THE LANGUAGE OF HERMAPHRODITES AS THEY SPEAK THEIR OWN SPECIAL KIND OF LANGUAGE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITY IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

Languages take birth and die out in this world; and there are still languages that we have not yet discovered. With this hypothesis in mind a search shows that the hermaphrodites in Bangladesh speak their own kind of language to communicate within their own community. They call their language the "Reverse Language" and speak it to hide and isolate them from the so called mainstream society. There are many reasons why they speak this language, the origin of the Reverse Language being rooted in Bengali as the native language. But the divergences and convergences are very different in the case of the Reverse Language. This study therefore shows what language the hermaphrodites speak, and how we can hypothesize this language to have its roots in the mother tongue.

Key words: Hermaphrodites, Bengali and the Reverse.

The history of human language has experienced lots of changing winds and shifting sands ever since humans have had language; and either divergent or convergent, human beings have always developed new languages for their cultural, social, factional, or functional needs. Studies have shown that languages still develop and die out in the world for very different reasons. A little research in the field reveals to us clues that many social groups, communities, certain communication groups, young boys and girls, teens, spies and intelligence for example, speak their special kinds of languages to signal things which either out of curiosity or for the sake of secrecy they do not want outsiders to get to know. Barber (1993) calls this "signalling system" a "human language" while language uses "vocal sounds" as its materials (p. 3). However, these and whatever deeper causes might involve, languages have lives in the fact that they still take birth and they still die out. Again, when a language is born it serves the oral/verbal purpose as the chief function in its being: it is spoken and listened to; and the literal/written form remains secondary. It is therefore no less a wonder now as to how many different languages there could be in the human world and how many of them have not yet been found; since most languages are supposed to be in the records only if they have a written form.

One such wonder is the language that the hermaphrodites speak in Bangladesh. They have their own language; they have their personal kind of signalling system which they use only while communicating personnel among the same community: may be this is so because of the physical and social feeling of isolation they bear in their mind or because of the world of fitness being prejudiced against the hermaphrodites. Let us just look into the matter of hermaphrodites and their languages in some detail.

Having gotten the origin from mythology, the word 'Hermaphrodite' means *Hermaphroditus* in Latin and *Hermaphroditos* in Greek. In Greek Mythology it is the name of the son of Hermes and Aphrodite, who became joined in one body with the nymph Salmacis (*Oxford Talking Dictionary*. Copyright © 1998). The lexicographical meaning says a hermaphrodite is (Cambridge Dictionary, 2005) "a plant, animal or person with both male and female sex organs (p. 599)." This really sounds very unusual, especially when it comes to human beings. How can human beings share the sexual organs of both males and females? Can it really happen? The answer is a qualified 'yes'. This *can* happen, and this *does* happen.

One out of a very large number of people suffers a birth deformity having a very unusual physical trait: such humans have both the female and male sexes incomplete in them. Either they are born as men and later appear to have breasts of women, or they seem to have female clitoris which changes into men's penis as they grow up. As in the adult age, they mostly have the female breasts and a male penis with scrotum in their physique: breasts being very immature or mature at teen and dry in later ages, and penis having no or little erectile. Some of them, very few though, might share a simple vaginal shape but no vulva; and some of them just have nothing but plain skin except for a tiny urinal opening common to all of them. The breasts they have make them women from waist up and the penis and scrotum they have make them men from waist down. They are thus neither a complete woman nor a complete man. In most cases furthermore they have either incomplete or immature uterus in their lower abdomen or testis below their penis; but none of the two organs works properly. If only they had a vagina! Or in other words, if only they did not have a fake penis! I said 'a fake penis' because, they use it for no other reasons than urinating. Some are even told to have a normal penis of a complete man with enough erectile; but unfortunately the Nature did not give them the feeling of using it for sexual intercourse. Rather than taking others for sex as a man does, they feel more comfortable in letting others take them as a woman. This is because they have the breasts, hormones, and feelings of a woman. They want to ignore that they have a penis; some of them even cut it off by the bliss of medical surgery. But alas! They cannot have a vagina to turn into a complete woman; nor do they feel like being a man. They are incomplete in either way; and thus we call them hermaphrodites.

