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Biodiversity in the Etymology of Haor Wetland Basin in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Bangladesh is a land of wetlands. Many phrases, idioms and sayings in the wetland areas of the country are originated and or evaluated from the wetland biodiversity. Etymological researches can help communities understand the insight of their existence with nature. A study on the biodiversity in etymology of wetland basin in Bangladesh was conducted between January and September 2024 in the Medir Haor located in Nasirnagar sub-district under Brahmanbaria district. The research objective was to explore the importance of etymology in wetland conservation attempts. Around 50 people including elderly and youth interacted during interviews and consultations. Twenty species precisely and more biodiversity in gross were identified associated with etymology of Haor wetland. The use of certain animal-related phrases, idioms, and sayings is gradually fading from everyday language. Etymology gives evidence of the status of past and present biodiversity of an ecosystem. Knowing the etymology will help people redefine the touch with the ecosystem and that will help the community feel more ownership in conservation actions. A more effective conservation strategy might incorporate etymological insights—indeed, such wisdom could have shaped conservation policies with greater foresight.

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is a land of wetlands. The northeastern part of the country is Haor basin. Haor is a special type of wetlands. Haors are dry cropland with some perennial water bodies like rivers, canals and pools during the winter and summer seasons, that is from November to April; but a huge waterbody during the monsoon, from May to October. The inhabitants of the Haor areas are either farmers or fishers. The farmers may also have fishing engagement for a small period of time during the monsoon. Life, livelihoods, culture, social customs of Haor basin are very much associated with the biodiversity of the surroundings. There are many proverbs and sayings that are reflecting the behaviors of the animals living in the Haor ecosystem. The etymology not only describes the origin and evolution of words but also the interaction of the human with the environment in an area. The Haor area of Bangladesh has dialects of Bangla. The dialects are slightly different the standard Bangla. The proverbs, idioms and sayings from the Medir Haor has been collected and the etymology for those words been detailed to understand the cultural and living intersection with the wetland animals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Etymology is the study of the origin and evolution of words. In the 21st century a subfield within linguistics, etymology has become a more rigorously scientific study. Etymological study with the animal or biodiversity association that is the origin of words from animals is not that many. Möller (2017) has studied the elements of naming and the toponyms derived from animals' names. "In the search for the origins and etymologies of names, the narratives and legendarisations of the speakers became

evident in the explanations provided, and often had to be considered within the prehistoric and pre-literate setting of cultural rituals such as the mimicking of animals in song and dance, folklore (storytelling, folktales), myths, phrases and other forms of expression". Nijhwan (2021) noted 13 animal words and phrases while studying the history of English language. Animals have played an important role in human life since ancient times. Both Chinese and Hindi languages possess a significant number of animal idioms. Some animal idioms are similar in both languages, having the same associative meanings and expressed by the same animal carriers. Moreover, two different animal carriers sometimes express the same meaning in these languages. Waru *et al.* (2021) studied the Cultural Aspect in the Idioms of Zodiac Animals in Indonesian and Chinese Language. Ahmed *et al.* (2021) studied Proverbs or Idioms in Chinese and Bangla language. Idioms are pervasive in a language, reflecting its culture even more vividly and deeply than all other kinds of words. Idioms reflect the cultural identity of a society. Roy (2023) studied the Culture Specificity in Animal Idioms of Chinese and Hindi language. Talebinejad and Dastjerdi (2005) studied the animal metaphor. Dutta *et al.* (2021) studied the biodiversity of the Medir Haor. Biological diversity has significant ecological and socio-economic importance on Haor-dependent residents, natural resources seem to diminish continuously from the Haor area due to over-exploitation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the Medir Haor areas between January and September 2024. Medir Haor is a small Haor located in Nasirnagar subdistrict under the Brahmanbaria. The total area of the Medir Haor is 3628 hectares, the

