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## 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH SPEECH OF BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN, POLITICAL POETRY: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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### **Abstract:-**

*In the iconic history of Bangladesh there are a number of dates which are etched, 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1971, is one of them. On this day the great national leader of Bengali era Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered a highly spiritual speech, an immortal political poem which was about the Bengali Nation's struggle for independence. The way he presented and the style of language of this speech is enriched with the use of aestheticism, dialect, gesture, syntax and semantics which make this speech more melodious and heart touching. Therefore, this speech of retelling the latent howling and urge of Bengali nation can be entitled as 'Political poetry' and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman can be called as 'Poet of Politics'. As the Speech of Bangabandhu is presented from political aspect, it is needed to be explained from Sociolinguistic point of view with other major linguistic analysis. The study has been conducted to find the linguistic phenomena of this historical speech.*

**Keywords:** - 7<sup>th</sup> March, Speech, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Poetry, Linguistics

## INTRODUCTION

The undisputable leader in the historical cycle of Bangla language and Bangladesh, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave a speech on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1971 at the Racecourse Ground (Now Soharawardy Udyan) of Dhaka which was the capital of the then EastPakistan. The Role of this speech is unparalleled as it awakens a new spirit and enthusiasm within the people in the face of politically critical situation. Through the analysis of various forms and linguistic aspects the standard of judging the world's greatest speech determined that the 7<sup>th</sup> March speech is emblem of self-awakening as well as the symbol of all humanity. The artistic use of language and the enriched poetic quality turn this speech into a 'Political Poetry'. For this reason Bangabandhu is known as the *Poet of Politics*. (News Week, New York, 5April 1971).

### Background of 7<sup>th</sup> March speech

on the eve of the liberation war of 1971 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, being very cautious of the critical political speech in front of a mass gathering at approximately 3.30 pm on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1971 at Racecourse Ground (Now Soharawardy Udyan) of Dhaka. On 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1947 Pakistan was established and divided into two parts: East Pakistan and West Pakistan. After this, Pakistani ruling class started to exploit the people of East Pakistan. The oppression of the Pakistani's ruling class never allowed the Bengali nation to uphold their head and enforced them to lead a life of a second class citizen. The monarchical leaders of Pakistan turned East Pakistan into a colony. They started too dominant and exploit the Bengalis. They also attacked on Bangla Language which led the Bengalis to raise their voice getting involved in the language movement. The movement reached its climax on the 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1952 when the police fired upon the adoption of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan. Then in 1958 General Ayub Khan enforced the Martial Law. Different types of Movement evolved as the intensity of the violence on Bengalis enunciated Six-Points Program, a character of freedom to the Bengali Nation, in Lahore where he went to attend a conference of Pakistani opposition political figures. In 1968, The 'Agartala Conspiracy case' was brought by the Pakistani Government against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the then leader of the Awami League and East Pakistan, and 34 other persons. This sedition case against them caused a great turbulence in East Pakistan. The general people started a united movement against that conspiracy case. In 1969, the people of Bangladesh freed the great man of Bengali nationalism by their mass movement. After that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was awarded the title 'Bangabandhu'. On the basis of Six Point Programme Awami League took part in the general election of 1970 and gained an absolute majority under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. But the Pakistani rulers were capricious of handing over the power. As a result, the political crisis was rapidly moving towards the final outcome. As a part of the conspiracy the constituent assembly, which was supposed to be held on 3 March, 1971, was suspended. As a protest, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called for non-cooperation movement. Since then, the country had been being managed under the leadership of Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu became *de Facto*. His home of Dhanmondi-32 was directed like the Prime Minister's office-cum-residence of no-10 Downing Street in London: "*Sheikh Mujibur Rahman now appears to the real boss of east Pakistan with the complete support of the population... Rahman's home-in Dhanmondi, already known as number 10 Downing street in imitation of the British Prime minister's residence- has been besieged by bureaucrats, politicians, bankers, industrialists and people from all walks of life.*" (Evening Standard, London, 12 March 1971, p.10). When the indiscriminate killing of people and the brutal oppression made the people restless for hearing the declaration of independence from the voice of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he decided to give a speech on 7 March, 1971. Lots of national and international newspapers published news on this upcoming speech. (The Sunday Times, London, 7 March, 1971, p.1, 9). A lot of suggestions had been made about the topics of speech to be delivered on 7 March. The eldest daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said that many written and unwritten advice were given to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman about his speech. (Sheikh Hasina, Historical Speech of 7<sup>th</sup> March: Some Memory, 2014) when Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman found that a continuous 36-hours meeting with the leaders of the Awami-League wasn't working to have a firm decision, he stated that he will give his speech according to the essence of the situation. In this case the statement of Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib (Wife of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) can be taken into consideration: "*The whole country is looking at you... Many people have suggested you to say many things ... you have to say what you want to say. Whatever you will say will be the correct one.*" (Sheikh Hasina, Historical Speech of 7<sup>th</sup> March: Some Memory, 2014). After that this speech turned into a history standing among the mass gathering he recited the immortal poem which was about the Bengali Nation's struggle for independence. On 30 October, 2017, United Nations Agency UNESCO accepted the 7 March speech as the valuable resource of human race by recognizing it as "*World-Heritage Document*". As a result, it has been universalized and become the wealth of all people.

