

English Linguistic Hegemony and Cultural Detachment in Bangladesh.

A Quantitative Analysis

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Abstract EN:

The rapid expansion of English-medium instruction (EMI) has become a defining feature in many post-colonial societies, raising concerns about cultural displacement including Bangladesh. Although EMI in Bangladesh promotes global competitiveness, access to information, international higher-education opportunities, a sense of a global cultural identity and technological literacy, it may also be associated with an increased likelihood of cultural detachment from their local culture. This study investigated the influence of the medium of instruction on the cultural competence of students in Bangladesh. It was hypothesised that cultural detachment would be more pronounced among students enrolled in EMI programmes following Cambridge or Edexcel curricula than among Bengali-medium instruction (BMI, i.e., national curriculum) students. The study compared the cultural competence of 300 participants from six BMI and EMI institutions using a quantitative 5-point Likert-scale survey. The results indicated that EMI was associated with stronger awareness of Western culture and a corresponding detachment from native culture and native cultural knowledge, skills, and language use was lower than among BMI students. This study contributes to debates on English-language hegemony and its sociocultural consequences and has implications for educational policy and language teaching. The study underscores the need to balance global competencies with the inclusion of local cultural content in EMI textbooks and curricula to advance linguistic inclusion and equity in education.

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Keywords: Medium of instruction, cultural detachment, cultural preservation, EFL learners, linguistic hegemony

Abstract DE:

Die rasche Ausweitung des englischsprachigen Unterrichts (EMI) ist zu einem prägenden Merkmal vieler postkolonialer Gesellschaften geworden und hat – so auch in Bangladesch – Befürchtungen hinsichtlich kultureller Verdrängung geweckt. Obwohl EMI in Bangladesch die globale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit, den Zugang zu Informationen, internationale Hochschulbildungsmöglichkeiten, ein Gefühl globaler kultureller Identität sowie technologische Kompetenzen fördert, kann es auch mit einer erhöhten Wahrscheinlichkeit kultureller Entfremdung von der lokalen Kultur einhergehen. Diese Studie untersuchte den Einfluss des Unterrichtsmediums auf die kulturelle Kompetenz von Lernenden in Bangladesch. Es wurde die Hypothese aufgestellt, dass kulturelle Entfremdung bei Lernenden, die in EMI-Programmen nach Cambridge- oder Edexcel-Lehrplänen eingeschrieben sind, stärker ausgeprägt ist als bei Lernenden im bengalischsprachigen Unterricht (BMI; d. h. nationales Curriculum). Die kulturelle Kompetenz von 300 Teilnehmenden aus sechs BMI- bzw. EMI-Institutionen wurde mittels einer quantitativen Befragung auf einer fünfstufigen Likert-Skala verglichen. Die Ergebnisse zeigten, dass EMI mit einem stärkeren Bewusstsein für westliche Kultur sowie mit einer entsprechenden Distanzierung von der einheimischen Kultur verbunden war; zudem lagen einheimisches kulturelles Wissen, einschlägige Fertigkeiten und der Sprachgebrauch niedriger als bei BMI-Lernenden. Die Studie leistet einen Beitrag zu Debatten über die Hegemonie der englischen Sprache und deren soziokulturelle Folgen und hat Implikationen für Bildungs- und Sprachenpolitik sowie den Sprachunterricht. Sie unterstreicht die Notwendigkeit, globale Kompetenzanforderungen mit der Einbindung lokaler kultureller Inhalte in EMI-Lehrbücher und -Curricula in Einklang zu bringen, um sprachliche Inklusion und Chancengerechtigkeit im Bildungswesen zu fördern.

Keywords: Unterrichtssprache, kulturelle Entfremdung, kulturelle Bewahrung, EFL-Lernende, sprachliche Hegemonie

1. Introduction

Language is closely linked to culture. Culture, an organised way of life, is both formed and expressed through language, which serves as its medium of expression and preservation. Although essential to human lives, the origins of language remain enigmatic. The interplay between language and culture has a profound impact on civilisation. Language has fostered the spirit and development of society through cultural evolution and reflects shared values and traditions. Accordingly, the preservation and documentation of language are crucial for cultural continuity. The practice of preserving and documenting language began thousands of years ago and is an expression of collective progress. Culture, whether consciously recognised or not, plays a pivotal role in the teaching and analysis of English literature. The contemporary global system is inherently unequal and unjust. Within this context, culture functions as a salient social marker. It is frequently manipulated as “denied, appropriated, altered, nullified, or destabilised” to align with the objectives of the late-capitalist world order (Al-Quaderi & Mahmud, 2010).

The growth of English-medium instruction (EMI) has become a prominent feature of Bangladesh, reflecting the increasing demand for it to be a part of a global free market economy and international opportunities. While EMI offers significant benefits in terms of career prospects and international mobility, its widespread adoption raises concerns about its sociocultural impact. One critical issue is the potential for cultural disconnect, as students are taught in English-speaking environments with Anglophone pedagogy and content, which creates less connection to local cultural norms and traditions. While international students find themselves as proficient users of English as a lingua franca (ELF), students from non-English countries identify as English foreign language (EFL) learners. This distinction influences their self-assurance and readiness to participate in EMI environments (Kim et al. 2014). This problem is particularly seen in post-colonial countries, where the dominance of English has deep historical roots and continues to characterise the development of language ideologies. Examples include the maintenance of the linguistic superiority of English, linguisticism, native speakerism and similar phenomena.

While the sociocultural impact of English language hegemony has been the subject of extensive research worldwide, little attention has been paid to the comparative experiences of students in English and Bengali-medium of instruction (MOI) in Bangladesh. This study fills this gap by examining how these media of instruction shape students’ cultural identities and practices, with a focus on the impact of English dominance on cultural orientation.

