Bengali or Sylheti speakers

English as an additional language (EAL) developmental features:

From Hall, D. (1998),.'Assessing the needs of bilingual pupils. Living in two languages". (pp. 32-34).

Introduction

These North Indian/Bangladeshi languages are derived from Sanskrit and belong to the Indo Aryan language group.

Children learning to speak English as their second language will often display errors which occur as a result of applying grammatical (syntactical) rules of their home/first language to English.

These structural errors are transient and on their own do not mean that the child has a language disorder. However if the errors continue beyond a couple of years and there is other evidence of difficulty in receptive and expressive language a child may need to be assessed by the Speech and Language Service. (These difficulties would also be evident in L1 so a bilingual assessment is desirable).

As children become more competent in English they will also make errors that are typical, common, developmental errors of monolingual children, particularly in use of grammatical rules.

Grammatical features and differences

- The basic word order in a sentence is subject-object-verb (SOV) compared with the English order of SVO.
- There is no definite (the) or indefinite (a) article before the noun.
- Post positions are used instead of prepositions.
- The third person pronoun is the same for masculine and feminine gender. Verb inflection usually signals gender.
- A second form of the second person pronoun is used with elders/strangers as a mark of respect.
- Bengali uses gender for neutral/natural nouns e.g. sun (masculine); moon, river (feminine).
- The verb component of a sentence can consist of one, two or three parts. The first part of the verb is in root form with inflection to indicate tense.
- Adverbs usually precede the noun.

Typical errors

- Putting verbs at the end of sentences: "He crayons not giving"
- Leaving out articles before a noun: "She give me sweet"
- Using prepositions after a noun or inserting them where unnecessary: "I told to my mum"

- Confusing placement of plurals, especially noun-adjective concord: "bigs dogs"
- Incorrect use of third person pronouns, particularly overuse of: "he", "him"
- Inappropriate use of 'no'; 'not': "He no play with me", "I not got my pencil"
- Omitting auxiliary verb: "My dad going Bangladesh", "He reading"
- Placing adverbs or adverbial phrases inappropriately: "He too much cursing"
- Wrong use (or lack) of preposition: "He hit me in my arm"

Bengali writing hangs on the line while English writing sits on the line.

Bengali script does not distinguish between capital and lower case letters.