This study presents the 7<sup>th</sup> March speech of great hero Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from two perspectives:

1. Variation of subject and style of Language
2. Linguistic Analysis

### Variation of subject and style of Language

The success of a speech depends on three facts: 1. Thought of Language; 2. Style of Language; 3. The Way of presentation. After analysing the world's best speeches achieved popularity only because of these three reasons. Beside them the speaker's appearance, personality, voice Projection and the use of diction also play a vital role for attracting the audience. These issues should be taken into consideration for analysing the speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In 2013, the great speeches of 41 great men were enlisted in "We Shall Fight on The Beaches: The Speeches That Inspired History" published from London. The 7 March speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman also got the honor of being there of among the speeches of Alexander The Great, Julius Caesar, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln,

Vladimir Lenin, Woodrow Wilson, Napoleon Bonaparte and many more famous persons. The variation of subject and style of Language make this speech differently beautiful and the analysis of these aspects are:

1. This speech contributed and inspired a lot for the independence of Bangladesh. This contribution and inspiration came from the subjective variation which is the quality of an ideal speech. For example, we can consider the below given parts of this speech where the amalgamation of personality and inspiration finds an artistic value: *"In case I can't give you orders, you should close all the roads and highways indefinitely. We will stop their access to food. We will stop their access to water. ...Since we have learnt to die, no one can dominate us."*
2. From the perspective of the relevance of the relevance of time this speech can be compared with the speech of Martin Luther king Jr. Martin Luther king Jr. went beyond the limitation of time and said, *"That my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."* (Martin Luther King Jr. 'I have a dream' Address 1963). Like him Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said *'You can't seventy millions of people subjugated.'* During that moment this speech sounded like the voice of all the oppressed people waiting for independence from the clutches of Pakistani rulers.
3. The subjective analysis of this speech throws light to the patriotism, the support of oppressed people, the politics of future economy and the ever-lasting struggle of Bengali nation. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said, *'Bear in mind that since we have sacrificed blood, we will sacrifice more, but we will liberate the people of the country by the grace of Allah (God).* Before that he also said, *'My instruction to government employees is that you shall obey what I say. From now on no tax shall be paid till the freedom of our country is not achieved. No one shall pay. Listen and bear in mind that the enemy has infiltrated so as to create division among us and start looting. Hindu, Muslim, Bangali, Non Bangali those who live in the Bangla, are all of our brother. The responsibility of protecting them is on you so that there is no smear on our reputation.'*
4. If we look at world's famous speeches we will find that all of them are in the written form. But this speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was an unwritten speech which bears the testimony of this ready wit along with intellectuality. Later on, this speech turned into the heart bits of all the people struggling for their independence. This speech can be compared with Abraham Lincoln's 'Gettysburg' speech and Martin Luther king's 'I have a dream' address. Gettysburg' speech was of 272 words which lasted for less than 3 minutes and 'I have a dream' was of 1667 words which lasted for 17 minutes. On the other hand, the 7 March speech was of 1105 words (Bangla language) which lasted for 18 minutes. Though these two speeches were in written form but the 7 March speech was absolutely written which is really very rare in the words' history. The style of language is enriched with the use of aestheticism, dialect, gesture, syntax and semantics which make this speech more melodious and heart touching. For this reason, this speech of retelling the latent howling and urge of Bengali nation can be entitled as *'Political poetry'* and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman can be called as *'Poet of Politics'*.