Therefore, the article is organised as follows: Section 1 introduces the study. Section 2 reviews the widespread use of EMI and its influence on linguistic hegemony, and cultural identity. Furthermore, Section 3 outlines the methodology and Section 4 describes the data analysis process. Moreover, Section 5 presents the results, Section 6 discusses the findings, and section 7 concludes with policy implications.

2. Literature Review

2.1. English linguistic hegemony

The hegemony of the English language in Bangladesh is a complex issue that is interwoven with historical, sociocultural, and educational dimensions. As a post-colonial country, Bangladesh has inherited a complex relationship with the English language, which has evolved from a colonial legacy to a perceived necessity for social and economic progress. The impact of English hegemony is particularly important here in the field of education.

Historically, the roots of English language dominance in Bangladesh can be traced back to British colonial rule, which overtly or covertly continued to use English in the post-colonial period. The Macaulay Minute of 1835 is often cited as the defining moment that prioritised English over native languages, laying the foundation for the linguistic hierarchy and dominance that continues to this day (Haque 2020). This historical background has led to English becoming a symbol of prestige and modernity, often eclipsing native Bengali and other local languages (Ara 2020; Shams 2015).

Furthermore, the perception of English as a means of personal and national development has cemented its status in the education system, making it a compulsory subject from primary to tertiary level (Awal 2023a; Halder 2023).

As in many other post-colonial South Asian countries, English is accepted as a critical skill for the global economy. The education sector reflects this belief, with many institutions using EMI as a means to improve students' employability and competitiveness in a globalised world (Akteruzzaman & Islam 2017; Al-Kahtany & Alhamami 2022). However, this shift towards English has raised concerns about the erosion of Bengali and many other regional languages. Critics argue that the preference for English in the educational context contributes to a form of linguistic imperialism, where the local language and culture are devalued in favour of a foreign language (Akteruzzaman & Islam 2017; Awal 2019; Charamba & Mutasa 2014). This dynamic creates a tension between the need for English in a globalised world and the promotion of local languages.

The sociolinguistic landscape of Bangladesh is characterised by a complex interplay of languages, where English, Bengali, and various local languages coexist. Young adults in Bangladesh often engage in code-switching, blending English with Bengali in their daily communication (Sultana 2012). The ability to navigate between languages is a marker of social status and educational attainment, further entrenching the hegemony of English in societal norms (Sultana 2012). As such, English has become a tool for social and economic growth, reinforcing existing power structures, while simultaneously neglecting those who do not master it.

Challenges associated with English language education in Bangladesh are significant. Many students, particularly in rural areas, face obstacles in accessing quality EMI because of a lack of trained teachers and resources (Faisal & Ali 2021). Furthermore, the emphasis on EMI can lead to a superficial understanding of the language, where students may excel in rote memorisation but struggle with practical communication skills (Haque 2022; Islam et al. 2021). This disconnect

highlights the need for a more nuanced approach to English language education that considers the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students and promotes genuine language acquisition, rather than mere compliance with educational mandates.

The role of the Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC) has been crucial in shaping language policy within the education system. However, there is a call for the BAC to take a more proactive stance to address the challenges of English hegemony (Milon 2023). This includes developing an inclusive language policy that recognises the importance of Bengali alongside English to promote a more equitable linguistic environment. Such a policy could help mitigate the negative effects of English dominance and promote bilingualism as a valuable asset rather than a hindrance.

In addition to the effects on education, the hegemony of the English language also intersects with questions of identity and cultural representation. The global spread of English has led to the emergence of varieties of English (World Englishes), including South Asian languages, which reflect local linguistic features and cultural nuances (Hamid & Baldauf 2013; Hamid 2023). This phenomenon challenges the notion of a uniform, standardised English and opens up discussions about linguistic diversity and the legitimacy of non-native varieties. In the context of Bangladesh, a pluralistic view of English could enable speakers to assert their linguistic identities while coping with the complexities of globalisation (Awal 2023b). However, EMI students follow the British curriculum exclusively, so there are few opportunities to nativise local varieties of English and incorporate local cultural components into English practice.

Furthermore, the influence of English hegemony goes beyond the classroom and affects the media, literature and public discourse. The predominance of English in print and digital media shapes public perception and reinforces the notion that English proficiency is synonymous with modernity and progress (Haque 2020; Shams 2015). In this media landscape, English content is often favoured, marginalising Bengali narratives and voices. Therefore, there is an urgent need for initiatives that promote the production and distribution of content in Bengali to support a more balanced linguistic ecosystem (Khan & Rahaman 2019; Li et al. 2019).

2.2. English-Medium instruction

The use of EMI in Bangladesh has raised concerns regarding its impact on the country's culture and linguistic landscape (Haque & Akter 2013; Haque 2020; Obaidullah 2022). While EMI is considered essential for preparing students for global communication and economic development (Islam 2019), it has also been criticised as a form of cultural imperialism that undermines the status of the national language Bengali and promotes Anglophone cultural values (Haque & Akter 2013; Haque, 2020; Obaidullah 2022). The rise of EMI in private universities is driven by the belief that English proficiency advances educational and career prospects (Islam 2019). EMI as an English-only environment is seen as essential for economic growth and international competitiveness (Islam 2019; Islam & Stapa 2021; Milon 2023).

However, EMI can contribute to cultural imperialism by emphasising Western (i.e., British) culture and undermining Bangladeshi culture and tradition. Students in EMI schools tend to

learn more about English literature, geography, history and way of life than Bangladeshi students (Haque & Akter 2013). The transition from Bengali high schools to EMI universities can be challenging for students as they cannot cope with the English-only environment and often have inadequate oral English skills (McKay 2019; Seraj et al. 2021). This can lead to structural and cultural inequalities in Bangladeshi society (Saha & Rahman 2022; Shams 2015). The impact of EMI on content learning in Bangladesh is not yet well researched and further studies are needed to make informed decisions about its implementation (Doiz et al. 2011). EMI could contribute to the hegemonic dominance of English over the national language Bengali, which raises concerns about linguistic imperialism (Haque 2020).

