Perceptions of English in Employment among Bangladeshi University Graduates

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Abstract : This study examines the perceptions of Bangladeshi university graduates regarding the role of English in employment and professional development. Based on survey data from 100 recent graduates of both public and private universities, it finds that English is widely regarded as a critical skill for employability, confidence in interviews, and professionalism. However, students also raised concerns about linguistic inequality and inadequate institutional preparation. Notable differences were observed between public and private university students: private university students showed stronger alignment with English-dominant norms, while public university students were more supportive of including Bangla in professional communication. The findings highlight the dual role of English as both an opportunity for social mobility and a barrier to equity. Participants called for greater linguistic inclusivity, bilingual workplace practices, and improved English instruction. The study emphasises the need for context-sensitive language policy reform to ensure that English education supports inclusive development without marginalising national language identities.

Keywords: *Bangladeshi graduates, English proficiency, employability, linguistic inequality, language policy, public vs. private universities*

1. Introduction

Bangladesh presents a highly dynamic and contested English language environment. While Bengali remains the official language and primary medium of national life, English continues to play a significant role in education, the economy, and international communications. The country does not have an official policy declaring English as a second language; rather, its status has evolved through a combination of colonial legacies, contemporary education reforms, private sector expansion, and ongoing sociolinguistic negotiations among local, national, and global actors (Rahman, 2022; Shams, 2015; Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). These tensions are evident in the varied ways English is taught, assessed, and enacted across different educational and social domains, from primary schools to private universities offering English-medium instruction (EMI), and from rural contexts to cosmopolitan urban centres (Sarker et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2019; Hasan et al., 2024). Consequently, English serves both as a tool for global connectivity and as a site of policy and practice contestation, with substantial implications for equity, identity, and national development (Ara, 2020; Hamid, 2022; Rahman, 2024; Shaoan et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2022). This synthesis foregrounds how Bangladesh's English Language Teaching (ELT) and language policies intersect with broader development goals, highlighting key challenges and opportunities for future policy and pedagogical practice (Das et al., 2019; Shaoan et al., 2024; Das et al., 2014). The historical trajectory of English in Bangladesh is deeply rooted in its colonial past, followed by post-colonial continuities that have preserved English as a powerful instrument of education, administration, and social status. Scholars argue that English has historically functioned as a vehicle of social and economic power, a view consistent with theories of linguistic imperialism and postcolonial language politics (Shams, 2015; Rácová, 2016; Awal, 2019).

In the Bangladeshi context, English is frequently discussed within the framework of "linguistic imperialism revisited", where colonial legacies continue to influence contemporary policies and practices (Shams, 2015). Simultaneously, researchers have emphasised the ambivalent status of English, which operates as a lingua franca in certain domains while being treated as a foreign language in others (for example This duality has persisted through successive waves of educational reform and policy debates (Ara, 2020; Islam & Hashim, 2019; Rahman, 2022). The absence of a formal national language policy for English, despite its pervasive use, has significantly shaped policy discourse and practice. Scholars have drawn attention to the asymmetry between language planning concepts and the on-the-ground realities (Arna & Sultana, 2022; Rahman, 2024; Zhang et al., 2022). The lack of a unified English policy thus underscores a broader pattern of divergence between policy direction and implementation, resulting in a pluralistic and uneven landscape of English education (Das et al., 2014; Shaoan et al., 2024). In-depth analyses of language policy and the evolution of English education in Bangladesh situate ELT within broader educational reforms and globalisation pressures. Historical studies note that seven national education commissions and subsequent reforms sought to navigate the dual goals of decolonisation and the practical need for English in higher education and employment (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Rahman et al., 2019). Contemporary research has extended this discussion by examining how policy directions influence English teacher training, curriculum development, and assessment practices, revealing gaps between declared policy goals and actual classroom realities (Shaoan et al., 2024; Sultana, 2011). English holds particular prominence in tertiary education, where private universities frequently adopt English as the medium of instruction, in contrast to the mixed-language practices prevalent in public universities (Sarker et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2024; Islam, 2013). Thus, the discourse surrounding English in Bangladesh extends beyond questions of

language choice to encompass the broader issues of policy coherence, pedagogical quality, and equitable resource access. These dimensions collectively shape the learning opportunities, employability, and social mobility in the country (Das et al., 2014; Shaoan et al., 2024).