Questions might arise as to why this abnormality in humans exists; and there will be many different answers of course. Some evidences might prove that this happens chiefly because of the disproportionate male and female hormones in a single human body; or some blind believers might say that this is so because the Nature designs it to be so. Some even might say that there is something deeper and more scientific in it. However, there are reasons of course why humans turn to be hermaphrodites; but this is unfortunately not the proper time now to go deep into that. Rather it is worthwhile to look into the wav the hermaphrodites survive in the society.

The mainstream society of physically fit humans considers hermaphroditism to be a kind of birth deformity. The people who are blessed with normalities in their physique hermaphroditism as a deformity among the race, a curse on the society. However, with all such deformity and curse the hermaphrodites are still humans; they too have normal affections of love and sex. The catastrophic fact is that they have the woman's kind of affection in them and they fall in love with men though they need to shave the beards on their cheeks daily. The world of normality thus takes them as invectives to normality and feels inauspicious about them. Very naturally, therefore, the hermaphrodites feel totally alienated and treated with prejudice as they grow up amongst the commonly normal people. They feel so because of a very complex behaviour offered to them by the people of the society: the society feels like ostracizing them, and sometimes even pretends to do so; but still wants them to exist among humans as dolls. The so-called society tends to forget that they are in all senses humans, not dolls. They too have emotions, feelings, dreams, love and even sense of personality. Being totally ignored in all cases therefore the hermaphrodites feel propelled to form their own community to survive where they have only themselves and no outsiders, and where they are free to do or say whatever their minds want to go with.

The hermaphrodites express their emotions and feelings in their own ways among themselves. When they are together as a community it is now them to feel like excommunicating the rest of the world from them. They design a world for them only. There they laugh, act and behave in whatever ways they want. They even fall in love, make love, and make others fall in love with them. It is mentionable that in some cases when they start physical affairs of anal sex there may again have reasons. Some take sex-affairs with a man as an expression of womanly love while ironically enough they have to offer their anal opening in place of a vagina to mean "Take my all"; and for some this is purely a business—they need to earn money to survive, and selling sex for money satisfies both their needs and emotions. Such complexities of their life have made them different in a way that the society does not want to accept. While the society seems to have true sympathy for the hermaphrodites, an unseen sense of isolation works there too; and finally this feeling of isolation is the only thing that the society gifts the hermaphrodites with. Pathos gets aroused in people listening to the way the hermaphrodites survive; but moments later the society takes it granted and says, 'this is the life of hermaphrodites', or shows a deep pity on them at most. This makes things worse for the hermaphrodites. They do not want to be pitied by the society that alienates them. They want to live as human beings; and since the society does not let them, they find their own way of living. All the despised and ostracized hermaphrodites became brothers, friends, and even parents to themselves. They turn their back to the rest of the world. They share their feelings in their personal ways. They do not want others to know about their personal lives: what they do, like and love. They want to hide their secrets from the rest of the world as they hate and distrust it. They want to keep themselves simply within themselves; and therefore they create their own signals for communication within their own community, which in turns forms a new skin for them while they are amongst themselves or even when they are suddenly exposed.

While hermaphrodites have developed a language for the reasons mentioned above, they call their language the reverse language, (Dëv fvlv in Bengali); and their speaking style, their intonations and their pitch have a distinctive feature which is identical with women's indulgence: something bashful and playful, thus justifying with the name "reverse language"; meaning that it was not supposed to happen as it has happened; or that the reverse of the appearance is true as they are neither men nor women: they share characteristics of both. The way they move their hands, walk and talk goes with a woman who is seeking affection and indulgence. But in fact they are half women. That is why they look different when they clap. Anyone can guess who they are from their style of clapping. Well, clapping! The hermaphrodites have several uses of clapping which they use as signals for various moods anger, annoyance, of dissatisfactions, awareness, grabbing someone's attention, nudging and probing an unknown person who they suspect to be a hermaphrodite, etc. They have their own fashions in everything, which are reverse to men's and at the same time to women's also; and hence they have their own Reverse Language.