2.3. Elements of culture

Culture can serve both as a vehicle of colonial oppression and a medium of resistance, as it is intricately tied to reinterpretations of identity, power, and history. Gramsci's (1995) notion of "cultural hegemony" elucidates how colonial powers maintain authority through cultural dominance, shaping ideologies that reinforce their superiority (see also Wang 2018). Similarly, Said's (2003) concept of Orientalism highlights the West's construction of the Orient as inferior, irrational, and exotic, using cultural misrepresentations to justify political and cultural imperialism.

Contrary to such essentialised binaries, Bhabha (1994) introduces the concept of "cultural hybridity", which challenges fixed cultural identities by emphasising the negotiation and amalgamation of cultures between colonisers and the colonised. Hybridity demonstrates how colonial encounters engender new cultural forms that both resist dominant narratives and reshape cultural identities. This interconnected understanding of culture within post-colonial theory underscores its dynamic role, simultaneously sustaining colonial power and fostering spaces for critical reflection, resistance, and transformation.

2.4. Cultural competence: knowledge, skills, and awareness

Given the significance of cultural competence to this analysis, it is necessary to clarify its meaning and interrelated components. Cultural competence refers to the capacity of individuals and organisations to engage effectively with diverse populations, with the aim of reducing disparities and promoting equitable service delivery (Betancourt et al. 2003; Smedley et al. 2002). Those exhibiting high levels of cultural competence demonstrate cultural self-awareness and a nuanced understanding of how culture shapes behaviours, values, and beliefs (Bennett 2015). While cultural competence can enhance attitudes and communication, evidence indicates that its long-term impact on substantive outcomes is limited (Beach et al. 2005; Truong et al. 2014). Consequently, effective strategies must combine practical skills with systemic awareness to foster meaningful and sustainable change.

Cultural competence is further delineated into three components: cultural knowledge, skills, and awareness. Cultural awareness is the capacity to perceive, analyse, and critically reflect on cultural phenomena, emphasising both self-awareness and the comprehension of others'

cultural expressions. This includes recognising the import of creative ideas, emotions, and experiences as articulated through artistic forms such as music, literature, visual arts, and performance (Stancikas 2019). Cultural awareness cultivates critical thinking, enabling individuals to interrogate their assumptions and understand the origins and ramifications of their beliefs. Such a process fosters transformation by motivating individuals to reassess extant knowledge, explore alternative perspectives, and adapt their worldview (Stancikas 2019). Additionally, cultural awareness is integral to the development of intercultural competence and meaningful cross-cultural communication (Forest 2003; Lyons & Branston 2006), as it relates to understanding how culture influences cognition, behaviour, and social interaction (Chen & Starosta 1998, 2000).

Cultural knowledge pertains to the understanding of social groups, their practices, and the interactions that occur within one's own culture as well as those of others. This encompasses knowledge of historical and contemporary relationships, collective memory, geographic perceptions, and the workings of social institutions that affect both daily life and cross-cultural interactions (Bandura 2011: 46). Furthermore, cultural knowledge entails the capacity to interpret cultural events or artefacts, identify ethnocentric perspectives, and understand their roots, thereby facilitating effective mediation between cultures (Bandura 2011: 47; Byram 1997). This critical cultural awareness allows for the evaluation of cultural practices and perspectives, advancing deeper intercultural understanding and communication (Bandura 2011: 47). Finally, cultural skills are manifested in the ability to communicate and interact effectively in intercultural contexts (Chen & Starosta 1998, 2000).

2.5. Cultural detachment

Cultural detachment refers to the process by which individuals or groups become disconnected from their cultural roots, values, and practices, influenced by factors such as exposure to foreign cultures, globalisation, or dominant cultural narratives (Boroomand & Yazdani 2017; Brunetta et al. 2020; Hejazi & Fatemi 2015; Matusitz & Minei 2013). This phenomenon can yield both positive and negative results. On the positive side, cultural detachment may encourage individuals to critically evaluate, appreciate, and potentially modify or reject aspects of their cultural systems, fostering personal growth and a deeper understanding of their own and other cultures (Archer & Nickson 2012; Boroomand & Yazdani 2017). Conversely, it can result in adverse effects, including the loss of cultural identity, alienation, and disconnection from communities and traditions (Hejazi & Fatemi 2015; Molina 2019; Reynolds-Cuéllar 2023).

Key contributors to cultural detachment include linguistic imperialism, the prevalence of UK-derived curricula cultural models, and the pervasive role of digital technologies in mediating environmental interactions (Hejazi & Fatemi 2015). Additionally, cultural diversity within groups or organisations may inadvertently foster feelings of dissatisfaction and detachment among members (Brunetta et al. 2020). While some studies point to potential benefits of diversity, such as enhanced creativity and broader perspectives, Stahl et al. (2010) demonstrate that cultural diversity can also lead to process losses, particularly through increased task conflict and

reduced social integration. These dynamics may strain interpersonal relationships and hinder group cohesion, thus contributing to emotional disengagement and dissatisfaction among team members. Mitigating the negative effects of cultural detachment involves strategies such as promoting one's own cultural and national values alongside an appreciation for foreign cultures and fostering cultural attachment through activities such as outdoor activities and cultural education (Boroomand & Yazdani 2017; Schwass et al. 2021). Given its multifaceted nature, the impact of cultural detachment is inherently complex and context-dependent, requiring careful consideration of its potential benefits and drawbacks (Boroomand & Yazdani 2017; Matusitz & Minei 2013).