2. Literature Review

2.1 English in Education

In Bangladesh's educational landscape, English plays a pivotal role across various curricula and teaching methods, though its significance varies by educational level, sector, and region. At the primary and secondary levels, English is a compulsory subject, in line with policy objectives that regard English proficiency as essential for global engagement and employment opportunities (Sultana, 2011; Hossain, 2018). However, the implementation of these policies is inconsistent due to challenges such as inadequate teacher quality, poor assessment design, and a disconnect between the curriculum and testing systems (Trisha, 2017). This "dissonance between syllabus and testing" continues to hinder the achievement of English learning outcomes at the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) level (Hossain, 2018).

In higher education, English-medium instruction (EMI) has expanded significantly, particularly in private universities, where English often serves as the main language of instruction (Afreen, 2020; Hasan et al., 2024). While EMI has been associated with improvements in students' speaking skills and academic performance, it also raises concerns about inclusivity, fairness, and its suitability for students not majoring in English (Hasan et al., 2024; Sarker et al., 2021). Thus, the growth of EMI presents both opportunities and challenges enhancing global engagement for some students while disadvantaging others who lack sufficient language support (Afreen, 2020; Ahmad & Rahman, 2021). Consequently, EMI in Bangladesh's higher education sector underscores the tension between English as a driver of socioeconomic advancement and as a potential barrier that reinforces linguistic inequalities (Sarker et al., 2021).

2.2 English Language Teaching (ELT)

The English Language Teaching (ELT) landscape in Bangladesh reveals a stark contrast between urban and rural settings. Urban areas benefit from better access to trained educators, technological tools, and English exposure through media and private institutions. In contrast, rural regions face systemic challenges that hinder language education (Alam, 2018; "English Language Teaching in Rural Areas", 2016). Rural classrooms, in particular, struggle to implement communicative language teaching (CLT) due to insufficient teacher training, lack of resources, and assessment methods that do not align with communicative goals (Akhter & Ashikuzzaman, 2019; Akteruzzaman & Islam, 2017). Experts recommend pedagogical strategies that are sensitive to context and adapt ELT methods to the varied socioeconomic and linguistic conditions across Bangladesh (Alam, 2018).

Teacher quality is crucial for the success of English education reforms. Studies consistently identify a gap between curriculum changes and teacher skills, with teacher training and continuous professional development as significant obstacles in ELT (Hossain, 2018; Roshid et al., 2017; Sultana, 2011). English teachers in Bangladesh face increasing pressure as they adapt to new assessment frameworks, updated textbooks, and changing expectations for communicative competence (Roshid et al., 2017). Ongoing investment in both pre-service and in-service teacher training is therefore vital. Training programmes must address classroom realities, incorporate technology, and focus on communicative methods to ensure teachers are well prepared for the demands of a modern ELT system (Islam, 2013; Khan & Kuddus, 2020).

2.3 Language Variation and Identity

In Bangladesh, the multilingual environment has produced distinctive linguistic patterns in the use of English. Studies on Bangladeshi English (BdE) and translanguaging practices show that English functions not only as a foreign language but also as a sociocultural asset integrated into local communication (Mir, 2024; Rácová, 2016; Tina, 2017). Research on code-switching and translanguaging underscores how bilingual approaches enhance understanding and engagement, particularly among multilingual students (Sajib et al., 2020; Chaudhary, 2025; Sweet et al., 2025). In Bangladesh, English carries symbolic significance, representing both global interaction and social advancement, while also serving as a contested space where identity and power are negotiated (Haque, 2024; Hamid, 2022; Awal, 2019; Shams, 2015). Scholars such as Hamid (2021, 2022) call for a critical examination of postcolonial language ideologies and suggest viewing English as a "Southern language," acknowledging its global relevance while adapting it to local contexts. Empirical studies reveal differing perceptions of English among rural, minority, and elite student groups, indicating that English is both an opportunity and a source of inequality (Jamila et al., 2024; Siddique & Haque, 2025; Rahman, 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). Assessment practices remain a significant issue within Bangladesh's ELT framework. There is a clear disconnect between the communicative aims of curricula and the grammar-translation focus prevalent in testing (Islam et al., 2021; Das et al., 2014). The absence of a cohesive assessment design impedes communicative objectives and restricts teachers' capacity for pedagogical innovation. For meaningful progress, assessment systems must be standardised, contextually relevant, and aligned with authentic language use and communicative competence (Islam et al., 2021). The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) is becoming increasingly important in Bangladesh's ELT context. Although national policies have improved digital infrastructure, effective ICT use in classrooms remains inconsistent due to limited teacher preparedness and systemic challenges (Khan & Kuddus, 2020). Nevertheless, blended learning and digital tools offer potential to enhance tertiary-level English education, increasing student engagement and access when supported by appropriate pedagogy (Ahmad & Rahman, 2021; Rabbi et al., 2023). The broader move towards EMI and digital learning aligns with national development goals but requires targeted training and resource allocation to ensure equitable participation across all regions (Afreen, 2020; Khan & Kuddus, 2020).