The hermaphrodites in Bangladesh and Calcutta use this Reverse Language to send and receive messages among themselves. Research will show

that this language has a lot to do with Bengali and Hindi Languages as it has originated in an environment where Bengali and Hindi languages are spoken; and even the three languages namely Bengali, Hindi and the Reverse might have commonalities in the roots as well. But in actuality the roots of the words in Reverse Language are not usually found to be normal in Bengali or Hindi as they were supposed to be according to the logics of linguistics. Rather it can be seen that the two languages (Bengali and Hindi) are deformed, distorted or vandalized in most cases in meaning and form to form a Reverse word. If this fact is truly discovered, the Reverse Language has the hermaphrodites' psychological, social and cultural alienation and revolt mixed in its roots as the reason for its being. Hence the name "Reverse Language" seems logical. As is mentioned, the so called fit world finds the hermaphrodites to be the freaks of Nature as reverse to fit men and women and draws a curtain between the hermaphrodites and the normal humans. This being done for ages has created in the hermaphrodites a sense of revolt as there is a saying that so much of pains can cause revolt against the oppressors. The hermaphrodites have no power to revolt in the literal sense. Distorting the fit human's language, cracking the fit sounds is therefore an expression of disgust and hate that they bear for the fit world. If there is no way of sending the message that 'you have wronged me and I do not like you anymore' the creation of the Reverse Language can be a blow, thus justifying the name the "Reverse Language", and thus hiding the hermaphrodites from rest of the world.

Table 1: Some words from the Reverse language compared with Bengali Language:

Sl.	Reverse (DëV)	Bengali Language
	Language	
1	Awoqyj	teuk / A‡bK / eo
2	Kwi	Kg / Aí / tQU
3	SjKv	UKv
4	Sj KvKwi	UK vKg
5	Lÿib	K_v/ Ayjıc
6	LÿAb Kwi Ki	K_vKg ej <i>l</i> e⊳× Ki
7	UKUb	Lul qv`ul qv
8	Ukkytby	Lvii qvibv
9	†Uyj b∨	tQtj e√Pv
10	†Uyj ub	tgtq evPv
11	tlyj by tlyj ub	10tj tgtq / tcyj vcvb

Sl.	Reverse (DëV)	Bengali Language
	Language	
12	KuZ	tgtqyj aitbi tQtj/wRiv
13	1Pj v	ki "
14	kqZvtbi †Pjv	GKai‡bi eKv My j
15	f‡Zibw Z	GKai‡bi eK√Mıj
16	†Lyj	ewv/ Ni
17	S iv	ejv/†`l q v
18	v S i√‡bv	#bl qv
19	UKUD USI	Lvi qv‡Z ej
20	cZv	h vi qv
21	cZ	hvi
22	eWyj	cwy
23	y j Mg	yj ½(cÿ4)
24	₽ ày	Thub
25	ve j v	d#Uv/ d/Uv/ #Piv/ Lvivc
26	nvgv Q	Avgvi / Avrg
27	ZgQ	†Zygui / Zwg / Avcub
28	BbQ	Dub
29	`vigv	fvZ / Pyj
30	UKv/ UK\tbv	Lul qv/ Lul qutbv
31	gwl	kã evedK'i mt_e'en; Wiff gjK (†Kub A_@nb K‡i bu)
32	W mv	ftjv
33	‡mM/v	evev
34	cwiK	⁻tgx/†ctigK
35	c\bu Z	Lui``ui / jus
36	j‡nwicwiK	hvi m‡_ MFxi eÜZ;
37	Qvbvb	n#§bx
38	†bnvi þ	hęZx(~tfweK)
39	tavi vB	th š Kg [©]
40	†avi vbx	th Š Kg₽
41	†avi 4bv	th š b Kg 9 Kiv

Nonetheless, research can find linguistic origins of the Reverse Language in Bengali in some cases (see Table 1). May be the hermaphrodites have borrowed that consciously, or may be they formed their language in complete subconsciousness. Careless of where from or how they have done this, they claim that it is they themselves who have originated the language for their convenience. Whatever the hermaphrodites say about their language, it is up to the field of linguistic research to answer questions about a language which is used only by a few speakers. The word "Appa" in

