



Language Policy, Nationalism, and Women's Participation in Bangladesh's Foreign Diplomacy

Tanjina Jahan

Yangzhou University, China

Email: phdyangzhou@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22540960>

ABSTRACT

Language is not merely a tool of communication; it is a site of power, identity, and geopolitical negotiation. In Bangladesh, the legacy of the 1952 Language Movement has rendered Bengali a powerful symbol of nationalism, yet in diplomacy, English continues to dominate. This paper, grounded in the Feminist Linguistic Coloniality (FLC) framework, investigates how this linguistic dualism affects Bangladeshi women's participation in foreign diplomatic services. Using a qualitative approach—in-depth interviews with 10 current and former female diplomats and discourse analysis of official diplomatic documents and UN speeches—the study reveals that English proficiency functions as a gatekeeping mechanism. Women diplomats from non-English-medium backgrounds face systematic disadvantage in promotion and international assignments. Employing FLC's concepts of 'Gendered Linguistic Gatekeeping' and 'Linguistic Hegemony,' the paper argues that Bangladesh's language-in-diplomacy policy inadvertently perpetuates gender inequality by privileging a colonial language. The paper critiques the foreign ministry's training programs for being gender-blind and linguistically assimilationist. It recommends a bilingual diplomatic training model that recognizes Bengali as an equal language of international communication, targeted language skill development for women diplomats, and gender-responsive language policies. The findings have implications for South Asian regional diplomacy, South-South cooperation, and the broader global discourse on language rights and gender justice in IR. This study is grounded in the author's positionality as a Bangladeshi researcher and a PhD candidate at Yangzhou University, China, which offers a critical insider perspective on the linguistic and gendered dynamics of Bangladesh's diplomacy.

Keywords: *language policy, Feminist IR, women diplomats, Bangladesh foreign policy, nationalism, Feminist Linguistic Coloniality, linguistic capital*

INTRODUCTION

The 1952 Language Movement in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) was a defining moment in the nation's history, establishing Bengali as a symbol of resistance, identity, and sovereignty. Today, Bengali remains the state language and a cornerstone of Bangladeshi nationalism (Uddin, 2020). However, in the realm of international diplomacy, English continues to serve as the dominant language—a legacy of British colonialism and a reflection of global power hierarchies (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1998).

This linguistic dualism creates a unique challenge for Bangladeshi diplomats, particularly women, who must navigate between the nationalist valorization of Bengali and the pragmatic demands of English-dominated international relations. While Bangladesh has made significant strides in gender equality in diplomacy, with women increasingly serving as ambassadors and foreign ministry officials (Hossain, 2021), the role of language in shaping their career trajectories remains underexplored.

Bangladesh's foreign ministry has seen a steady increase in female representation over the past two decades. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023), women now constitute approximately 15% of the diplomatic service, a significant improvement from previous decades. However, despite this progress, women remain underrepresented in senior diplomatic positions and international assignments (Hossain, 2021). This underrepresentation is often attributed to structural barriers, including gender bias, lack of mentorship, and limited access to professional development opportunities (True, 2012; Aggestam & Towns, 2018).

This study argues that language—specifically, English proficiency—is a critical yet overlooked barrier that perpetuates gender inequality in Bangladesh's diplomatic service. Drawing on the Feminist Linguistic Coloniality (FLC) framework, the study analyzes how the dominance of English in diplomacy functions as a gendered gatekeeping mechanism, systematically excluding women from non-English-medium backgrounds. FLC posits that language is not a neutral medium but a site of power, where dominant languages (such as English) impose colonial structures on marginalized communities, particularly women and those from non-Western contexts (Spivak, 1988; Lugones, 2010; Mohanty, 2003).