2.4 Policy Directions, Gaps, and Sustainable Development

Bangladesh's approach to English language policy is characterised by high aspirations but inconsistent implementation. Recent studies highlight persistent discrepancies between policy frameworks and actual classroom conditions, emphasising the need for comprehensive curriculum reform and capacity building (Shaoan et al., 2024). Although English plays a significant role in education and employment, the absence of a formal national English language policy exacerbates inequalities and impedes systemic coordination (Arna & Sultana, 2022; Haque, 2024; Rahman, 2024). Experts call for a national framework that is inclusive and equity-focused to ensure that English supports sustainable development rather than reinforcing social disparities (Das et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2022). The English language situation in Bangladesh is closely linked to its colonial history, a contemporary policy environment lacking a formal national policy, and a rapidly expanding ELT sector that spans rural primary schools to private universities where EMI. Current scholarly consensus recognises both the opportunities English offers in a globalised economy and the risks of inequality and policy-practice gaps if reforms are not carefully adapted to local contexts. The literature consistently calls for context-sensitive policies, improved teacher education, equitable EMI practices, and integrated assessment and translanguaging approaches to maximise the positive impact of English education on Bangladesh's development trajectory. By aligning policy with classroom realities, investing in teacher capacity, and embracing sociolinguistic diversity rather than imposing a single standard, Bangladesh can advance English language education in ways that foster inclusive growth, social justice, and sustainable development (Rahman, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019; Shaoan et al., 2024; Das et al., 2014; Khan & Kuddus, 2020; Sarker et al., 2021; Chaudhary, 2025; Sajib et al., 2020; Arna & Sultana, 2022; Rahman, 2024; Zhang et al., 2022).

3. Methodology

Table1: Demographic of the participants

Category	Participants (*n*= 120)	
	%	*n*
Age		
18-28	100%	100
Gender		
Man	53%	53
Woman	47%	47
Employment status		
Employed	9%	9
Unemployed	64%	64
Self-employed	45	4
Others	17%	17
University type		
Public	48	48
Private	52	52

The study included 100 participants aged 18 to 28, with a mean age of 24.82 and a standard deviation of 2.43. The gender distribution was nearly balanced, with 53% men and 47% women. Most participants were unemployed (64%), while smaller proportions were employed (9%), self-employed (4%), or classified as "others" (17%). In terms of university affiliation, participants were almost evenly split between public (48%) and private (52%) institutions, enabling comparative analysis between these two groups.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Perceived Importance and Professional Value of English

This section examines the instrumental and symbolic significance of English in relation to employment prospects and the formation of professional identity among Bangladeshi university graduates.

Table 2: Perceived professional value of English

Statements	Mean (± SD)	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
English proficiency is an essential skill for obtaining employment.	3.82 (0.94)	0 (0%)	13 (13%)	16 (16%)	47 (47%)	24 (24%)
Employers in Bangladesh tend to prefer candidates who are fluent in English.	3.59 (1.07)	0 (0%)	21 (21%)	23 (23%)	32 (32%)	24 (24%)