3. Methodology

3.1. Method

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between the medium of instruction (BMI vs. EMI) and disengagement from home culture across students enrolled in secondary school through university levels in the Rangpur Division, Bangladesh. This study addresses the following research questions: Does the medium of instruction influence students' cultural competence within the context of Bangladeshi education? In line with the research hypothesis that cultural detachment is more prevalent among EMI students than their BMI counterparts, survey data were collected and then analysed using exploratory factor analysis and inferential statistics.

3.2. Participants

A total of 300 students participated, equally divided between the BMI ($n=150$) and EMI ($n=150$) groups. Six institutions located in the Rangpur Division (Figure 1) were first identified using a non-random purposive sampling strategy to ensure equal representation of both the MOIs, followed by simple random sampling of students within institutions. The Rangpur Division in north-west Bangladesh was selected due to its logistical accessibility. Subsequently, the participating students within these institutions were randomly selected.

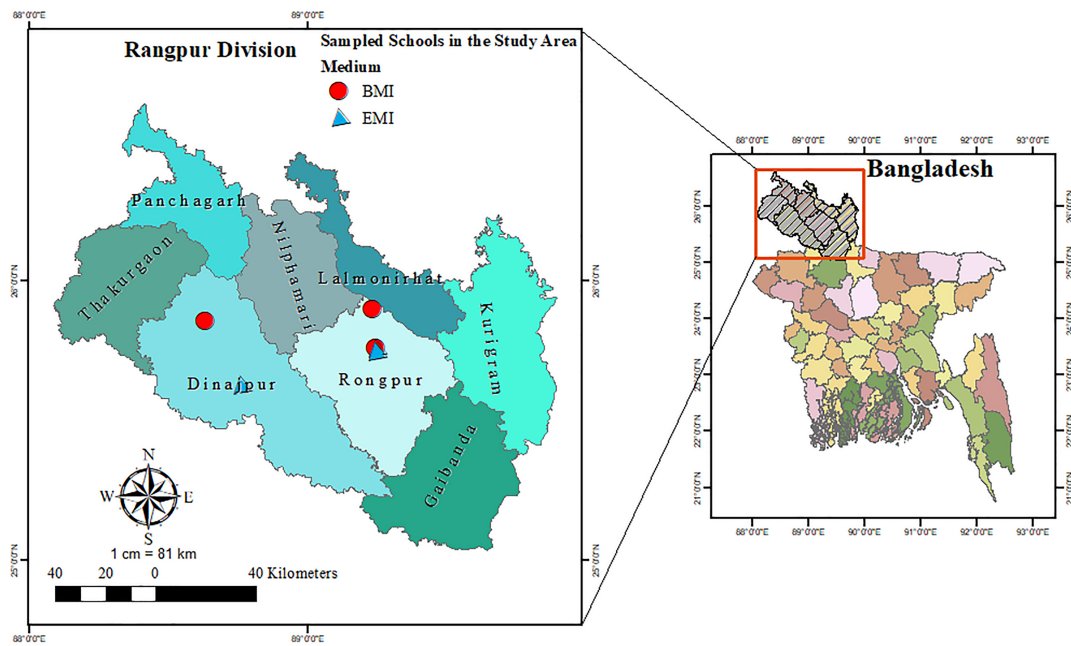


Figure 1. Map of the study area (Rangpur Division, Bangladesh).

As summarised in Table 1, the BMI exhibited (a) an equal gender ratio, (b) older age distributions, and (c) higher representation at the university level. In contrast, the EMI showed (a) a higher proportion of male respondents, (b) younger age distributions, and (c) a predominance at the upper secondary level. The average age of the overall sample was 17.77 years ($SD=3.07$).

Characteristics		Frequency		Total	Percentage	
		Bengali Medium n	English Medium n		Bengali Medium %	English Medium %
Gender	Male	75	86	161	50.0%	57.3%
	Female	75	64	139	50.0%	42.7%
Age of the respondents	10 - 14	20	12	32	13.3%	8.0%
	15 - 19	91	109	200	60.7%	72.7%
	20 - 24	31	24	55	20.7%	16.0%
	25 - 29	8	5	13	5.3%	3.3%
Education level	Lower Secondary	44	58	102	29.3%	38.7%
	Upper secondary	41	69	110	27.3%	46.0%
	University and higher	65	23	88	43.3%	15.3%
Total		150	150			

Table 1. Demographics of participants.

3.3. Data collection procedure

Prior to data collection, which took place from December 2023 to February 2024, formal permission was obtained from the authorities of the six selected institutions. The researcher provided a brief overview of the study's general objectives and procedures to potential participants. Parental consent was mandatory for participants younger than 18 years. Upon receiving the completed consent forms, the participants were asked to fill out the survey at their convenience within their institutions. Surveys were administered in a supervised setting during free periods, thus minimising any potential disruptions to regular academic schedules.

3.4. Ethical considerations

All ethical guidelines pertaining to human research were rigorously followed. Because a considerable proportion of the participants were minors, additional safeguards were implemented to protect their welfare. Parental consent, as well as permission from institutional heads, was obtained prior to their participation in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained; no identifiable information (such as names or student IDs) was collected. Participants were reminded that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point or skip any questions without providing a reason, thereby ensuring voluntary participation.

3.5. Measures

A survey instrument was developed to assess participants' perceptions, knowledge, and engagement with both Western and Bengali cultures, focusing on measures of cultural competence to evaluate detachment from Bengali culture. The survey included 15 items adapted and "nativised" from the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society instrument to address the research hypothesis. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and all items were provided in both English and Bengali to accommodate varying language proficiency. Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate internal consistency, yielding a value of $\alpha=0.78$, indicating acceptable internal consistency (de Vaus 2002; George & Mallery 2010). Correlation matrix analysis showed that each item correlated $\geq .30$ with at least one other item, supporting the feasibility of the factor analysis (Phakiti et al. 2018). However, Item 9 - comfort level with native speaker (Bangladeshi) interactions - was excluded due to low communality (<0.30) prior to the final analysis, which enhanced the overall factor solution.