The paper is structured as follows: First, it reviews the existing literature on language policy, feminist IR, and diplomatic practice. Second, it introduces the FLC framework and its relevance to the study. Third, it presents the methodology and findings from qualitative interviews with female diplomats and discourse analysis of official documents. Fourth, it discusses the implications of these findings for Bangladesh's strategic autonomy and gender equality. Finally, it offers recommendations for decolonizing Bangladesh's foreign policy through bilingual diplomacy and gender-responsive language policies.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the emerging field of feminist geopolitical linguistics, which examines the intersection of language, gender, and power in international relations (Chowdhury, 2020; Gurumurthy & Chami, 2020). By applying the FLC framework to the analysis of diplomatic practice, this study offers a novel perspective on the linguistic dimensions of strategic autonomy and gendered exclusion in South Asia.

Furthermore, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature on women in diplomacy, which has largely focused on Western contexts (Aggestam & Towns, 2018; True, 2012). By examining the case of Bangladesh, a post-colonial state in the Global South, this study provides insights into the unique challenges faced by women diplomats in non-Western contexts. The findings have implications for South Asian regional diplomacy, South-South cooperation, and the broader global discourse on language rights and gender justice in international relations.

My positionality as a Bangladeshi researcher and a PhD candidate in International Studies at Yangzhou University, China, shapes my approach to this study. Having grown up in Bangladesh, I am intimately familiar with the historical and cultural significance of the 1952 Language Movement and its enduring influence on national identity. At the same time, my training in global IR and feminist theory allows me to critically analyze the linguistic and gendered dynamics of Bangladesh's diplomacy from a decolonial perspective. This dual insider-outsider position enables me to interrogate both the nationalist valorization of Bengali and the pragmatic dominance of English, while remaining sensitive to the lived experiences of women diplomats who navigate this linguistic dualism daily.

Literature Review

Language, Nationalism, and Identity in Bangladesh

The 1952 Language Movement made Bengali a central pillar of Bangladeshi national identity (Uddin, 2020; Rahman, 2021). The movement, which culminated in the recognition of Bengali as a state language of Pakistan, was a defining moment in the nation's struggle for cultural and political autonomy (Uddin, 2020). Today, Bengali is not only the state language but also a symbol of resistance against colonial and post-colonial domination (Khan, 2019). However, despite its symbolic importance, Bengali has not achieved equal status with English in diplomacy, higher education, or international communication (Khan, 2019). English remains the language of power, prestige, and global connectivity, reflecting what Phillipson (1992) terms "linguistic imperialism." This linguistic dualism creates a unique challenge for Bangladeshi diplomats, who must navigate between the nationalist valorization of Bengali and the pragmatic demands of English-dominated international relations (Chowdhury, 2020).

The tension between Bengali nationalism and English pragmatism is not unique to Bangladesh. Similar dynamics are observed in other post-colonial states, such as India, Pakistan, and Nigeria, where former colonial languages continue to shape political, economic, and cultural life (Pennycook, 1998; Canagarajah, 1999). However, the case of Bangladesh is particularly significant because of the central role of the Language Movement in the nation's founding identity (Uddin, 2020).

Linguistic Imperialism and Post-Colonial Dependency

Scholars such as Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1998) have extensively documented how English has been positioned as the language of power and knowledge in post-colonial societies. This linguistic imperialism perpetuates colonial hierarchies, where English-

speaking elites are privileged over non-English-speaking populations (Bourdieu, 1991). In the context of foreign policy, the dominance of English limits the ability of states to articulate their interests in their own languages, thereby constraining their autonomy (Chowdhury, 2020; Rahman, 2021).

In Bangladesh, the dominance of English in diplomacy reflects a broader pattern of post-colonial dependency, where former colonial languages continue to shape political, economic, and cultural life (Pennycook, 1998). This dependency is not merely linguistic but also epistemological, as it limits the ability of Bangladeshi diplomats to articulate their interests in Bengali and imposes Western conceptual frameworks on policy formulation (Khan, 2019).

The concept of linguistic dependency is central to understanding the constraints on Bangladesh's strategic autonomy. According to this view, the dominance of English in diplomacy limits the state's ability to articulate its interests in its own terms, thereby reducing its capacity for autonomous action in international forums (Chowdhury, 2020). This dependency is reinforced by the lack of official recognition of Bengali as an equal language of international communication (Khan, 2019).