		SD	D	N	A	SA
The ability to communicate enhances confidence during job interviews.	3.85 (1.01)	0 (0%)	16 (16%)	12 (12%)	43 (43%)	29 (29%)
English is perceived as a marker of higher education and professionalism.	3.9 (0.88)	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	14 (14%)	52 (52)	24 (24%)
Using English in professional contexts facilitates access to better career advancement.	3.37 (0.7)	0 (0%)	11 (11%)	43 (43%)	44 (44%)	2 (2%)

Note. N = 100. SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree,

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for five items assessing participants' views on the professional importance of English in Bangladesh. Responses were collected using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Participants generally expressed a high level of agreement that English is crucial for employment and symbolically associated with professionalism. The statement "English is perceived as a marker of higher education and professionalism" had the highest mean (M = 3.90, SD = 0.88), followed by "The ability to communicate enhances confidence during job interviews" (M = 3.85, SD = 1.01) and "English proficiency is an essential skill for obtaining employment" (M = 3.82, SD = 0.94). These three items showed strong positive skewness, with over 70% of respondents selecting agree or strongly agree. The item "Employers in Bangladesh tend to prefer candidates who are fluent in English" had a slightly lower mean (M = 3.59, SD = 1.07), indicating greater variability in responses. The item "Using English in professional contexts facilitates access to better career advancement" had the lowest mean (M = 3.37, SD = 0.70) and the highest proportion of neutral responses (43%). This suggests that, while English is widely recognised as important for securing employment, its role in long-term advancement may be perceived as less direct or more context-dependent. These findings highlight the instrumental value of English in the job market, with participants identifying it as a key employability skill. The high levels of agreement indicate that Bangladeshi graduates view English as an unofficial gatekeeper to professional entry and credibility. English is seen not only as a functional communication tool but also as a symbolic asset reflecting educational background and social status. Notably, while initial employment appears closely linked to English competence, the findings indicate less certainty about its role in career progression. The lower mean and higher neutrality on the final item may reflect graduates' awareness that promotions and advancement may depend more on other factors such as technical expertise, networking, or workplace performance– possibly in either Bangla- or English-dominant environments.

4.2 Linguistic Inequality and Perception Toward Language Policy
This section examines participants' awareness of linguistic inequality and their attitudes toward the role of English and Bangla in professional communication, particularly within the corporate and multinational contexts of Bangladesh.

Table 3: Perceptions of Linguistic Inequality and Language Policy

Statements	Mean (± SD)	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Overemphasis on English in job market creates inequality.	4.05 (0.75)	0 (0%)	4 (4%)	14 (14%)	55 (55%)	27 (27%)
Feel pressured to improve English skills.	3.56 (1.06)	2 (2%)	18 (18%)	22 (22%)	38 (38%)	20 (20%)
University education prepares students with English for work.	2.91 (1.02)	13 (13%)	18 (18%)	34 (34%)	35 (35%)	0 (0%)
English should remain primary medium in corporate sectors.	2.93 (0.87)	0 (0%)	42 (42%)	23 (23%)	35 (35%)	0 (0%)
Bangla should be recognised alongside English in communication.	3.7 (1.04)	1 (1%)	14 (14%)	26 (26%)	32 (32%)	27 (27%)

Note. N = 100. SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Table 3 presents participants' responses to five items concerning linguistic inequality and language policy within the Bangladeshi professional context. The statement "Overemphasis on English in the job market creates inequality" received the highest level of agreement (M = 4.05, SD = 0.75), with 82% of respondents selecting agree or strongly agree. This result indicates a broad

consensus that prioritising English contributes to structural disadvantages, particularly for individuals from rural or Bangla-medium educational backgrounds.

Similarly, many respondents reported feeling compelled to enhance their English skills to remain competitive (M = 3.56, SD = 1.06), with 58% agreeing or strongly agreeing, highlighting the widespread sociolinguistic pressure experienced by graduates. In contrast, only a minority believed that university education adequately prepared them with English skills for professional use (M = 2.91, SD = 1.02). With 31% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and only 35% agreeing, this suggests that higher education institutions may not be sufficiently equipping students with workplace-relevant English proficiency.

Regarding language policy preferences, the item "English should remain the primary medium of communication in corporate sectors" (M = 2.93, SD = 0.87) revealed a polarised view. A significant proportion (42%) disagreed, while 35% agreed, underscoring a division in perceptions about linguistic hegemony in formal spaces. Finally, the majority of respondents supported recognising Bangla alongside English in professional communication (M = 3.70, SD = 1.04), with 59% expressing agreement or strong agreement. This indicates a clear desire for greater linguistic inclusivity and national identity recognition in the professional domain.