4. Data Analysis

Descriptive analyses, including means, standard deviations and frequency distributions, were used to draw a general picture of the participants of the two instructional media (BMI and EMI). In addition, normality was confirmed as the skewness and kurtosis values for the original 15 items fell within the acceptable range of -3 to $+3$ (Kline 2016) and remained so after the removal of one item (Byrne 2010; George & Mallery 2010; Hair et al. 2010). Therefore, an exploratory

factor analysis (EFA) with 14 items (excluding item 9) was conducted to determine the underlying factors representing participants' cultural competence. A principal axis factor extraction with varimax rotation was performed, assuming uncorrelated factors with item retention criteria (e.g., loading $\geq .40$). Factor retention was determined by the scree plot and eigenvalues exceeding 1, both of which indicated a three-factor solution (Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004). Sampling adequacy was supported by a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index of 0.813, which was found to be 'meritorious' (Pett, Lackey & Sullivan 2003), and Bartlett's test for sphericity was significant at $p < 0.001$, validating the correlation matrix for factor analysis. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each factor to ensure reliability.

Composite scores were calculated for each factor by taking the average of the loaded items. To test the hypothesis that EMI students exhibit greater cultural distance than BMI students, independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare the composite scores for cultural engagement and knowledge between the groups. In addition, binary logistic regression was applied with medium of instruction (BMI vs. EMI) as the dependent variable and the three factor scores as predictors to provide complementary perspectives on the data. Omnibus tests of the model coefficients confirmed that the factor scores significantly improved the model's ability to predict participants' MOI. The t-tests allowed for a direct comparison between BMI and EMI students to test the hypothesis of greater cultural detachment among EMI students. Logistic regression, on the other hand, assessed the predictive utility of factor scores in distinguishing between BMI and EMI students, taking into account the simultaneous influence of all factors. This dual approach strengthens the robustness of the results.

5. Results of the study

5.1. Influence of medium of instruction on home language

In earlier decades, Bengali was the primary language used by children in Bangladesh, both at home and in school. However, in recent years, the sudden growth of English-Medium Instruction (EMI), particularly in urban areas, is gradually displacing the native language from the first and most consistent environment in which children acquire and practise language. Figure 2 shows the primary language at home and students' MOI.

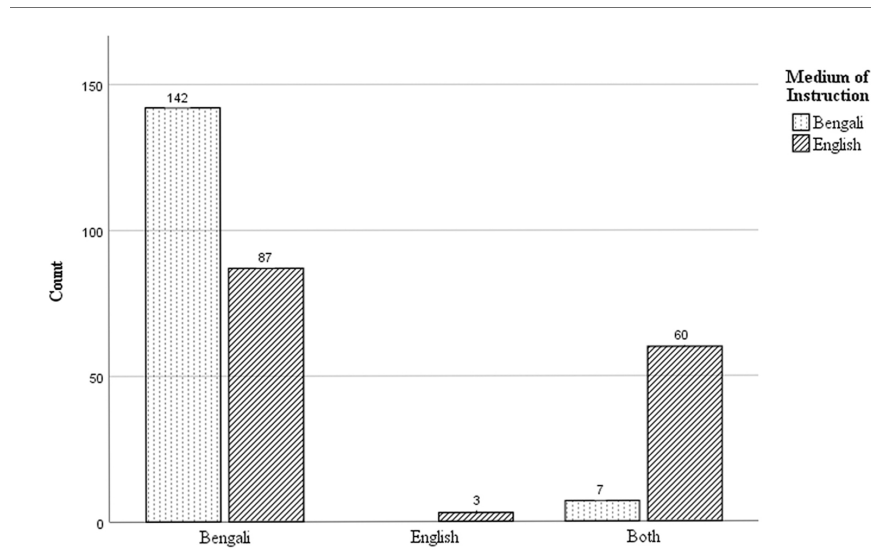


Figure 2. Primary home language by medium of instruction (BMI/EMI).

The majority of the BMI students ($n = 142$) mentioned Bengali as their primary language, and only seven of them reported using a mix of Bengali and English in their home communication, which can be characterised as code-switching. However, the predominance of mixed language use is visible in EMI, as students ($n = 60$) admit to incorporating both languages in their family environment, while Bengali still emerges as the dominant language among EMI, as most of them ($n = 87$) use Bengali. Only a few EMI students ($n = 3$) primarily used English. The dominance of the native language in BMI indicates a strong preference for the native language as a medium of communication within the family. By contrast, EMI shows a growing preference for mixed-language use and only English as a primary language. The predominance of mixed languages in EMI indicates that the emphasis on English contributes to use English in their family environment.

5.2. Descriptive analysis of participants' awareness, knowledge, and skills in native and Western cultures

Western Culture Awareness	Mean	Std. dev.	SD	D	N	A	SA
Western cultural practices are worth celebrating	2.29	1.20	34.7	24.3	22.0	15.0	4.0
I learn about different aspects of Western culture.	2.59	0.79	23.0	28.0	20.0	24.3	4.7
I engage in traditional Western activities.	2.96	1.14	31.0	24.7	23.3	16.7	4.3
I am comfortable in interactions with Western individuals.	3.46	1.01	1.0	23.0	15.0	48.3	12.7
I hold positive assumptions about Western cultures and people.	3.29	0.83	1.0	14.7	44.3	34.0	6.0
Native Culture Awareness							
Native cultural practices are worth celebrating.	3.49	0.82	0.7	8.7	25.0	47.3	18.3
I hold positive assumptions about native cultures and people.	3.66	0.87	1.3	7.7	29.3	47.0	14.7
I engage in traditional native activities.	3.47	0.93	3.0	20.0	16.0	48.3	12.7
I am comfortable in interactions with native individuals.	3.68	0.95	0.0	11.7	31.7	34.0	22.7
I learn about different aspects of native culture.	3.86	0.89	1.7	5.7	20.7	49.3	22.7
Native cultural knowledge							
I recognise my knowledge of native culture is adequate.	3.98	1.07	3.7	6.7	7.0	33.3	39.3
I often reflect on improving my native cultural understanding.	3.24	1.18	7.3	22.7	25.0	28.3	16.7
I acknowledge the attachment to my native culture.	3.97	0.91	1.7	2.7	24.3	39.0	32.3
Native cultural Skill							
I am actively involved in initiatives that promote interaction and understanding of native culture.	3.50	0.91	0.7	16.7	24.3	48.7	9.7
I know and use a variety of relationship-building skills to create connections with people from different regional backgrounds.	3.91	0.77	0.7	2.0	24.3	52.0	21.0

Table 2. Participants' responses to Likert scale items.