Reverse meaning "telk / AtbK / eo" in Bengali seems to have come from the word "Au" in Bengali. But the meanings do not make same senses in that case. Again, we have a river called "Awayi Lt" in Bangladesh. But then again, what is the relation between the river and the sense the hermaphrodites make of the word "Awqj"? This question itself might seem to justify the name of the language of hermaphrodites as the "Reverse Language". Yet, further search shows that the word "Avy / Avy", a medieval Bengali means the high bank of a river, and has a meaning in common with the word "Away" in Reverse Language to mean "tek / AthK / eo". Therefore, the hermaphrodites have mingled their sense of much, enough and big, in "Awayi", with the name of a river and with the sense of the height of the bank of river at another: thus "Awdyi" means "tek / AtbK / eo" for them. On the other hand, the word "SjKv" which the Reverse Language uses to mean "**UKV**" can directly be found in Bengali but meaning completely otherwise. In Bengali it means "1. Authitation 1. ANTELY 2. "IZ; D"THK; SICW". This again has a metaphorical connotation to the sense that the Reverse Language makes for "SJKV"; because money, "UKV", has always been considered to be the second god, power, light, might, brightness, etc.; and thus the word "SjKV" in Reverse language means "UKV" in Bengali while "SJKV" itself has a meaning like "" " D" D" Such" in Bengali. This too seems to have originated from the same Bengali word meaning completely different things, as in the case of "Away". In this way the Reverse Language is found to have taken its origins from Bengali, Hindi, Urdu and Persian: for example the word "thmib" in Reverse Language meaning "hpZx ("ITWK)" in Bengali seems to have its origin in the foreign word "thmi" which means "t Lv" in Bengali.

The study of the origins of all the words listed in table-1 will demand much time and huge space, and a deeper analysis is called for. Let us therefore take the study of those few words above as samples as just a beginning, an inauguration of a new kind of search to inspire the next research. For further discovery now we can look into the ways how this Reverse language forms expressions with their own words, and if possible what situation and meaning their sentences refer to.

It is seen that the Reverse Language Speakers in Bangladesh and in Calcutta use Bengali words for many parts of their sentences to form a complete sense; and in the same way the Reverse Speakers might use Hindi or Urdu supplements in India and Pakistan respectively to form sentences. In Bangladesh, as they speak they take words from pure, medieval or colloquial Bengali when they need contextually to make a full meaning which proves that the Reverse language of the hermaphrodites is not complete in itself and is to a great extent associated with the mother tongue of the speaker. It is therefore very important to see what the hermaphrodites do in other parts of the world since we find them

do the same 'Reverse' in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan: and this may be because of the closer origins of the languages of these three countries. Moreover, this also shows that among the hermaphrodites it is a kind of universal art of making a Reverse language from the native language, especially when the Bengali, Hindi and Urdu speaking hermaphrodites are seen to do the same reverse. One coincidence is that there are many things in common among Bengali, Urdu and Hindi 'Reverse speakers', as mentioned above; but further research is still necessary to prove the hypothesis globally, and there are demands and scope for more research to answer such hypotheses.

Table 2: Reverse language: a mixture of Reverse and Bengali signals.

Sl.	Reverse (DëV) Language	Bengali Language
1	Zg:@i by fLW / Zg:@i by :K?	†Zvgui bug ej / †Zvgui bug uK?
2	Zgu um/futjvAu?	Zng fttjvAtQ?
3	ZgQ bKw uk?	Zny uK Ki?
4	ZguQ †mWvi byg guQ uK?	†Zygui evevi byg uK?
5	ZgvQ GLb †Kv_vq †VKev?	Zwy †Kv_vq hrţe?
6	(ZgA) iwewi mgA2i †Lvtj †VB‡Kv	(Zmg) iweevi Avgyt`i evmq G‡mv
7	Ptj vubuk †Vulk	Ptji v NgvB
8	Zgwî †Lyj †Kv_vq?	Zwj †Kv_vq _vK?
9	Zgrū ik UK‡Z umrjitNP	Zmy wK †L‡Z cOb` Ki?
10	mg@i MZigw@wjvjWf@	Avgui kixi Luive juWQ

As table-2 shows, the Reverse Language Speakers in Bangladesh insert native words between Reverse words to complete the message they want to send. As we can see in sample sentence-1, between "ZgQi" and "TLU" a Bengali word "bvg" has directly been inserted to mean "TZgQi bg ej" (say your name); and after "ZgQi" "bg \(\forall \)" has been taken from Bengali to mean "What is your name?" (TZgQi bg \(\forall \) This in Hindi they say "ZgQi bg \(\forall \) The same thing happens in most of the other samples listed in table-2.

One very interesting thing is the way the Reverse Language uses a particular word called "gul?'. This does not mean 'fly' for the hermaphrodites as it does in Bengali. "gul?" has no particular meaning

for them in Reverse. It sometimes adds a rhythm for them in their speech, sometimes tunes a self-sufficient word or sentence; and it is rather more like the tautology in Bengali. But while Bengali Language makes a tautology of many or every possible words the Reverse uses only one word, "gu?", to make it rhythmic or, to their senses, more playful. (Example: Sample sentence-10 in table-2, and item 24 in table-3.)