These findings illustrate a perceived linguistic inequality resulting from English dominance in the job market. Graduates feel external pressure to master English and express dissatisfaction with how well their universities have prepared them for real-world demands. There is growing advocacy among students for a bilingual professional environment, where Bangla is not marginalised but acknowledged and valued alongside English. This data suggests a tension between global economic demands, which often privilege English, and local linguistic identity, which calls for space for Bangla in professional and official contexts. Policy discussions in higher education and employment sectors should consider these perspectives to foster linguistic equity and inclusive professional environments.

4.3 t-test Between Public and Private University

Table 4: Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Public and Private University Students' Perceptions of English Language Use in Professional Contexts

Statement	Public M (SD)	Private M (SD)	t	p	95% CI	Cohen's d
English proficiency is essential for employment	3.19 (.89)	4.40 (.53)	-8.2	< .001	[-1.51, -0.92]	.72
Employers prefer English-fluent candidates	2.75 (.81)	4.37 (.60)	-11.27	< .001	[-1.90, -1.33]	.70
English boosts confidence in interviews	3.17 (.93)	4.48 (.61)	-8.28	< .001	[-1.63, -1.00]	.78
English = higher education and professionalism	4.08 (.87)	3.73 (.87)	2.03	0.045	[0.01, 0.70]	.87
English helps in career advancement	3.46 (.71)	3.29 (.70)	1.2	0.232	[-0.11, 0.45]	.70
Overemphasis on English creates inequality	3.98 (.81)	4.12 (.70)	-0.89	0.374	[-0.44, 0.17]	.76
Feel pressured to improve English	3.60 (1.22)	3.52 (.92)	0.39	0.696	[-0.35, 0.52]	1.07
University prepared me with English proficiency	2.85 (1.13)	2.96 (.93)	-0.52	0.606	[-0.52, 0.31]	1.03
English should remain main corporate communication medium	3.15 (.92)	2.73 (.80)	2.4	0.018	[0.07, 0.76]	.86
Bangla should be recognised alongside English	2.88 (.67)	4.46 (.70)	-11.57	< .001	[-1.86, -1.31]	.69

Note. N = 100 (Public = 48, Private = 52). Significant results at p < .05 are bolded in reporting. Cohen's d interpreted as: small (.20), medium (.50), large (.80).

Table 4 presents the results of an independent samples t-test assessing whether students' perspectives on English language usage significantly differed according to their attendance at public or private universities. Students from private universities expressed significantly stronger agreement on several key aspects related to the professional importance of English. These included the necessity of English proficiency for employment, t(98) = -8.20, p < .001, d = 0.72; employers' preference for candidates fluent in English, t(85.72) = -11.27, p < .001, d = 0.70; the role of English in enhancing interview confidence, t(80.10) = -8.28, p < .001, d = 0.78; and the recognition of Bangla alongside English, t(97.83) = -11.57, p < .001, d = 0.69.

Interestingly, students from public universities rated English as a more significant indicator of higher education and professionalism than their private university counterparts, t(97.26) = 2.03, p = .045, although the effect size was large (d = 0.87). Another notable difference emerged in attitudes towards corporate language policy, with public university students more strongly supporting the idea of English remaining the primary language in corporate settings, t(93.18) = 2.40, p = .018. There were no significant differences between the groups in perceptions related to career advancement, inequality, institutional preparation, and the pressure to improve English (p > .05), indicating shared experiences across university types regarding systemic pressures and inadequate institutional support.

These findings highlight considerable differences in how students from public and private universities perceive the role of English in professional and academic contexts. The stronger focus on English among private university students may be attributed to a greater institutional emphasis on English-medium instruction, exposure to multinational environments, or access to English proficiency development programmes. Conversely, public university students, while acknowledging the symbolic value of English, appear to advocate more strongly for the recognition of Bangla in professional settings, suggesting a stronger connection to linguistic identity or potential barriers in accessing English training.