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geographical location is 24°05'91" N and 91°06'64" E. There are around 25,000 people are dependent on the Haor. The Haor dependents are mostly fisher and farmers. The language is Bangla but the local dialect has some deviation from the standard Bangla, specifically the alphabet "S" in nouns and adjectives is pronounced as "H". The phrase, idioms and wording associated with biodiversity of was identified by interviewing 6 individuals including academics, elderly and cultural activists from Nasirnagar town. A consultation was conducted with the teachers of Nasirnagar Ashutosh Pilot High School to identify the individuals who can support identification of the idioms and phrases associated with biodiversity. The identified individuals were interviewed using open-ended questionnaires. To make them understand the subject etymology and its coverage, a detailed description was given to them. Since the meaning of words varies from culture to culture and is very area specific the interview follows strong ethical concerns. The questioning and discussion avoided religious aspects and only the culturally accepted and practiced wordings were documented. The ethnological information collected from the community were checked by reviewing available literature, specifically the folklore collection from Brahmanbaria by the Bangla Academy (Khan *et al.*, 2014). Additionally, the information gathered from individuals was verified through consultations and group discussions. The frequency of the use of those idioms and phrases was known in two consultations conducted with mixed group individuals of age group 40 to 55 years old. Etymology is a relatively new topic within the community. This study aims to explore the etymological relationship between 'nature' and 'community' in greater detail, drawing more attention to the subject. However, it was observed that primarily educated and scholarly individuals showed interest in the research. As a result, the number of respondents in the study was comparatively small. To know the biodiversity of the Medir Haor a survey of wildlife was conducted following a transect of 6 Km from the village Buriswar to Monuharpur passing the villages Asurail, Benipara, Nasirnagar and Nasirpur. The observed Amphibians, Birds, Reptiles and Mammals within 200 meters of both side of the walk were recorded, the field guidebooks by Khan (2018), Khan (2015), and Grimmett (2021) were used to identify the wildlife species. A pair of binoculars were used to observe the species in distance. The community were asked about reptiles and mammals during March 2024. Four catches of fishing boats in the Longan Beel and fish markets of Nasirpur and Asurail were visited to record the fisheries of the Medir Haor. The name of uncommon fishes was double-checked by following Rahman (1989). Ten students from class 8 and 10 of Nasirnagar Ashutosh Pilot High School were interviewed individually to know their perspectives of the importance of etymology in conservation efforts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Idioms and phrases

ব্যাঙের সর্দি "Benger Sordi" [Frog cold]: Frog stay in water, and there is no possibility of getting running nose, but if a human stay more time in water or rain will get sick of cold. The common use of this idiom is to express the more or added vulnerability of a vulnerable. Usually, the word is expressed by someone when he or she is explaining that us a need burden or pain is nothing new to him or her.

সাজতে সাজতে ফেউচ্ছা রাজা "Sajte Sajte Feuccha Raja" [Busy in dressing but the Drongo got the kingship]: This is used to explain if someone is lazy or delay to perform. This proverb is based on a story. God decided to select a king for the birds for better management and bring discipline among them. God asked all the birds to come to city ground as He will declare the king for them. All the birds were busy dressing up and decorating themselves colorful. The peacock used almost all the colours but forgot to take care of the legs. God was waiting for them; all were late but not the Drongo. The Drongo only put some oil on the head and have combed. God declared the Drongo the king of birds. That is why the Drongo even chaises Crow, Eagles and Kits.

পাক দিয়া নদী ভানর "Pak Dia Nodi Vanor" [Again the river Vanor]: The Vanor is a river on the northern side of the Medir Haor. This river is too zigzag that to go to a village from a near-by village one has to cross the river several times.

মাছের মা'র পুত্র শোক "Macher Mar Putra Shok" [Fish mother is crying for son]: This phrase is use to mean fake expression. If someone has not shown any responsibility but expressed more seriousness then the saying is used.

হিয়াইল্লা বুদ্দি "Hialya Buddi" [Canning life a Fox]: Fox is very canning. They are not loyal. They make pseud friendship. The people who are canning are telnet like a fox.

নলতল বর্ষা "Nol Tol Borsha" [Flood that drowning the reeds]: Reed can grow fast. If a flood level raises gradually the reed can grow along with the flood level, but if the flood water raises the faster the reed cannot manage growing parallel. Heavy flood is called a reed-drowning flood. Such a flood is not a regular riverine flood. Usually, heavy rainfall causes such floods.