In terms of perceived value as shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents, 59%, disagreed that Western cultural practices are worthwhile, and 22% expressed a neutral attitude. Similarly, most respondents, 51%, said they had no interest in learning more about Western traditions, norms, and practices, although almost one-third, 29%, showed some curiosity. In addition, the majority, 55.7%, said they had no experience of Western cultural activities, while a smaller group, 21%, actively practised Western traditions (e.g., celebrating Christmas, Halloween, or Valentine's Day) either at home or through school events. These proportions are consistent with lower mean scores on items related to Western cultural practices ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 1.20$) and activities ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.14$) as well as limited interest in learning about Western culture ($M = 2.59$, $SD = .79$). Nonetheless, participants indicated that they were mostly comfortable interacting with Westerners ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.01$). Furthermore, 44.3% remained neutral, and 40% agreed with the statement on positive assumptions about Western cultures ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.83$).

In contrast, the participants showed a consistently positive attitude, awareness, adequate knowledge, and strong commitment to their native culture. They viewed native cultural practices as worth celebrating ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.82$), with 65.6% of participants expressing agreement. A similarly positive perception of native culture was observed, with 61.7% agreeing that native culture is valuable ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.87$). A high level of engagement with native cultural activities was observed, with 61% of participants agreeing with the statement ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .93$). Most of the participants were comfortable interacting with native individuals ($M = 3.68$, $.95$), and the highest mean ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .89$) showed that participants were interested in learning about native culture.

Regarding the participants' knowledge and skills in native culture, the majority of the participants (72.6%) believed they had adequate knowledge about native culture, and a small number of students (10.4%) disagreed. They actively sought to deepen their cultural understanding; however, 25% remained neutral and 30% disagreed. Overall, participants reported feeling strongly connected to their native heritage ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.91$). They were also committed to encouraging cultural interaction ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.91$) and confident in their ability to build relationships across different regional backgrounds ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.77$).

The results indicate that Bangladeshi students have a predominantly positive attitude towards their native culture, which is reflected in their strong commitment to cultural values, practices, and language preservation. This is evident in the higher scores for engagement with native cultural aspects compared with the comparatively lower interest and ambivalence observed in relation to engagement, commitment, and appreciation of Western cultural traditions.

5.3. Factor analysis of Cultural competence

Exploratory factor analyses in Table 3 revealed the following three interpretable factors: (1) Western cultural awareness (WCA), (2) Native cultural awareness (NCA), and (3) Native cultural knowledge and skills (NCKS).

	Factors			Communality
	1	2	3	
Item 1	.792			.581
Item 2	.771			.596
Item 3	.770			.606
Item 4	.767			.812
Item 5	.746			.783
Item 6		.875		.722
Item 7		.867		.649
Item 8		.626		.418
Item 10		.510		.415
Item 11			.747	.444
Item 12			.643	.320
Item 13			.629	.407
Item 14			.561	.623
Item 15			.456	.624
% of variance accounted for	31.98%	17.19%	7.97%	
Cronbach's Alpha	.832	.740	.701	

Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results.**Note:** Rotation method: Varimax.

For the final 14 items on cultural competence, Cronbach's alpha for each factor (e.g., Factor1 $\alpha = 0.83$; Factor2 $\alpha = 0.74$; Factor3 $\alpha = 0.70$) demonstrated an acceptable to good degree of internal consistency. The final three-factor model accounted for 57.14% of the total variance in the items with eigenvalues greater than one (see Table 3). Sampling adequacy was confirmed by the KMO measure (.813), and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. Furthermore, the component transformation matrix provides insights into how varimax rotation methods improve interpretability by producing a clearer factor structure while retaining the same total variance. Thus, the results suggest that the model fits the data well. Both factor one and two contained five items relevant to perceived practice, value, engagement, comfort, and assumptions towards Western and native culture, labelled as "Western culture awareness (WCA)" and "Native culture awareness (NCA)". Factor three included items related to a participant's assessment of cultural knowledge, understanding and adaptive towards native culture, "Native Cultural Knowledge and Skills (NCKS)".

5.4. Factor score and composite score

In this process of translating factors into scores, factor scores were derived by summing the regression coefficients of items associated with a common latent factor for each individual participant. These new factor scores estimates were then used in subsequent analyses. Furthermore, a composite score was created for each factor. A composite is a raw score (or unweighted composite score) composed of items loaded onto a factor (Phakiti et al. 2018). Such score is accessible to readers, as its value can be interpreted using a scale descriptor (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The technique is commonly referred to as item parcelling (Brown 2015), which enhances the richness of data (i.e., a construct is represented by multiple items, rather than by one item). Finally, Pearson's correlations were computed to assess the relationship between these factor scores and the corresponding composite scores.

	WCA	NCA	NCKS
Factor 1	.972**		
Factor 2		.958**	
Factor 3			.886**

Table 4. Correlation between factor score and composite scores.

Note: Correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). Sample size: n = 300.

