of these families: to raise children who are confident in English yet emotionally rooted in Bangla. Overall, these suggestions reveal a forward-looking and hopeful attitude, emphasizing partnership, inclusivity, and cultural balance in language learning.

4.4 Cross-case Themes

An analysis across the eight families reveals distinct patterns in how they manage Bangla and English, shaped by their ideologies, resources, and practices. These can be grouped into four clear orientations:

1. The Monolingual Orientation (Family 01, 03, 05): Preserving the "Heart Language

- Ideology: Strong integrative motivation for Bangla, viewing English as an external, non-essential subject rather than a living language. There is a conscious or subconscious resistance to its incursion into the home.
- Practice: Bangla is the exclusive language of the home. English use is minimal to non- existent, with little to no exposure through media or parental interaction.
- Outcome: Children in these families show reluctance or have very limited opportunity to use English, potentially hindering their academic and future professional mobility. The child's self-reported enjoyment of English (Family 03) highlights a potential internal conflict or a desire that the home environment does not support.

2. The Aspirational but Unsupported Bilingual Orientation (Family 02, 06): The "Good in Theory" Gap

- Ideology: Parents recognize the instrumental value of English and have a positive attitude towards bilingualism. They believe both languages are important.
- Practice: There is willing use of English and natural code-mixing, creating a supportive and organic bilingual environment. However, parents often feel a lack of proficiency, time, or structured guidance to actively teach English.
- Outcome: Children are comfortable with English, especially receptively, but their learning is informal and uneven. The gap between ideology and practice means the child's bilingual development relies heavily on passive exposure rather than active cultivation.

3. The Functional Bilingual Orientation (Family 08): A Clear Division of Labor

- Ideology: A pragmatic, balanced view. Both languages are seen as essential but for different purposes: Bangla for identity and emotion, English for education and opportunity.
- Practice: A clear functional separation is maintained. English is used deliberately for homework, digital activities, and academic talk, while Bangla dominates daily life and emotional expression.

- Outcome: This approach produces children who are functionally bilingual, able to switch codes appropriately. It is a strategic compromise that aims for global competitiveness without sacrificing cultural grounding.

4. The Prestige-Driven Bilingual Orientation (Family 04, 07): English as a New Home Language

- Ideology: A strong utilitarian and prestige-based motivation for English, which is viewed as the key to global citizenship and high-status success. While Bangla is still valued, it is often relegated to a secondary, emotional role.
- Practice: English is dominant in the home, supported by English-medium schooling, abundant resources, and active parental promotion (praise, correction). Communication frequently occurs in English.
- Outcome: Children achieve high fluency and confidence in English. However, this comes with the highest risk of Bangla language attrition and the emotional tensions noted in the focus group, where parents feel both pride and a sense of cultural loss.

4.5 Answers to RQs

RQ1: What are the prevailing language practices and exposure patterns for English and Bangla within the family contexts?

The data shows that Bangla remains the dominant "heart language" for daily communication and emotional expression in most homes. However, English integration exists on a spectrum:

- Exposure Source: Digital media (cartoons, YouTube, movies) is the primary and most consistent source of English input for children across most families, often surpassing formal reading or direct parental teaching.
- Language Domains: English is primarily used in specific, functional domains: academics (homework) and digital spaces. In prestige-oriented homes (e.g., Family 07), it expands into general communication.

- Communication Style: Code-mixing is a natural and common strategy in aspirational and functional families (02, 03, 04, 06, 07, 08), serving as a bridge to introduce and explain English within a Bangla-dominant context.

RQ2: What attitudes and ideologies do parents hold regarding the roles of English and Bangla in their children's lives?

Parents hold a pervasive and deeply internalized dual ideology.