সব মাছে গো খায় ঘাউরা মাছের বদনাম যায় "Sob Mache Gu Khay Gaura Macher Bodnam Jay" [All fishes eat the human poop but only the Gaura fish is claimed]: This phase is used if someone blamed for a matter that many others are doing. According to the community, the fish eat human feces. This fish is not edible in the Medi Hoar because of its food habitat. Though feces are not that available in a wetland for this fish to eat it. But this fish is not consumable and no fisherman catches it. If it is cotingh accidentally the fisherman throws this fish back into the water.

প্যাঁচা "Pancha" [Owl]: Owl is nocturnal. If someone is late to sleep then s/he is called an owl. In the rural

context such behaviour is not good. Not because s/he is late to go to sleep, but wake up late.

খাতিস “Khatas” [Civet]: Though Civet has a good smell but also has practicing dropping in the same place. That is a dirty behaviour. If someone is not clean is called Khatash. Also, if some have no regular bathing in winter it is called as Khatas.

গ্যাড়াকল “Gerakol” [Rhino Trap]: Gerakol is trap of hunting Rhino, Gerakol was made by pillars of big trees and the Rhino was trapped that way that it has no way to scape. If someone is in danger and there is no way to overcome it, the situation is called Gerakol.

মাইসা “Moisa” [Like the Buffalo]: Moisa is Bangla name of Buffalo. Earlier the threshing of paddy was done by cattle. Still the practice is found in remote rural areas, The paddy was put in a cercle and cattle are walking on it in a cyclic way. The cattle that are in the center need not walk by more very slowly. All cows are not good for that job. Bull that is heavy can only do this. Such a bull which is a cow but stays like a buffalo is called Moisha.

বইসাল “Boisal” [Buffalo moving]: Boisal is local name of earthquake. If Buffalos walk beside everything moves, even the soil shakes. During earthquakes the land is also shaking.

মৎস্যন্যায় “Matsonay” [Sin of fish]: This is a very common Bangla phrases to describe the chain of corruption. Big fish eat medium size fish, medium size fish takes small fish.

কুম্বিরাশ্রু “Kumvirashru” [Tears of crocodile]: Crocodile’s tear describes fake courtesy.

কাউউঁর কামুর “Kauttar Kamur” [Bit of a Turtle]: It is saying that if a turtle bit it will not open the mouth until there is a thunderstorm. For that if someone is dedicated to an assignment

সাপে নেউলে “Sape Neole” [Relation between snake and mungoose]: The relationship between the snake and the mungoose is not good. They are always fighting. To describe the bad relationship between two individuals for no specific reason the words are used by the community.

কইমাছের প্রান “Koi Macher Pran” [Life a climbing fish]: “Koi Macher Pran” is an idiom, used to describe a painful living. Very commonly used to say if someone is serving even after an undesirable pain or tragedy. Also used in an urban slang for uncared or less attended elders. This is because the climbing fish has an extra gill, so that they can survive for long days without water.

নিমতিতা “Nim Tita” [Sour like the Neem Leaf]: The need leaf is very sour. There are some people in the community who always speak very roughly, they roud and never polite. Such a behaviour is call “Need Tita”.

সাপের পাঁচ পা “Saper Panch Pa” [Five legs of snake]: Snake has no legs. If someone in a community starts behaving differently and misusing the power and position, people commonly say, “He has seen five legs of snake”.

বকের মতো সাদা “Boker Moto Sada” [White like Egret]: Cattle Egret and Little Egrets are white in colour. To describe pure white without any stain the metaphor is used.

বকধ্যান “Bokodhyan” [Meditation of Egret]: Egrets are very quiet and dedicated. To catch fish lay look on the water for long and finally lay are able to hunt. Someone who is dedicated to the target is called is appreciated for the dedication. Such a dedication is called Bokodhan. The word Dhen means meditation.

বকধার্মিক “Bokodharmik” [Pious like an Egret]: Bokodharmik is fraud. The egret has a beautiful crest, so long feathers on the back of the head like the monks have some long hairs on the back side of their shaven head. The monks are quiet and silent when praying and meditation. If someone does harm silently or is always busy doing harm to others but behaving very nicely is called “bakodharmik” means pious like an egret.