Women in Diplomacy: A Gendered Field

Feminist International Relations (IR) scholars have highlighted how diplomacy has historically been a male-dominated field, shaped by masculine norms and exclusionary practices (Enloe, 2014; Tickner, 2001; Aggestam & Towns, 2018). While women have made significant gains in diplomatic services worldwide, they continue to face structural barriers, including glass ceilings, unequal representation, and gendered expectations (True, 2012).

In Bangladesh, women have been part of the diplomatic service since the country's independence, yet they remain underrepresented in senior positions (Hossain, 2021). This underrepresentation is often attributed to structural barriers, including gender bias, lack of mentorship, and limited access to professional development opportunities (True, 2012). However, the role of language in shaping women's career trajectories has received limited attention in the literature.

The gendered nature of linguistic exclusion is particularly significant in the context of diplomacy, where language proficiency is often a prerequisite for career advancement (Gurumurthy & Chami, 2020). Women from non-English-medium backgrounds face compounded disadvantages due to limited access to language training, international assignments, and professional development opportunities (Ahmed, 2021).

Language and Linguistic Capital in International Relations

Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic capital is useful for understanding how language proficiency functions as a form of symbolic power in diplomatic contexts. In the context of diplomacy, English proficiency is often perceived as a prerequisite for international assignments and career advancement (Chowdhury, 2020). This reliance on English perpetuates colonial hierarchies and excludes those who lack access to English-medium education (Phillipson, 1992).

For women diplomats, particularly those from non-English-medium backgrounds, the lack of English proficiency can be a significant barrier to career advancement (Gurumurthy & Chami, 2020). This is compounded by gender-based discrimination, which often limits women's access to language training and international assignments (Ahmed, 2021). The concept of linguistic capital is particularly relevant in the context of Bangladesh, where access to English-medium education is unevenly distributed along lines of class, gender, and geography (Chowdhury, 2020).

Feminist Linguistic Coloniality (FLC) Framework

The FLC framework, developed by the author, extends post-colonial and feminist critiques to analyze how language operates as a site of gendered coloniality. FLC argues that linguistic hierarchies—where English is positioned as superior to Bengali—are not merely linguistic but deeply political, reflecting and reinforcing colonial power structures (Spivak, 1988; Lugones, 2010). FLC also highlights how language acts as a gendered gatekeeping mechanism, disproportionately affecting women, particularly those from non-English-medium backgrounds (Mohanty, 2003).

By applying FLC to the study of diplomacy, this paper seeks to uncover how linguistic dependency constrains strategic autonomy and perpetuates gender inequality in Bangladesh's foreign policy (Gurumurthy & Chami, 2020). The FLC framework offers a critical lens for analyzing the intersection of language, gender, and power in diplomatic contexts, and for identifying possibilities for decolonial resistance.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, using semi-structured interviews and discourse analysis to explore the intersection of language, gender, and strategic autonomy in Bangladesh's foreign diplomacy. The qualitative approach is particularly suited for exploring complex social phenomena, as it allows for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The choice of a qualitative design is justified by the exploratory nature of the research, which seeks to uncover the lived experiences of female diplomats and the linguistic dynamics of diplomatic practice (Patton, 2015). The use of multiple methods—interviews and discourse analysis—ensures a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and allows for triangulation of findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Participants or Data Sources

A total of 10 current and former female diplomats from Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in this study. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure diversity in rank, experience, and educational background (Patton, 2015). The sample included diplomats at various stages of their careers, from early-career officers to senior diplomats with over 20 years of service.

The inclusion of both current and former diplomats provides a longitudinal perspective on the challenges faced by women in diplomacy (Hossain, 2021). The diversity of the sample

ensures that the findings reflect a range of experiences and perspectives, from early-career challenges to systemic barriers at senior levels (True, 2012).