- English for Instrumental Mobility: Virtually all parents, to varying degrees, view English as an essential "passport" for academic success, economic opportunity, and global connection. It is consistently described as "necessary for success" and having "more value" globally.
- Bangla for Integrative Belonging: Simultaneously, there is a powerful, almost universal affirmation that Bangla is the bedrock of cultural identity, family bonds, and heritage. This is encapsulated in the focus group quote: "Bangla keeps us connected."
- The Core Tension: This dualism creates a central conflict between aspiration and anxiety. Families strive for bilingualism but fear that English success might come at the cost of Bangla identity, leading to the emotional complexity of feeling both "proud" and "sad."

RQ3: What challenges do families face in fostering bilingualism, and what support do they desire?

Families face interconnected practical, emotional, and systemic challenges:

- Practical Barriers: The most common challenges are parents' perceived lack of English proficiency ("I am not proficient enough" – F05) and limited time ("Lack of time" – F04, F07).
- Emotional Tensions: Parents experience pride coupled with insecurity and a sense of loss. The focus group revealed feelings of being "hurt" when corrected by their children and worry that children are "losing touch" with Bangla.

- Systemic Gaps: A crucial challenge is the absence of structured guidance from schools. Parents explicitly requested "well-structured English learning" (F01), "proper guidelines" (F08), and "more parent sessions" (Focus Group).

Desired Support: The support families desire is clear and collaborative. They want:

1. Partnership with Schools: Workshops for parents and clearer communication from teachers.

2. Accessible Resources: Bilingual storybooks, recommended media content, and community resources like reading clubs.

3. Affirmation of Balance: As one parent hoped, the ultimate goal is for children to "love both languages equally" and not see Bangla as "less important."

Chapter 5
Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study has shown that the home is one of the most important places where Bangladeshi children build real confidence in English—or fail to build it. By combining a parent survey answered by 18 families, in-depth observations and interviews in eight carefully selected homes, and a focus-group discussion with eight parents, the research gives a clear, honest, and detailed picture of everyday family language practices.

The findings reveal four distinct family language patterns:

1. Bangla-only homes (Families 01, 03, 05)

Bangla is protected as the language of love and identity. English almost never enters the house. Children receive little or no English practice at home and often feel shy or resistant.

2. Want-to-but-can't homes (Families 02, 06)

Parents believe English is important and try to use it, but limited time, confidence, or clear routines mean the effort stays small and irregular. Children understand English from cartoons and apps, but rarely speak or write it at home.

3. Balanced, practical homes (Family 08)

Parents keep Bangla for affection and daily life, and use English mainly for homework, videos, and school topics. This simple division works beautifully: children become comfortable in both languages and stay strongly connected to Bangla.

4. English-first homes (Families 04, 07)

English is used even for casual chatting. Children become very fluent and confident, but parents worry that Bangla is getting weaker and some cultural closeness is being lost.

The survey of 18 parents confirms that almost all families see English as "essential for success", yet active practice is still limited: watching English videos and using apps is

common, while reading English books together or writing simple sentences at home happens much less often. The habits that make the biggest difference—gentle correction, praise, and natural code-switching—are seen most clearly in the balanced and English-first homes.

Parents feel proud when their children speak good English, but many also feel sad or a little hurt when Bangla starts to fade. This mixed emotion shows the real challenge: teaching English without losing the mother tongue that keeps the family close.

The happiest and healthiest results come from the balanced, practical homes. This proves that true bilingual confidence is possible in Bangladesh—but it needs conscious choices and small daily habits.

5.2 Limitations

This study provides useful insights into home language practices, but several limitations should be noted. The qualitative findings are based on only eight purposively selected families, which limits generalizability to the wider Bangladeshi population. The parent survey was also small and represents mostly educated, urban or semi-urban households. In addition, the study focused solely on children aged 9–14, so the results may not fully apply to younger learners or older adolescents. Despite these constraints, the mixed-methods design offers a strong foundation for further investigation.

5.3 Recommendation for future research

To overcome the limitations of this study, future research should involve larger and more diverse samples from various socio-economic and regional contexts, allowing for broader generalization. Studies that include younger children and older adolescents would offer a fuller understanding of how home language practices shift across developmental stages. Longitudinal research is also needed to observe how bilingual habits evolve over time. Additionally, future work should explore the roles of fathers, siblings, and extended family members in shaping language use, as well as examine how digital media and school–home collaboration influence children's bilingual development.