গোবক “Gobok” [Egret]: The Bubulcus ibis are known as Cow-Egret, the common English name is also means the same, Cattle Egret. When the cattle are grazing the egret always follows them, sometimes they sit on the back of the cattle. This is actually to eat insects; the cattle walk and the grass moves and that makes the insect jump or fly. কাকের চোখের মতো স্বচ্ছ “Kaker Chukher Moto Swaccho” [Clean as crow eye]: To define clear and clean the phrase “Kaker Chukher Moto Swaccho” is used. Very commonly this is used to describe the cleanliness of water pools. If there is less turbidity in water then it is called like this.

পাচাঁ শামুকে পা কাটে “Poncha Shamuke Pa Kata” [We cut our legs by rotten snail]: The proverb is very serious and widely use. If someone steps on a live snail s/he will not cut the feet; but if the snail is rotten, it will break easily and the person will have a cut on the feet. Very minor or poor issues cause a huge burden for us.

ছিনাই দিয়ে গাং সেচা “Chinai Diye Gang Secha” [Dewatering a canal by a Bivalvia]; You can do a great work with small capacity. Dewatering a canal is not possible by a Bivalvia. There was a common use of bivalent to feed milks to baby. Bivalvia was the early form of spoon.

বনগুইল “Bongoeel” [Pangolin] It someone is very unclean s/he is compared with the porcupine. Goeel is a lizard, and bon is a forest. The word Bongoeel literal means the wild lizard, but it was not. It was discussed with the community; according to them Bongoeel is a pangolin, not a lizard.

গন্ডারের চামড়া “Gondarer Chamra” [Skin of Rhino]: The words “Gandared Chamra” is used to mean feelingless or irresponsible people; means lacking or devoid of feeling, emotion, or sensitivity. Rhino has very thick skin. If they are touched, they will get the sense after a long time.

Use Frequency

It was found that idioms and phrases that have noted biodiversity are not very common. Only a few are in frequent use. Also, some words are in use by some specific community and age group. Use frequency in Table 1 has been grouped as, Frequent: Regula use; Occasional: Once or twice in a week; Rare: Once or twice in three months; Very year: Once in a year or longer time.

Table 1: Use frequency and user group of biodiversity-noted Idioms and Phrases

Sl	Idioms and Phrases	Use Frequency	Lead User group	In Standard language	Described in Textbook
1	ব্যাঙের সর্দি “Benger Sordi” [Frog cold]	Moderate	Common	✓	✓
2	সাজতে সাজতে ফেউচ্ছা রাজা “Sajte Sajte Feuccha Raja” [Busy in dressing but the Drongo got the kingship]	Rare	Elderly		
3	পাক দিয়া নদী ভানর “Pak Dia Nodi Vanor” [Again the river Vanor]	Very Rare	Elderly		
4	মাছের মা'র পুত্র শোক “Macher Mar Putra Shok” [Fish mother is crying for son]	Moderate	Educated	✓	✓
5	হিয়াইল্লা বুদ্দি “Hialya Buddi” [Canning life a Fox]	Moderate	Common		
6	নলতল বর্ষা “Nol Tol Borsha” [Flood that drowning the reeds]	Very rare	Elderly		
7	সব মাছে গো খায় ঘাউরা মাছের বদনাম যায় “Sob Mache Gu Khay Gaura Macher Bodnam Jay” [All fishes eat the human poop but only the Gaura fish is claimed]	Frequent	Common		
8	প্যাঁচা “Pancha” [Owl]	Moderate	Common		
9	খাটাস “Khatas” [Civet]	Moderate	Common		
10	গ্যাডাকল “Gerakol” [Rhino Trap]	Rare	Common	✓	
11	মাইসা “Moisa” [Like the Buffalo]	Very rare	Farmer		
12	বইসাল “Boisal” [Buffalo moving]	Rare	Remote rural illiterate		
13	মৎস্যন্যায় “Matsonay” [Sin of fish]	Moderate	Common	✓	✓
14	কুম্বিরশ্রু “Kumvirashru” [Tears of crocodile]	Rare	Educated	✓	✓
15	কাউটার কামুর “Kauttar Kamur” [Bit of a Turtle]	Moderator	Common		
16	সাপে নেউলে “Sape Neole” [Relation between snake and mongoose]	Frequent	Common	✓	✓
17	কইমাছের প্রান “Koi Macher Pran” [Life a climbing fish]	Frequent	Common	✓	✓
18	নিমতিতা “Nim Tita” [Sour like the Neem Leaf]	Occasional	Common	✓	
19	সাপের পাঁচ পা “Saper Panch Pa” [Five legs of snake]	Occasional	Common		✓
20	বকের মতো সাদা “Boker Moto Sada” [White like Egret]	Rare	Common		
21	বকধ্যান “Bokodhyan” [Meditation of Egret]	Moderate	Educated	✓	✓
22	বকধার্মিক “Bokodarmik” [Pious like an Egret]	Frequent	Common	✓	✓
23	গোবক “Gobok” [Egret]	Moderate	Common		
24	কাকের চোখের মতো স্বচ্ছ “Kaker Chukher Moto Swaccho” [Clean as crow eye]	Rare	Common		