### Linguistic analysis

For linguistic analysis of any lecture or speech, the combination of different linguistic data analysis is also necessary besides speaker's pronunciation, utterances and gestures. As the Speech of Bangabandhu is presented from political aspect, it is needed to be explained from Sociolinguistic point of view with other major linguistic analysis. Before the linguistic analysis of the speech, it is essential to note that the speech was delivered in Bangla language for the dedicated Bengalis before the liberation war. So, the speech will be analyzed linguistically based on Bangla language.

### Phonetic Analysis

Sound is the main element of a language. The noise made from the vocal cords is called sound.

Any speech or language is made of numerous sounds. Before analyzing the 7<sup>th</sup> March speech of Bangabandhu, it is mandatory to remember that the speech is an oral speech based on the contemporary political circumstances. So naturally there is the combination of different sounds in case of Pronunciation.

If we listen to the speech for several times to make a comprehensive analysis, some issues are noticeable. As the speech was recorded many years back, we get some black noise in the audio clip. After avoiding the black noise, it is found in phonetic analysis *"Voice of Bangabandhu is sometimes in high pitch... Again his turbulent voice makes us unladen and fearless. He didn't use any modified standard Bengali, nor even any specific dialect or accent of East Bengal but used a language that is intelligible and enchanting to all people of Bangladesh including the common people and civil society. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman composed his speech style and unique language style like a fiction writer."* (Ajay Roy: 2005)

Some other characteristics come into light if we analyze the 7<sup>th</sup> March speech phonetically:

1. Though the standard language is not used completely in the speech, it has been intelligible to the common people because of its easy and simple pronunciation.
2. For emphasizing or putting stress on some words, there are extra uses of I, e, o sounds. For example :
  1. /sob>sobi/ (Transliteration of Bangla word SOB, in English We can call it 'Fully')
  2. /jodi>jodio/ (Transliteration of Bangla word JODI, in English We can call it 'If')
  3. /tarpor>tarpore (Transliteration of Bangla word JODI, in English We can call it 'Then')
3. There is also the insertion of additional vowel sound in the middle of the words and it indicates the varieties of dialects in East Bengal. In Bangla, it is called Moddho Soragom (Bangla), Anaptyxis in English). But this anaptyxis has been used in case of personal noun in the speech. For example: /Ayub>Ajyub/ (Ayub Khan, Pakistani Autocratic Leader) /ajke>ajjke/ (Transliteration of Bangla word AJKE, in English We can call it 'Today')

## Morphemic Analysis

Use of diction or word choice is the significant component in speech presentation strategy. And if the speech is based on political context, it has to be both melodious and connected with the political state. Considering the political context before and after 7<sup>th</sup> March speech and also Bangabandhu's speech styles, the morphemic analysis of 7<sup>th</sup> March should focus on Sociolinguistics point of view. Besides, the use of adherence with words in the speech will also be explained.

## Use of Dialect

According to the linguist, dialect is "One of the subordinate forms or varieties of a language arising from local peculiarities" (Oxford Dictionary). Bangabandhu belonged to Tungipara, a village in Gopalganj District in the Province of Bengal. He also grew up in the rural environment. So, a tendency of using some dialects was inhabited in him besides the dialectal tone of his pronunciation. In the speech of 7<sup>th</sup> March, Bangabandhu used several dialects. For example:

Bangla word		Dialect		Transliteration		English Meaning
toiri	>	toiar	>	toiri > toiar	>	Making
dabiye	>	dabaye	>	dabiye > dabaye	>	Suppress
korun	>	koren	>	korun > koren	>	Do

## Use of Register

Register is one of the important elements in Sociolinguistics. American linguist called the register as '*Functional varieties of a language*' (Mrinal Nath: 1999). In the professional life, everybody has own professional code which is called register. As Bangabandhu was politician and the speech of 7<sup>th</sup> March was delivered in the political context, so there is a great use political register in his speech. For example: National Assembly, Constitution, Election, Freedom, Struggle, Democracy, government, Majority party, Leader, President, Martial Law, strike, Secretariat, Movement etc.