References

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101.* https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design.* Harvard University Press. https://docs.edtechhub.org/lib/X94S6SED

De Houwer, A. (2007). Parental language input patterns and children's bilingual use. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 28(3), 411–424.* https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716407070221

King, K. A., Fogle, L., & Logan-Terry, A. (2008). Family language policy. *Linguistics and Language Compass, 2(5), 907–922.* https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2008.00076.x

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes.* Harvard University Press.

Appendices

Appendix A: Family Language Practice Survey (Parents)

Sections: Background; Language use; Literacy practices; Parental attitudes; Open-ended.
Response types: multiple-choice, Likert, open-ended

Survey Questions:

Section A: Background Information

1. Parent's age: __

2. Gender: a. Male b. Female

3. Educational qualification: __

4. Profession: ____

5. Child's age: __

6. School type: a. English-medium b. Bangla-medium

Section B: Language Use at Home

7. Which language do you use most with your child?

a. Bangla

b. English

c. Bangla & English equally

8. How often do you speak English with your child?

a. Always

b. Sometimes

c. Never

9. How often does your child respond in English at home?

a. Always

b. sometimes

c. Never

Section C: Literacy Practices

10. How often do you/your child do the following? (5-point Likert: Always → Never)

- Read English books together

- Watch English TV programs/videos

- Use digital apps or games in English

- Write simple English sentences at home

Section D: Parental Attitudes

11. “Learning English is essential for my child’s success.”

a. Strongly Disagree

b. Disagree

c. Moderately disagrees

d. Agree

e. Strongly Agree

12. “Bangla should always remain the main language at home.”

a. Strongly Disagree

b. Disagree

c. Moderately disagrees

d. Agree

e. Strongly Agree

Section E: Open-ended

13. What challenges do you face when supporting your child's English learning?

14. What strategies do you use to encourage English at home?

Appendix B: Observation Checklist

Domains: Interaction patterns; Literacy practices; Supportive behaviors (willingness, encouragement, codeswitching, shared reading, homework, media, praise, gentle correction)

Interaction Patterns

- Parents mix Bangla and English in daily conversations.
- Children voluntarily use English at home.
- Parents encourage children to respond in English.

Literacy Practices

- Parents read English stories with children.
- Use of English digital media (TV, YouTube, apps).
- Parents assist with English homework.

Supportive Behaviors

- Parents praise children for using English.
- Parents correct mistakes gently.
- Parents balance use of Bangla and English.

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Parents: home language, balancing, institutional roles, success/difficulty; Children: frequency, encouragement, activities, And difficulties.

Questionnaires:

For Parents:

1. What language do you usually speak with your child at home? Why?

2. How do you feel about balancing Bangla and English in your child's learning?

3. What role should schools or government play in supporting families like yours?

4. Can you share an example of a successful or difficult moment of helping your child with English?

For children:

1. How often do you speak English at home?

2. Do your parents encourage you to use English?

3. Which activities do you enjoy most?

4. What is hard about learning English at home?

Appendix D: Focus Group Discussion (Parents)

Format: Small group discussion (6–8 parents), guided by a facilitator

Purpose: To understand how parents think, feel, and act regarding their children's English language learning at home.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does your family usually communicate at home — in Bangla, English, or both? What feels most natural to you?
2. How do you feel when your child uses English at home? Does it make you proud, or do you sometimes worry about their Bangla?
3. Can you share a moment when you felt happy or challenged while helping your child with English learning?
4. How do you try to keep a balance between teaching English and keeping your child close to Bangla culture and values?
5. What kind of help — from schools, teachers, or the community — would make it easier for you to guide your child's English learning?
6. What are your hopes for your child's future as a bilingual speaker?
7. Any suggestions?