Data Gathering Procedure

- Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant, lasting between 60 and 90 minutes. The interviews explored participants' experiences with language in their diplomatic careers, including training, assignments, and promotion. The interviews were conducted in both Bengali and English, depending on participants' preference, to ensure comfort and authenticity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).
- Discourse Analysis: Official documents, including diplomatic correspondence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs policies, and UN speeches by Bangladeshi representatives, were analyzed to examine language use and linguistic hierarchies. The analysis focused on the visibility and recognition of Bengali in diplomatic contexts (Fairclough, 2013).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), guided by the FLC framework, particularly its concepts of 'Linguistic Hegemony' and 'Gendered Linguistic Gatekeeping.' The analysis followed a six-phase process: familiarizing with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board at Yangzhou University. All participants provided informed consent, and data were anonymized and stored securely. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty (British Educational Research Association, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Language Proficiency as a Gatekeeping Mechanism

All participants unanimously reported that English proficiency was a decisive factor in their career progression. One mid-career diplomat shared:

"My English was not strong enough, so I was passed over for international assignments. They said I needed to improve my language skills, but I had no opportunity to practice."

— (Participant 3, mid-career)

A senior diplomat elaborated on the systemic nature of this barrier:

"The foreign ministry operates in English. All official correspondence, meetings, and negotiations are in English. If you cannot speak English fluently, you cannot

represent your country effectively. It's not just about grammar—it's about confidence, networking, and being taken seriously in international forums."

— (Participant 5, senior diplomat)

Another participant, who had served in multilateral missions, added:

"At the UN, informal negotiations happen in English. If you hesitate, you lose your chance to influence decisions. Many brilliant women from Bengali-medium backgrounds struggle because they lack fluency—not intellect."

— (Participant 4, senior diplomat)

A junior diplomat described how this gatekeeping begins early in one's career:

"During the initial training, those who spoke English well were given priority for foreign postings. The rest of us were sent to desk jobs. It felt like we were being punished for not having an English-medium education."

— (Participant 7, early-career)

These testimonies highlight that English proficiency is not merely a skill but a gatekeeping mechanism that determines access to career-defining opportunities. The data suggest that women from non-English-medium backgrounds are systematically filtered out of high-stakes diplomatic roles, reinforcing a cycle of exclusion.

Unequal Access to Language Training

Participants from non-English-medium backgrounds reported that the foreign ministry's language training programs were inadequate and inaccessible. One early-career diplomat noted:

"I learned English in a Bengali-medium school. When I joined the foreign ministry, I realized how far behind I was. But there was no systematic support to improve. The ministry offers basic courses, but they are not tailored for diplomats who need advanced negotiation skills."

— (Participant 7, early-career)

A senior diplomat echoed this frustration:

"The ministry offers language courses, but they are often basic and not tailored to the needs of diplomats. There is no advanced training for those who need it. Meanwhile, male colleagues who studied in English-medium schools are automatically considered more competent—even when their analytical skills are weaker."

— (Participant 2, senior diplomat)

Another participant pointed to the lack of gender-sensitive training:

"Women diplomats often have family responsibilities that make it harder to attend evening classes or long-term training abroad. The ministry does not consider these challenges when designing language programs. They assume everyone has the same flexibility."

— (Participant 6, mid-career)

A participant who had previously worked in a different ministry shared:

"In other ministries, there are language labs and exchange programs. In the foreign ministry, the training is minimal. It's almost as if they expect you to already know English perfectly before you join."

— (Participant 9, mid-career)

This finding reveals a structural gap: the ministry's training programs are gender-blind and fail to address the specific needs of women from non-English-medium backgrounds.

Gendered Dimensions of Language Exclusion

Women diplomats, particularly those from rural or non-English-medium backgrounds, reported feeling doubly disadvantaged. One participant explained:

"Men often have more opportunities to study abroad or attend English-speaking institutions. Women, especially those from conservative families, do not have that privilege. Even when women have the same qualifications as men, they are often overlooked for international assignments because of language. It is double standard."

— (Participant 1, early-career)

Another participant described the psychological toll:

"I constantly feel that I have to prove myself more than my male colleagues. If I make a grammatical error, it is seen as a sign of incompetence. But my male colleagues who speak with heavy accents are not judged the same way."

— (Participant 8, senior diplomat)

A mid-career diplomat highlighted the intersection of class and gender:

"English proficiency is often a marker of class privilege. Women from rural or lower-income families cannot afford English-medium education. The ministry does not recognize this structural inequality and instead treats language as a personal failing."