Another very important trait in the Reverse Language is the arrangement of words in sentences. Languages actually vary in their arrangement styles of words to form sentences: e.g. English goes in SVO arrangement and formal Bengali goes in SOV arrangement; and the Reverse Speakers in Bangladesh form their affinity more to their native language taking the arrangements style too from

Bengali Language. Formal Bengali sentences sometimes do not need to have a verb, and sometimes when they have a verb they follow the SOV pattern type. The Bengali expression "Agai kini Luic julg" follows the SOV pattern; and more examples like "Zy tkyy _k", "Ptjv Nyb"

make it obvious. The Reverse Language uses the same structural pattern of Bengali and just changes the words. Respective translations of these three Bengali sentences into Reverse make it clear: "mgti NZigut wjv jutt", "Zguti tly tkuy" and "Pjyuhk thk".

Table 3: Some more Reverse expressions compared with Bengali ones of same messages.

Sl.	Reverse (DÖV) Language	Bengali Language
1	cZvb@ nI	Zwy Ptj kvii
2	KW †Kj K‡i‡Q	elicui xPyi uK/Politics K‡i‡Q
3	Uuba£ ie	gvBi we
4	BbvQ Uubde\B‡Q	tmgvBi LvB‡Q
5	tvi⁄ ý tvk‡Q	cyjk GtmtQ
6	c‡ Z v	Ptj hvi
7	ubuk tVK‡ev	ivî huch Kie
8	QuqvguQ v\$i‡ev	wrtbgv†` Ltev/ Que Zj tev
9	Lýus Uuba£ i‡ev	Rÿvgui‡ev/ Rÿvwì‡q gui‡ev
10	†RvMgwQ Avoqyj	Pj eo / eo eo Pj
11	ci KwE	th me KuZ‡ i Pj ‡Qţj‡ i g‡Zv "OfweK †QuU
12	buK Kub wejvKinQ	b₭-₭ ₺ ₫₿₿ ₢
13	Qv iv s ‡i ·Q	kwxc to@
14	Qv iv lqyjx	kwxcov
15	Kwi †ckv	k U ۬vU
16	W eix	wRov(vj 1/mb/plain)
17	аурх	urM‡iU/MRv(aycıb RıZıq †bk v`ê')
18	†L ij upi U K‡ev	g` (cwbq RvZxq †bkv`ê')
19	†ml/V+†ml/V	eævgv
20	ve.‡l/cqv	fB
21	ve Vljax	†e i b
22	`vigvv6i	fvZ / Pgj `vl
23	`vigv U ‡Kv	fvZ / Pyj Lul qv
24	cbygwQ	gıΩ
25	‡Luqui v	gýNk
26	eiKv‡L vņi v	gustmv
27	†Lyj gwQ‡Z †VKv	evmq Avmv/ hvl qv
28	e u Rui † Uy j v	evRvi DVVIbv
		1

However, as the Reverse Language has no alphabetic symbols of their own, and since it has no written form, it should be written using Bengali alphabets in Bangladesh, because the sounds they produce follow the Bengali sounds totally. That they say "**Unbit** to mean "**gBi**" (see table-3) is the Reverse Language; but when they put "U+Av+b+b+B" and pronounce /**Ubb**/ it sounds rather

like Bengali. It is just the use and the meaning which is entirely different. The same is the case for every other word listed in the three tables above. These therefore can prove the existence of a different language in Bangladesh called the Reverse Language (Dëv fvl) by its speakers, and generally described as 'The Language of Hermaphrodites'. The origin of this language is

deeply rooted in the mother tongue of its speakers; but in such a divergent and convergent way which does not usually happen: at least this is what is proved from the research taking the language of hermaphrodites in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan into consideration. Furthermore, the style of pronunciation and sentence structure is also greatly influenced by the native language. This is a different language that a small group of people understand and use for their communication. They do not want others to know or discover this language since it veils them from the social and customary injuries. Since hermaphrodites are a common human group in all parts of the world, and since they speak 'Reverse Language' Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, it will be interesting to discover if hermaphrodites in other parts of the world use similar languages to communicate amongst themselves.

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