As shown in Table 4, all three factor scores exhibited strong and statistically significant positive correlations with their respective composite scores. This indicates that the derived factor scores are closely aligned with their corresponding composite measures, supporting the convergent evidence of the factor scoring method. These strong correlations suggest that both factor and composite scores are valid representations of the underlying constructs and are therefore appropriate for use in subsequent analyses.

5.5. Influence of MOI on factors of cultural competence

Descriptive analysis showed a general perception of the participants regarding Western culture, with more than half expressing either disagreement or strong disagreement with the statement. This suggests a lack of strong appreciation for Western cultural practices, engagement, and underlying assumptions. In contrast, participants consistently expressed a positive view of native culture. Therefore, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the differences in perceptions of the three factors of cultural competence.

Statements	Bengali-medium		English-medium		t	p	Mean difference	95% CI		Cohen's d
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation				Lower	Upper	
Western culture awareness	2.31	0.542	3.46	0.539	-18.48	<.001	-1.15	-1.27	-1.03	2.13

Table 5. t-test of MOI differences in WCA (Factor 1).

An independent-samples t-test as presented in Table 5 was conducted to examine whether the MOI (Bengali vs. English) influenced the participants' awareness of Western culture. Students receiving English-medium instruction ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.539$) reported significantly higher levels of Western cultural awareness than those receiving Bengali-medium instruction ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 0.542$), $t(298) = -18.48$, $p < .001$, with a significant mean difference of 1.15, 95% CI [-1.27, -1.03], with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 2.13$), this mean difference indicating that the EMI participants rated Western cultural elements significantly higher than BMI. Therefore, EMI students have substantially greater WCA than BMI students.

Statements	Bengali-medium		English-medium		t	p	Mean difference	95% CI		Cohen's d
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation				Lower	Upper	
Native culture awareness	3.65	0.511	3.42	0.760	2.97	0.003	0.22	0.08	0.37	0.34

Table 6. t-test of MOI differences in NCA (Factor 2).

An independent-samples t-test as suggested in Table 6 was conducted to determine whether the medium of instruction (Bengali vs. English) influenced participants' awareness of their native culture. Students receiving Bengali-medium instruction ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.511$) demonstrated significantly higher levels of native cultural awareness than those receiving English-medium instruction ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.760$), $t(298) = 2.97$, $p = .003$. The mean difference was 0.22, 95% CI [0.08, 0.37], with a small effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.34$). The mean value indicates that BMI students rated comparatively higher than EMI students in this section. These findings suggest that the use of Bengali as a medium of instruction significantly enhanced students' native cultural awareness compared to English-medium instruction.

Statements	Bengali-medium		English-medium		t	p	Mean difference	95% CI		Cohen's d
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation				Lower	Upper	
Native cultural knowledge and skills	4.15	0.378	3.30	0.612	14.44	<.001	0.85	0.73	0.96	1.667

Table 7. t-test of differences in NCKS (Factor 3).

An independent-samples t-test as shown in Table 7 was conducted to examine whether the medium of instruction (Bengali vs. English) influenced the participants' knowledge and skills related to their native culture. Students taught in Bengali ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.378$) demonstrated significantly greater native cultural knowledge and skills than those taught in English ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.612$), $t(298) = 14.44$, $p < .001$. The mean difference was 0.85, 95% CI [0.73, 0.96], with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.67$). These results suggest that BMI is significantly associated with enhanced native cultural knowledge and skills compared with EMI students.

5.6. Effect of MOI on Cultural Detachment

After determining the factor solution, factor scores were calculated for each factor. They were used in a follow-up binary logistic regression to investigate the capability of the factors in predicting participants' MOI. $\chi^2 = 322.00$, $df = 3$, and $p < .001$ indicating the predictors significantly improved model fit over the null. Furthermore, Cox & Snell $R^2 = 0.658$ and Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.878$, a more adjusted version of R^2 means that approximately 87.8% of the variance in MOI is explained by the model, indicating a better model fit. The classification table shows the accuracy of the logistic regression model predictions of MOI. Both BMI and EMI were predicted with high accuracy (92% for Bengali and 94.0% for English), with an overall classification accuracy of 93%.

Predictor	β	Wald χ^2	p	Odds ratio
Factor 1	4.217	51.863	<0.001	71.59
Factor 2	-0.660	5.286	0.022	0.517
Factor 3	-3.864	41.639	<0.001	0.021

Table 8. Logistic regression predicting participants' MOI.

Table 8 presents a binary logistic regression estimating EMI affiliation (coded 1 = EMI; 0 = BMI) from three factor scores: Western Cultural Awareness (WCA), Native Cultural Awareness (NCA), and Native Cultural Knowledge and Skills (NCKS). The fitted model was:

$$\text{logit}(P(\text{EMI} = 1)) = 0.094 + (4.217 \times \text{Factor 1}) - (0.660 \times \text{Factor 2}) - (3.864 \times \text{Factor 3})$$

Holding the other predictors constant, a one-unit increase in WCA was associated with substantially higher odds of EMI affiliation ($\beta = 4.217$; $OR = 71.59$; $p < .001$), indicating a strong positive association, representing WCA significantly increased the log-odds of EMI affiliation. Therefore, indicating that EMI environments are associated with greater awareness, knowledge, and skills related to Western culture.

In contrast, higher NCA ($\beta = -0.660$; $OR = 0.52$; $p = .022$) and higher NCKS ($\beta = -3.864$; $OR = 0.02$; $p < .001$) were demonstrated negative relationships and associated with lower odds of EMI affiliation. Equivalently, participants who reported higher awareness and proficiency in their

native cultural context had a greater likelihood of being BMI students. These results suggest that the predominance of the English language and UK-derived curricula cultural content in EMI settings may diminish students' engagement with and understanding of their native cultural traditions and practices.

6. Discussion

This study reveals significant contrasts between English-medium instruction (EMI) and Bengali-medium instruction (BMI). The findings provide important information on the cultural implications of MOI, particularly the perceptions of students and their alignments with the cultural paradigms of the native and Western worlds.