25	ছিনাই দিয়ে গাং সেচা “Poncha Shamuke Pa Kata” [We cut our legs by rotten snail]	Frequent	Common	✓	
26	ছিনাই দিয়ে গাং সেচা “Chinai Diye Gang Secha” [Dewatering a canal by a Bivalvia]	Rare	Elderly		
27	বনগুইল “Bongoel” [Pangolin]	Very rare	Namasudra community		
28	গন্ডারের চামড়া “Gondarer Chamra” [Skin of Rhino]	Frequent	Young	✓	✓

Standard Language and Dialect

Bangla is the native language of the most of the people and parts of the country. There are some distinct dialect-areas where significance of difference from the standard Bangla is quite strong, viz., Chittagonian, Sylheti and Chapai dialects. The norther part of Medir Hoar is part of Sylhet division and the northwest is adjustment to Mymensingh division. The northern part of Medir Hoar is part of Sylhet division and the northwest is an adjustment to Mymensingh division. The dialect of Medir Haor is a mix between the dialects of Brahmanbaria, Sylhet and Mymensingh. The words found originated from biodiversity in the Medir hoar can be divided into two classes:

Originated in the Haor basin and speeded to other areas: Idioms and phrases like “Pak Dia Nodi Vanor” (পাক দিয়া নদী ভানর), “Hialya Buddi” (হিয়াইল্লা বুদ্ধি), “Nol Tol Borsha” (নলতল বর্ষা), etc., were very much Medir Haor basin origin, and of those words are being used outside these areas too. Metaphor use of animal’s name to describe uncommon behaviour was found very localized. Standard Bangla: Some of the Idioms and phrases used

by the community are standard Bangla, some are used in its same for some are slightly modified. “Matsonay” (মৎস্যন্যায়) and “Kumvirashru” (কুম্বিরাশ্রু) are tuff in pronunciation but found widely used. “Kaker Chukher Moto Swaccho” (কাকের চোখের মতো স্বচ্ছ) and “Chinai Diye Gang Secha” (পচাঁ শামুকে পা কাটে) those are said in local dialect. In Nasirnagar areas “H” is used instead of “S”, live Shamuk is called Hamuk.

Current Status of Biodiversity

Some of the biodiversity noted Idioms and Phases referees to specific species some are in glass. Like, সব মাছ গো খায় ঘাড়েরা মাছের বদনাম যায় “Sob Mache Gu Khay Gaura Macher Bodnam Jay” [All fishes eat the human poop but only the Gaura fish is claimed], noted the Garua Bacha fish (Clupisoma gaura), and few biodiversity are noted in group of class, like, মাছের মা’র পুত্র শোক “Macher Mar Putra Shok” [Fish mother is crying for son]. The population status of the biodiversity noted in the identified idioms and phases is described in Table 2. Population of almost all species is declining. Habitat loss was found as the main cause of species diversity loss.