5. Discussion

The integration of recent studies on English as a form of linguistic capital underscores its fluid and context-specific role in determining access to education, employment, and social mobility. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic capital, this analysis reveals that English can serve both as a tool for advancement and as a barrier, depending on its integration into national policies, institutional practices, and social hierarchies. English proficiency extends beyond basic communicative ability, representing a form of symbolic power that shapes one's legitimacy in academic, professional, and international contexts (Grayson, 2008; Malik & Mohamed, 2014). The research indicates that the value of English as capital depends on sociopolitical contexts and institutional frameworks. In many contexts, English acts as a gateway to elite education and prestigious employment, a trend reinforced by the global spread of EMI (Straubhaar, 2013; Chang, 2021). However, the benefits of English capital are not distributed equally, favouring learners from socioeconomically privileged or urban backgrounds who have greater access to quality English education (Tri, 2021; Chowdhury, 2024). As a result, English capital perpetuates existing social divisions while simultaneously presenting itself as a means of meritocratic advancement. This contradiction underscores the dual nature of English in global education: it offers opportunities for some while creating barriers for others. EMI is a key arena where these dynamics are evident. Promoted as a means of internationalisation, EMI is widely advocated for enhancing students' global skills and employability (Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2021; Marav & Choi, 2023). However, evidence shows that EMI policies often reinforce linguistic hierarchies by privileging English-dominant discourse and marginalising local languages (Jahan & Hamid, 2019; Tri, 2021). This ideological preference for English strengthens the perception of native or near-native proficiency as a form of elite cultural capital, deepening disparities in access to knowledge and participation (Gao, 2016; Brown et al., 2019). Thus, the political economy of EMI encapsulates the tension between the promise of mobility and the reality of exclusion.

The review highlights the interplay between English capital and broader identity and power dynamics. In regions such as Singapore and Korea, English proficiency signifies cosmopolitanism and professional capability, yet it also generates linguistic insecurity and debates over ownership (Foo & Tan, 2019; Hwang & Yim, 2019). Similarly, in transnational and diasporic contexts, English functions both as a tool for assimilation and as a symbol of distinction, shaping how migrants and minority groups navigate their sense of belonging in global labour markets (Gerhards, 2014; Wu & Veronis, 2022). These insights confirm that the value of English capital is relational, shaped by social recognition, habitus, and the hierarchies of linguistic legitimacy within each field. Critical scholarship warns against viewing English as a neutral or universally beneficial capital. The commodification of English through global neoliberalism risks perpetuating linguistic imperialism by marginalising local languages and knowledge systems (Phillipson, 2016). To address these disparities, scholars advocate for multilingual and translanguaging pedagogies that recognise local linguistic repertoires as complementary rather than inferior to English (Codó & Gil, 2022; Chowdhury, 2024). Such approaches not only promote linguistic justice but also expand the range of capital available to learners from diverse backgrounds. English serves as a potent yet contested form of linguistic capital, whose value depends on context, policy, and power. While EMI and English proficiency can enhance educational and economic prospects, their uncritical expansion risks reinforcing class, racial, and linguistic hierarchies. Equitable policy reform should therefore aim to balance the instrumental value of English with the preservation of multilingual practices and local knowledge systems. Future research should employ multi-scalar and ethnographic methods to trace how English capital is produced, circulated, and transformed.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this research highlight the complex and sometimes contradictory perspectives of Bangladeshi university students regarding the significance of English, shaped by both practical job requirements and socio-cultural factors. Participants generally recognised the practical importance of English for securing employment and increasing confidence in professional settings. Many agreed that proficiency in English improves interview performance and conveys a professional image, a view particularly prevalent among private university students, who placed greater emphasis on the professional benefits of English. The study also revealed a growing awareness of inequality based on language. Many respondents felt that the strong focus on English in the job market disadvantages those from Bangla-medium or rural educational backgrounds. Although students acknowledged the need to enhance their English skills, they expressed dissatisfaction with the language instruction provided by their institutions– a concern shared by

both public and private university students, indicating widespread instructional shortcomings. Significant differences emerged between students from public and private universities. While private university students tended to favour English-centric professional standards, public university students were more supportive of incorporating Bangla into formal and corporate communication. This divide reflects broader educational and socio-economic disparities affecting access to and familiarity with English.

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