The study shows that EMI students are significantly more aware of Western culture than their BMI counterparts, confirming previous research that emphasises the dominance of Western-orientated materials and teaching approaches in EMI settings (Haque & Akter 2013; A. Haque 2020; Obaidullah 2022). This increased Western cultural engagement among EMI students often comes at the expense of native cultural awareness, as BMI students are associated with significantly more knowledge and skills related to Bangladeshi traditions and practices. Participants showed a spectrum of attitudes ranging from rejection to neutrality, with EMI students showing a clear preference for Western values. The predominance of English in the EMI environment reinforces Western cultural hegemony and characterises students' aspirations, lifestyles, and worldviews. These tendencies are consistent with the argument that EMI perpetuates neocolonialism by prioritising Western norms over local cultural practices, thereby exacerbating cultural and structural inequalities (Haque 2020). This aligns with Al-Quaderi and Al Mahmud's (2010) argument that EMI students can become alienated from their cultural roots, thereby fostering a sense of detachment and potential cultural alienation.

The adoption of Western cultural practices by EMI students reflects their ability to navigate a globalised world, a skill that is increasingly valued in today's society. Participation in Western-style social events, such as graduation balls or themed celebrations, demonstrates enthusiasm for intercultural engagement. In addition, EMI's curricula familiarise students with Western literature and history, allowing them to appreciate cultural diversity while developing globally recognised skills through classroom practices, such as debates and group discussions. These activities foster intercultural competencies that prepare students for international events such as Model United Nations (MUN) conferences or exchange programme, where Bangladeshi EMI students excel in building relationships and engaging in intercultural conversations.

However, this immersion in Western paradigms raises critical concerns regarding cultural demarcation. As findings align with Al-Quaderi and Al Mahmud's (2010) critique, the increased engagement with Western cultural elements through EMI reinforces socioeconomic inequalities. The perception that EMI primarily appeals to the wealthy class emphasises its role in perpetuating cultural and class-based inequality in Bangladesh.

Sociocultural theories of second language acquisition further contextualise these findings. Language acquisition in EMI environments emphasises the social nature of learning and reflects

broader cultural influences on students' perceptions and motivations (Kang & Gyorke 2008; Kim 2010). EMI fosters an environment in which learners internalise Western norms and values that shape their goals and social attitudes (Kormos et al. 2011). Although this cultural orientation is beneficial for global integration, it requires pedagogical reforms to strike a balance between global competence and the preservation of local cultural heritage.

This study highlights the interaction between EMI and cultural identity in Bangladesh and emphasises the need for pedagogical strategies that develop intercultural skills while preserving native cultural ties. Although EMI promotes global competencies, its impact on local cultural awareness requires a re-evaluation of educational practices. Integrating Bangladeshi literature, history and traditions into EMI curricula alongside Western subjects can reduce cultural disengagement and maintain continuity between local and global identities. Such an approach allows students to reap the benefits of a globalised education while preserving their cultural heritage and enhancing their ability to cope with globalisation.

7. Conclusion

This study shows the extent to which EMI students showed greater alignment with Western culture and lower Bangladeshi cultural knowledge & skills. These influences shape social attitudes, norms, interactions, and values in Bangladesh significantly, particularly through the rise of individualism and consumerism. While these changes reflect the adaptability of Bangladesh's younger generation to an increasingly globalised world, they also create tensions around the preservation of cultural heritage and intergenerational continuity. Ensuring a language policy that promotes the use of both Bengali and English in education is crucial for preserving cultural identity and promoting global competence (Karim et al. 2023). A flexible, multilingual pedagogy that integrates native-language cultural content with English language instruction can promote linguistic inclusion and reduce cultural disconnection (Saha & Rahman 2022).

Recommendations for national language policy and planning include the promotion of a bilingual home environment to maintain native language proficiency and cultural identity alongside the development of English proficiency. Bangladeshi traditions, literature, and history should be included in the curriculum alongside global content. Teachers should be provided with cultural awareness training to cater to the diverse needs and backgrounds of their students.

Using a predominantly quantitative and cross-sectional design, this study provides only a partial view of participants' lived experiences of cultural and linguistic change. The lack of qualitative research and longitudinal data limits deeper insight into evolving attitudes over time. However, subsequent studies should be conducted using mixed methods to capture the nuanced dimensions of linguistic and cultural adaptations. Longitudinal studies that incorporate socioeconomic and regional variables could lead to targeted interventions that promote balanced language policies and preserve cultural identity amid ongoing global influences. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge potential confounding variables, as age,

gender, and level of study differed by MOI (see Table 1); future analyses should therefore control for these covariates. Overall, the findings emphasise the urgency of promoting language and cultural education strategies that enable students to engage in global opportunities without sacrificing the richness of their cultural heritage.

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Appendix

Western culture awareness:

Item 1: Western cultural practices are worth celebrating.

Item 2: I hold positive assumptions about Western cultures and people.

Item 3: I engage in traditional Western activities.

Item 4: I learn about different aspects of Western culture.

Item 5: I am comfortable in interactions with Western individuals.

Native culture awareness:

Item 6: Native cultural practices are worth celebrating.

Item 7: I hold positive assumptions about native cultures and people.

Item 8: I engage in traditional native activities.

Item 9: I am comfortable in interactions with native (Bangladeshi) individuals. (excluded from analysis)

Item 10: I learn about different aspects of native culture.

Native cultural knowledge and skills

Item 11: I recognise my knowledge of native culture is adequate.

Item 12: I often reflect on improving my native cultural understanding.

Item 13: I acknowledge the attachment to my native culture

Item 14: I am actively involved in initiatives that promote interaction and understanding of native culture.

Item 15: I know and use various relationship-building skills to create connections with people from different regional backgrounds.