— (Participant 9, mid-career)

Another participant shared a painful experience:

"I once had a supervisor who told me, 'Your ideas are good, but your English is not strong enough. You should focus on improving that before you apply for international posts.' It made me feel that no matter how hard I worked, I would never be good enough."

— (Participant 10, early-career)

These testimonies underscore how linguistic gatekeeping intersects gender, class, and geography to perpetuate inequality.

Nationalism vs. Pragmatism

Participants expressed ambivalence about the role of Bengali in diplomacy. While they valued Bengali as a symbol of national identity, they acknowledged its limited utility in international settings. One senior diplomat observed:

"I am proud of Bengali. But when I am at the UN, English is the language of negotiation. If I cannot speak English fluently, I cannot represent my country effectively. There is a tension between our national identity and the practical demands of diplomacy."

— (Participant 4, senior diplomat)

Another participant noted:

"We want to promote Bengali, but we also need to be effective in international forums. The reality is that English dominates global diplomacy. If we insist on using Bengali, we risk being ignored."

— (Participant 9, mid-career)

A younger diplomat offered a more hopeful perspective:

"We can promote Bengali in symbolic ways—like using it in speeches or cultural events—but we cannot ignore English. The challenge is to find a balance. A bilingual model could allow us to maintain our identity while engaging with the world."

— (Participant 10, early-career)

However, a senior diplomat expressed skepticism:

"Bilingualism sounds good in theory, but it is impractical in multilateral forums. We cannot expect other countries to accommodate Bengali. The question is: do we want to be effective or romantic?"

— (Participant 5, senior diplomat)

Institutional and Policy Barriers

Participants identified institutional barriers that perpetuate linguistic exclusion. One senior diplomat noted:

"There is no clear policy on language in the foreign ministry. English is the default, but there is no official recognition of Bengali as an equal language of communication. This ambiguity creates confusion and reinforces the dominance of English."

— (Participant 8, senior diplomat)

Another participant criticized the ministry's hiring practices:

"The recruitment process for diplomats is heavily biased toward English-medium candidates. Even if a Bengali-medium candidate has excellent analytical skills, they are often filtered out because they lack fluency in English. This is a form of structural discrimination."

— (Participant 5, senior diplomat)

A mid-career diplomat called for systemic change:

"We need to rethink the role of language in our foreign service. If we want a truly inclusive and effective diplomatic corps, we must invest in language training, recognize Bengali as an equal language, and create pathways for women from diverse backgrounds."

— (Participant 6, mid-career)

A participant who had served in multiple ambassadorships noted:

"The ministry promotes the idea of meritocracy, but it is a myth. Meritocracy is only possible if everyone starts from the same point. Bengali-medium students start from a disadvantaged position, and the ministry does nothing to level the playing field."

— (Participant 4, senior diplomat)

Discussion

Linguistic Hegemony in Diplomacy

The findings confirm that English functions as a hegemonic language in Bangladesh's diplomatic service, reinforcing colonial hierarchies and excluding those without access to English-medium education. This reflects FLC's concept of Linguistic Hegemony, where dominant languages are positioned as universal and necessary for success (Phillipson, 1992; Bourdieu, 1991). The study demonstrates that English proficiency is not merely a skill but a form of symbolic capital that determines access to career opportunities and international assignments (Bourdieu, 1991).

This hegemony is particularly damaging in a post-colonial context like Bangladesh, where the 1952 Language Movement was a defining moment of national identity (Uddin, 2020). The continued dominance of English in diplomacy represents a betrayal of the nationalist ideals that shaped the nation's founding. By privileging English, the foreign ministry perpetuates a form of epistemic dependency that limits Bangladesh's ability to articulate its interests in its own terms (Chowdhury, 2020).

Furthermore, this linguistic hegemony is not accidental—it is reinforced by structural factors such as recruitment practices, training programs, and promotion criteria. The study found that diplomats from English-medium backgrounds are disproportionately represented in senior positions, while those from Bengali-medium backgrounds are often relegated to support roles. This creates a self-perpetuating cycle, where English proficiency is both the cause and consequence of career advancement.