## Use of Code Mixing

Usually code mixing is existent in bilingual situation. Code mixing is the uniform mixture of one language with another one in different levels in conversation or speech. "*Code mixing is the use of one or more languages for consistent transfer of one or more linguistic units from one language into another, and by such a language mixture developing a restricted or not-so-restricted code of linguistic interaction*" (Kachru: 1978). After the analysis of 7<sup>th</sup> March Speech, several examples of code mixing will be observable. Though the speech is in Bengali language, there is also the use of English.

For example: (Transliteration of this Bangla sentence is- /ami shudhu banglar noy, pakistaner majority party'r neta hisebe take onurodh korlam 15i february tarikhe apni jatiyo parishoder odhibeshon den. /In English We can translate it 'I've made a request to him not only on behalf of bengal but also the leader of the party which has the majority in Pakistan; I said to him: 'you must hold the session of the National Assembly on 15th February.')

Here, Bangabandhu could use / sangkhagoristho doler / instead of using / majority party'r/. But he used code-mixing there that express the sentence more meaningfully.

Besides this, there are also other uses of code mixing in the speech.

Some other morphemic characteristics are also noticeable in the speech:

1. Some borrowed words of Bangla language from Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and Japanese have been used in the speech. For example: (Transliteration of these Bangla words dukkho, sangskriti, golam, sahid, riksha, in English Grief, Culture, Slave, Martyred, Rickshaw)
2. Sometimes the sound /i/ has been used as suffix for stressing the word.
3. In the speech there are so many uses of agglutinated words. For example: (Transliteration of this Bangla words dukkhobharakranto= dukkher bhare akkranto, in English overflowing with grief)
4. There is a mixture of standard written form used in literature ('Sadhu' in Bangla) and Colloquial ('Chalito' in Bangla) language in the speech. For example: (Transliteration of this Bangla word bosor>botsor, in English Year)

However, the words that have been used in the speech in order to encourage people to take part in the liberation war considering the political situation have been chosen perfectly.

## Syntactic Analysis

Sentence is the main component of a language. That means, human being reveal their infinite expressions consciously or subconsciously by using sentences. A speech will take place in the heart of the audience when the content of the speech is relevant to their context. If the 7<sup>th</sup> March speech of Bangabandhu is analyzed, his magical power of using sentences can be understood easily. Listening to this speech of Bangabandhu, the Bengali people took part in the liberation in full swing. When it is declared that Bangabandhu will deliver a speech in Racecourse Ground (Present Suhrawardy Udyan in Dhaka), Bangabandhu made a significant comment that proves his speech for freedom-lover Bengali people. His comment was-"You will see history made if the conspirators fail to come to their senses." So the syntactic analysis of Bangabandhu's speech will be accomplished based on sentence structure analysis.

## Sentence structure

Besides the sentence structure of 7<sup>th</sup> March, the following issues will also come forward in Syntactic analysis:

1. Most of the sentences of the speech are in simple form which has a transitive and an intransitive verb. In case of subject and predicate, same rule is applicable. But in some sentences there are more than one intransitive verb and predicate. Besides, some complex and compound sentences have been used in the speech. For example: (Transliteration of a Bangla sentence is- /apnara sob'i janen ebong bojhen /In English We can translate it: You are fully aware of the events that are going on and understand their importance)

2. Bangabandhu did not use only assertive sentences in the speech but also used some interrogative, imperative and optative sentences. In most cases, he used interrogative sentences to justify the truth from the audience and he was successful. For example: Interrogative Sentence: (Transliteration of a Bangla sentence is- /ki onnay koresilam? /In English we can translate it: What have we done that was wrong?)  
Optative sentence: (Transliteration of a Bangla sentence is- /tomader protti amar onurodh roilo; proteek ghare ghare durgo gore tolo/In English We can translate it: I request all of you: convert every house into a fort.)  
Imperative sentence: (Transliteration of a Bangla sentence is- /tomader ja kisu ase tai niye prostut thako /In English We can translate it: Be prepared to act with whatever you have to in your possession.)
3. During the speech, sometimes he addressed the audience using 1<sup>st</sup> person and sometimes 2<sup>nd</sup> person.
4. In this speech, there is an excellent combination of rationality and human emotions in case of using sentences. Besides, there is also great use rhetoric in the speech. In case of providing logic, a sentence is like that: (Transliteration of a Bangla sentence is- /jodi kew nejyo kotha bole, amra songkhay beshi holeo ekjon jodi hoy tar nejyo kotha amra mene nebo/In English We can translate it: I went so far as to say that if anyone came up with an offer that was just, even though we were in the majority we would agree to that offer). Bangabandhu has proved excellence in selecting some words in the sentences. As a result, these words have become the key-words of the speech. Among them, /mukti/ (Freedom), /amra/ (We) and /amar/ (My) are the common three. The word /mukti/ (Freedom) has been used 5 times, /amra/ (We) has been used 20 times and /amar/ (My) has been used 15 times.