Table 2: Current State of Population of the Biodiversity in the Etymology

Sl	Species	State of Population
Invertebrate		
1	Shamukh, Apple snail	Those there were 3 species of snails were recorded from the Medir Haor, viz, apple snail (<i>Pila globosa</i>), Disk snail (<i>Macrochlamys indica</i>), and Banded snail (<i>Bellamya bengalensis</i>), but in the phrase noted the apple snail. After laying eggs the mother snail died. There are plenty of dead and rotten apple snails in the paddy field.
2	Jhinuk, Bivalvia	Mussel (<i>Lamellidens marginalis</i>), is found in all the canal and perineal wetlands. The population has declined dramatically. Big Bivalvia is very rare. During the 1950s children were collecting pearls from the droppings of the domestic duck in the seasonal riverine islands located on the western side of the Medir Haor.
Fishes		
3	Fish	Sixty-five species of fishes have been identified from the Medir Haor during the study. The team fish is a common reference to the crab fishes. Association of crab fishes in different rituals both social and religious was also found in Medir Haor.
4	Ghaura Mach,	Ghaura Mach (<i>Clupisoma garua</i>) population is decaling. Since there is no harvesting of this fish, the population decline is because of the interruption in its food chain and pollution. Fish is very similar to the Bacha fish (<i>Eutropiichthys vacha</i>) to look at. Children are also thought to identify the difference between those two fishes.
5	Climbing Fish	Population of Climbing Perches (<i>Anabas cobojjius</i>) fish is declining. Upto 2010 the climbing fish was very common. Habitat loss and chemical pollution of water bodies are the main causes of population decline.

Amphibians		
6	Frog	There were 3 species of wetland frogs found in the Medir Haor wetlands, viz., (1) Indian Bullfrog (<i>Hoplobatrachus tigerinus</i>), (2) Common Skittering Frog (<i>Euphlyctis cyanophlyctis</i>), and (3) Asian Grass Frog (<i>Fejervarya limnocharis</i>)
Reptile		
7	Crocodile	Crocodiles are extinct from Medir Haor. According to the community upto 1965 there were crocodiles in the western side of the Haor, that is the Meghan River adjutant areas. The description gave an idea that the crocodile was not a resident animal of that wetland, they were visitors during the early monsoon where there is the jute preparation time. There was some evidence of attacking the farmers when they were washing the jute. From the description it was not clear whether it was a Freshwater Crocodile and Estuarine Crocodile; but most probably a Fresh Water Crocodile, because a farmer escaped from the mouth of a crocodile by hitting the eyes of the animal, it is more possible in case of a Freshwater Crocodile (<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>) attack.
8	Snake	Most common water snake is the Medir Haor is the Checkered Keelback (<i>Xenochrophis piscator</i>), Olive Keelback Snake (<i>Atrretium schistosum</i>) is also common. There were records of cobra; Monocellate Cobra (<i>Naja kaouthia</i>) was reported from the trees inside the Haor. Now cobra population is nearly declined. The description of the presence of fish-eating ghosts and people killed by them assume the death by bit of Shankhini, Banded Krait (<i>Bungarus fasciatus</i>).
9	Turtle	The Spotted Flapshell Turtle (<i>Lissemys punctata</i>) was found occasionally in Medir Haor. There were also Bengal Eyed Turtles (<i>Morenia petersi</i>) and Peacock Softshell Turtles (<i>Nilssonina hurum</i>). Nowadays, catching turtles in the fishing net is very rare from the Haor and adjutant areas.
Birds		
10	Egret	Egret was a very common bird in this wetland. They are common now but the number of Egret colonies has reduced drastically. There are Cattle Egrets (<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>) and Little Egrets (<i>Egretta garzetta</i>).
11	Owl	The population of Spotted Owlet (<i>Athene brama</i>) and Fish Owl (<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>) is declining. According to the community, the owl population was always occasional. There was Laxmi Pecha (<i>Tyto alba</i>), which is a sign of good luck and wealth now is rare.
12	Drongo	Black Drongo (<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>) population in Medir Haor is moderate. They are common birds in the crop field.
13	Crow	Crows were common upto 1990s. House crow, <i>Corvus splendens</i> is a very common bird in Haor. All of a sudden, the population of crows declined after 1995 according to the community. Community assumed that it was because of poison killing and use of insecticides in crop fields. Plastic pollution may be a cause. At that time many sick crows were seen in garbage dumping areas. From 2010 to 2020 the Jungle crow (<i>Corvus leuillanti</i>) was very rare and the House were seen very occasionally. But now the population has been increasing.
Mammal		
14	Buffalo	Buffalo is domestic cattle, but the practice of rearing buffalo was not common. Only a few buffaloes were used to carry goods and carts in the remote villages. The Buffalo Cart was used to carry the harvested paddy to the villages.
15	Rhino	There was no evidence that there was Greater One-Horned Rhino (<i>Rhinoceros unicornis</i>) in Medir Haor. No tells, art work or folk festival represents the presence of Rhino in this Haor.
16	Fox	The Bangla name Shial is used for both Jackal and Fox. To specify Fox the name Khék Shial is also used. Upto 1980s the population of Golden Jackal (<i>Canis aureus</i>) and Bengal Fox (<i>Vulpes bengalensis</i>) was good in villages in the Haor basin. The Fox was blamed as a killer of domestic hen and duck. Young boys on weekends in the 1980s were enjoying happy times killing the Jackal and Fox from the village grove forest and bush. The abandoned homesteads were the habitat for Jackal and Fox. Some eye-witness said they have seen jackals killing migratory birds like Cotton Teal. Due to no killing the Jackal population has been increased but the Fox are very rare now.