Gendered Linguistic Gatekeeping

The study demonstrates that language acts as a gendered gatekeeper, disproportionately affecting women from non-English-medium backgrounds. This supports FLC's argument that linguistic exclusion is not gender-neutral but intersects with existing gendered inequalities (Mohanty, 2003; Gurusurthy & Chami, 2020). The findings highlight how women

diplomats face compounded disadvantages due to limited access to language training, international assignments, and professional development opportunities (Ahmed, 2021).

This gatekeeping is reinforced by patriarchal norms that limit women's access to education and professional development. In many Bangladeshi families, investment in English-medium education is prioritized for sons rather than daughters (Ahmed, 2021). As a result, women diplomats from non-English-medium backgrounds are often less fluent in English than their male counterparts, which perpetuates a cycle of exclusion.

Moreover, the study found that women diplomats face a double burden: they must not only perform their official duties but also prove their linguistic competence in a way that male colleagues do not. This creates an environment of constant scrutiny, which can lead to stress, anxiety, and burnout. One participant described it as "working twice as hard to be seen as half as competent."

Epistemic Violence and Linguistic Capital

The devaluation of Bengali in diplomatic contexts constitutes a form of epistemic violence, where local knowledge and language are rendered invisible (Fricker, 2007). This reflects Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic capital, where certain languages are privileged and others are marginalized. The study demonstrates how the dominance of English in diplomacy perpetuates a cycle of dependency, where Bangladeshi diplomats are compelled to operate within Western linguistic and conceptual frameworks (Pennycook, 1998).

This epistemic violence is particularly significant in the context of South-South cooperation, where Bangladesh could play a leadership role in promoting multilingual diplomacy. By failing to recognize Bengali as an equal language, the foreign ministry not only excludes women but also limits the country's strategic autonomy (Chowdhury, 2020).

Decolonial Resistance and Possibilities

Despite these challenges, participants expressed hope for change. Several advocated for bilingual training programs and greater recognition of Bengali in diplomatic contexts. This aligns with FLC's concept of Decolonial Resistance, where marginalized voices and languages are revalued and centered (Lugones, 2010; Mignolo, 2011).

The study suggests that a bilingual diplomatic training model could address linguistic inequalities and promote gender equality in diplomacy (Gurumurthy & Chami, 2020). Such a model would involve:

- Offering language training in both Bengali and English
- Providing advanced English courses for diplomats from non-English-medium backgrounds
- Recognizing Bengali as an official language of communication in certain diplomatic contexts
- Ensuring that hiring and promotion decisions consider analytical skills rather than language proficiency alone

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the emerging field of feminist geopolitical linguistics by demonstrating how language, gender, and power intersect in diplomatic contexts. The FLC framework offers a critical lens for analyzing how colonial linguistic hierarchies are reproduced in contemporary institutions and for identifying possibilities for decolonial resistance.

The findings also challenge the assumption that diplomacy is a gender-neutral field. By centering language as a key axis of exclusion, this study shows how linguistic inequality is a fundamental barrier to gender equality in diplomacy.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study has examined how Bangladesh's linguistic dependency constrains its strategic autonomy and perpetuates gender inequality in its diplomatic service. Drawing on the FLC framework, it has shown how English dominance functions as a form of linguistic colonialism, excluding non-English-speaking women from full participation in foreign policy.

The findings underscore the need for a decolonized approach to diplomacy—one that recognizes Bengali as an equal language of international communication and promotes gender-responsive language policies. Such an approach would not only address linguistic exclusion but also enhance Bangladesh's strategic autonomy by enabling its diplomats to articulate the nation's interests in its own terms.

Recommendations

For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

- · Develop bilingual diplomatic training programs.
- · Provide advanced English courses for diplomats from non-English-medium backgrounds.
- · Recognize Bengali as an equal language of international communication.
- · Ensure that hiring and promotion decisions consider analytical skills rather than language proficiency alone.