### Semantic Analysis

The main task of language is to express meaning. Though the word ‘meaning’ denotes the expansions, the presentation of any political or non-political speech or the identification of the meaning of it is not so easy. It is very difficult to make a semantic analysis of a world’s documentary heritage like 7<sup>th</sup> March speech. Bangabandhu has made a combination of several issues in this 1105 line’s speech. By using one word or sentence, he has expressed different layers of meanings. In this excellent political and diplomatic speech, each sentence has its deep insight application. That’s why this speech can be explained from the idea of Noam Chomsky’s Surface structure and deep structure as well as from the perspective of seven types of meaning by Geoffrey Leech.

Geoffrey Leech discusses about the different types of meaning in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter called ‘Seven Types Meaning’ in his book ‘Semantics’. Among them, the first one ‘conceptual meaning’ indicates the literal or general sense of the speech. In this case the deep meaning is not expressed. For example, Bangabandhu has started his speech by saying the word: (Transliteration of a Bengali word is ‘bhayera amar’, English meaning My Brothers) which Conceptual Meaning is [MY BROTHER: + Human, +Male] but if we consider the whole circumstances and context, the Connotative Meaning is [MY BROTHER: + Human, +Male Female Both].

Again if we focus on the stylistic Meaning of the speech, it is found that Bangabandhu has his own unique style and position as a speaker. In 1969, David Crystal and Davy mentioned 3 styles of language in the book ‘Investigating English Style’. First, style has relatively permanent and constant characteristics which include address, social-class and the use of dialect. And all the three were present in 7<sup>th</sup> March speech. Secondly, discourse analysis which covers the speech and dialogues were also available in 7<sup>th</sup> March speech. Thirdly, style has relatively temporary or unstable characteristics where speaker’s intrinsic quality, laws, economics, slang etc. will be used. Without slang, all of them were present in Bangabandhu’s remarkable speech.

If the Thematic Meaning of the speech is considered, it has also been successfully expressed. Generally if a speaker’s speech is written, the content of the speech is written maintaining the order. Besides, which issue will be more focused in the speech or the main point of the speech is determined and written carefully. It is a matter of wonder that even though the 7<sup>th</sup> March speech of Bangabandhu is not written, it is well organized and presented orderly emphasizing some words like: /mukti/ (freedom) and /sangram/ (struggle).

### Conclusion

On 7<sup>th</sup> March 1971, the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered an unforgettable speech to the freedom-lover people of East Bengal at Race Course Maidan (present Suhrawardy Udyan). This speech is compared to the ‘Gettysburg Address’ of Abraham Lincoln (November 1863) and the speech ‘we shall fight on the beaches’ by Winston Churchill. But it is also needed to note that both of those speeches were written. On the other hand, the splendid 7<sup>th</sup> march speech delivered to the thousands of people was not written. If the speech is keenly observed, we find the ancient Grecian oratory power in Bangabandhu’s speech. According to Oxford Dictionary, “Oratory is the art of formal speaking in public using rhetoric language.” Million people’s heart touching and inspiring speech of 7<sup>th</sup> March tells about the all freedomlover people in this world. Besides, the sounds, words, and the sentences that have been used in this speech are the perfect ones. As a result, the speech not only spread a stream of literary feelings to its listener but also has become remarkable for its language use. Besides, this speech is an excellent evidence of political realism, sociological philosophy and historical information and theory as well as an extraordinary text according to linguistics. In this case, Dr. Zeenat Huda’s comment is mentionable- “*This speech of Bangabandhu is also honored by me as political discourse.*” (2017). Being inflamed in patriotism and ignoring the standard form of Bengali language, Bangabandhu delivered the speech using a language that will make his connection with all level of people. Where the significance of the 7th March speech of Bangabandhu is boundless, it becomes secondary to make linguistic or literary analysis of it.

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## Competing interests

None declared.

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