17	Civet	Small Indian Civet (<i>Viverricula indica</i>) is rare, found very occasionally in remote villages of the Haor periphery. The population of this species was never good according to the community. The common habitat was the bamboo bush.
18	Pangolin	Though it seems very doubtful having pangolin (<i>Manis pentadactyla</i>) in Medir Haor, but from the description by the eye-witness it was presumed that it was pangolin.
Plant		
19	Reeds	Reeds are common plant in Haor basin. Though there is no reed forest in the Medir Haor but there are big patches of reed. The dominating species of reed is the Nol (<i>Phragmites karka</i>). There is also Khagra (<i>Saccharum spontaneum</i>), which is called Kash in standard Bangla. In local terminology the reed where Nol is major is called Nol Bon and where Kash is major is called Kash Bon. Nol Bon grows in comparatively wet and low areas.
20	Neem	Neem (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>) is a medicinal tree and planted in homestead.
Ecosystem		
21	River	There are many rivers and canals in a Haor ecosystem. In the Medir Haor major rivers are the Kulkulia, Longan, and Balbhadra. The Toponymy of the rivers and perennial waterbodies name was very thought-provoking.

Etymology says about Past Biodiversity

Though all the species found in the phrases and idioms are not present in current days in the Medir, it also gives evidence of past existence. Like the presence of Crocodile in the river of the Medir Haor and the Pangolin in the nearby villages. Local stories evident that upto 1965 there were crocodiles in the Meghna river adjacent area of the Haor. A farmer was attacked by a crocodile in the village Goalnagar while washing the jute in the river. Once Rhino was also present in the wetland of Bangladesh.

Conservation Importance

Whether Etymology plays any important role in conservation of Biodiversity? The answer was dutiful from the community and students. Students from the Nasirnagar Ashutosh Pilot High School said they got curious to know more about those species after knowing the origin and association of those idioms with animals and plants. Etymology may support conservation efforts by making the community understand the importance of biodiversity.

Discussion

Research on the origin of words from the biodiversity is not a common study topic. Research papers on exploration were not that available. There are few studies on the zoological nomenclature and process of naming of species. According to Jozwiak *et al.* (2017) the names of animals were divided into several categories, starting from the most common - given after morphological features - through inspiration from mythology, legends, and classic literature but also from fictional and nonfictional pop-culture characters (e.g., music, movies or cartoons), science, and politics. Ghalekhani and Khaksar (2016) studied the etymological glossary of carnivores' animal in text of Iranian Budhahishn, they detailed the origin of the names of animals and theological evidences of the naming process. Each name serves as a key to a story (Khidirova, 2024). Activities of ancient Indians were woven around the animals. Buddhist Jathaka stories