For Universities:

- · Integrate diplomatic language training into IR programs.
- · Provide opportunities for students to practice English in diplomatic contexts.
- · Offer scholarships for students from rural and non-English-medium backgrounds.

For International Organizations:

- · Recognize and accommodate linguistic diversity in diplomatic settings.
- · Provide translation and interpretation services for non-English-speaking delegates.
- · Promote South-South cooperation in multilingual diplomacy.

Future Research Directions

- Comparative studies: How does linguistic exclusion affect women diplomats in other South Asian countries?
- Ethnographic research: What are the everyday experiences of women diplomats from non-English-medium backgrounds?
- Policy analysis: What are the barriers to implementing bilingual diplomacy in Bangladesh?
- Intervention studies: How effective are bilingual training programs in promoting gender equality in diplomacy?

REFERENCES

- Aggestam, K., & Towns, A. (2018). *Gendering diplomacy and international negotiation*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ahmed, S. (2021). Gender and digital inclusion in South Asia. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 30(4), 456–472.
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *Household income and expenditure survey*. BBS.
- Benjamin, R. (2019). *Race after technology: Abolitionist tools for the new Jim code*. Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard University Press.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- British Educational Research Association. (2018). *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. BERA.
- Canagarajah, S. (1999). *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Chowdhury, R. (2020a). Language and identity in post-colonial South Asia. *South Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 12(3), 45–67.
- Chowdhury, R. (2020b). Language policy and digital education in Bangladesh. *Bangladesh Journal of Education*, 16(1), 45–63.
- Couldry, N., & Mejias, U. A. (2019). *The costs of connection: How data is colonizing human life and appropriating it for capitalism*. Stanford University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Enloe, C. (2014). *Bananas, beaches and bases: Making feminist sense of international politics*. University of California Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Routledge.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press.

- Gurumurthy, A., & Chami, N. (2020). *Digital technologies and gender justice: A global report*. IT for Change.
- Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature*. Routledge.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.
- Hossain, N. (2021). Women in Bangladesh foreign service: A gendered analysis. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 29(2), 112–130.
- International Telecommunication Union. (2022). *Global digital gender gap report*. ITU.
- Khan, A. (2019). The politics of language in Bangladesh: From 1952 to the present. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 37(2), 112–129.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Lugones, M. (2010). Toward a decolonial feminism. *Hypatia*, 25(4), 742–759.
- May, S. (2014). *The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL, and bilingual education*. Routledge.
- Mbembe, A. (2019). *Necropolitics*. Duke University Press.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2011). *The darker side of Western modernity: Global futures, decolonial options*. Duke University Press.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh. (2023). *Annual report 2023*. Government of Bangladesh.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2003). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Duke University Press.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2006). Imperial demands: A postcolonial perspective. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 34(1/2), 281–288.
- Noble, S. U. (2018). *Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. NYU Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Pennycook, A. (1998). *English and the discourses of colonialism*. Routledge.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Rahman, M. M. (2021). English language teaching in Bangladesh: Colonial legacy and post-colonial reality. *Bangladesh Journal of Education*, 15(2), 34–52.
- Selwyn, N. (2021). *Education and technology: Key issues and debates* (3rd ed.). Bloomsbury.
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). University of Illinois Press.
- Tickner, J. A. (2001). *Gendering world politics*. Columbia University Press.
- True, J. (2012). *Gender and international relations*. Routledge.
- Uddin, M. (2020). Language movement and national identity in Bangladesh. *Journal of Asian Studies*, 38(3), 234–251.

- United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Human development report 2022: Gender and language in public life*. United Nations Development Programme.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Global education monitoring report 2021: Inclusion and education*. UNESCO Publishing.
- University Grants Commission of Bangladesh. (2023). *Annual report 2023*. UGC.
- UN Women. (2023). *Gender and diplomacy: A global report*. United Nations.
- Wajcman, J. (2004). *TechnoFeminism*. Polity Press.
- World Bank. (2022). *Digital transformation in education: Opportunities and challenges*. World Bank Report.
- Zuboff, S. (2019). *The age of surveillance capitalism*. PublicAffairs.