attach great importance to rebirth. The elephants and the monkeys come across a variety of animals in different re-births. During his long forest-stay, Lord Rama developed special relations with different animals such as birds, Hanuman, deer and monkeys. Lord Krishna was also an animal lover. In order to protect the animals that he loved, from heavy rains and thunder storm he lifted a huge mountain and came to be known as Govardhana Giridhari (Kamat, 1994). Animals in Indian mythology were studied by Kamat (1994), Krishna (2014), Pattanaik (2014). Horses gallop across the sky. Serpents hoard gems in their subterranean realms. Turtles remember the goodness of old kings. Crows narrate epic poems. Dogs walk right up to the gates of paradise. Monkeys build a bridge across the sea. Vultures fly towards the sun. These are just some of the roles animals play in Hindu mythology. The current study aims to understand the association of animals in culture and identity. Language and identity are intricately linked, with language serving as a powerful marker and shaper of personal and social identity. Identity refers to the characteristics, beliefs, values, and experiences that define an individual or a group. It presents various aspects such as cultural, ethnic, national, personal, and social identities. Language, as a fundamental mode of communication, is intricately intertwined with these different dimensions of identity (Yadav & Golaiti, 2010). Language serves as a reflection of cultural identity, capturing the shared values, traditions, and beliefs of a particular group. Idioms are pervasive in a language, reflecting its culture even more vividly and deeply than all other kinds of words. Animal idioms vary from their literal meaning, not only reflecting people's different opinions and attitudes towards animals, but also transmitting different cultural connotations profoundly and intensively (Lyu & Li, 2020). To write about the Etymology and Ecology, Lörinczi (2014) wrote, "hen we are dealing with the names of birds, plants, traditional local place names or the names of tools invented thousands of years ago (such as the knife, the ploughshare, the hammer, the needle), in-the-field surveys and direct knowledge

of the object and its environment are in some cases of fundamental importance in understanding the origin of nouns and changes in their meanings”.

Animal terms are heavily conventionalized in metaphor. In each culture certain animal terms are strongly certain attributes (Nesi, 1995). The animal terms that were found in the Medir Haor is describing the mostly the so-called bad habit of the animals. Children are compared with butterflies, not for the beauty but for their restlessness.

There has been no record of the occurrence of the freshwater crocodiles in the wild in Bangladesh in the last five decades, resulting in regional extinction. It was also considered extinct during the 2000 IUCN evaluation. Once, the mugger crocodiles were common across Bangladesh as the major rivers Padma, Jamuna and Meghna and most of their tributaries have supported the species. The animals were abundant in the hilly rivers Karnaphuli and Sangu. But, due to unchecked poaching for its prized skins, the species was thought to have gone extinct in Bangladesh (Islam, 2023). Trageser *et al.* (2017) recorded Chinese pangolins from Lauachara National Park which is located in the Haor basin. There were sightings on 5 June and 20 June 2016. Rookmmaker (2024) mentioned that presence of Rhino in Shamsheernagar sub-district upto 1910s. It was a Sumatran Rhino (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*). It is evident that etymology can play an important role in understanding the population status of biodiversity too.

Due to the people’s religious faith many of the endangered species of plants as well as animals are being conserved and protected in the wild and people do not harm their religious trees and animals (Kumar & Knaujia, 2016). Etymology referees the association of a species with the community and society. Such an attachment can also justify the importance of conservation if the valuation is in that way. In Bangladesh the tiger is not only an animal but also a pride and identity. Etymology can be a vehicle of conservation if treated in that way.

Etymological research in Bangladesh faces significant limitations, particularly in terms of available literature and methodological frameworks. Despite its importance in understanding linguistic and cultural connections to nature, this field remains underexplored. The current study seeks to address this gap by advancing etymological inquiry and promoting its relevance among ecologists and conservationists. By highlighting the intrinsic relationship between language, nature, and community, this research aims to foster greater appreciation and application of etymological knowledge in ecological and conservation practices.

CONCLUSION

Etymology can support conservation efforts by providing insights into the cultural significance and historical uses of biodiversity. Understanding the etymology can help designing effective and culturally sensitive conservation strategies. Etymological insights can assist in identifying areas where human-nature interactions have been

particularly significant in the past. Understanding the cultural significance of a species or place can be a powerful tool for engaging local communities in conservation. For special types of ecosystems, like Haor that is very much essential. By incorporating etymological knowledge in conservation effort community ownership towards conservation can be amplified. Etymological research is highly valuable for nature conservation. It can reveal diverse perspectives of the human-nature relationship. The current study was very brief and rapid, also with limited methodology; a detailed study of the animal biodiversity association in language and culture of the Haor is recommended. Local biodiversity conservation attempts could have considered the idioms, phrases and sayings as the identity of the human in the ecosystem and society. Cultural association and linguistics values needs to be considered and recognized in the policy and strategy of conservation of biological diversity, it will give the community more ownership in the conservation process.

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