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Conceptualizing Mother Language as Symbolic Capital in Diplomatic Journalism: The Bangladesh Context

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Article Info	Abstract
<i>Article History</i> Date of Submission 29-01-2026 Date of Acceptance 06-05-2026 Date of Publication 15-06-2026	Language plays a crucial role in diplomatic journalism as a source of authority and legitimacy. In Bangladesh, where national identity is deeply rooted in the mother language, this role is highly significant. This theoretical article conceptualizes mother language as symbolic capital within diplomatic journalism. It examines why Bangla, despite its strong cultural value, holds limited authority in elite diplomatic news discourse. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, alongside journalism and translation studies, the paper argues that professional norms, reliance on English-language source texts and standard language ideology constrain the interpretive use of the mother language. Using Bangladesh as an illustrative context, it demonstrates how Bangla functions primarily for textual adaptation or cultural symbolism rather than as a full analytical resource. Finally, the study discusses the implications of this marginalization for linguistic sustainability and public communication.
<i>Keywords</i> Mother language, Symbolic capital, Diplomatic Journalism, Language ideology, Linguistic sustainability	

Introduction

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Language, Diplomacy and Symbolic Power

Diplomatic journalism plays an important role in shaping how a country is understood at home and abroad. Through reports on state visits, bilateral meetings, international summits, and foreign policy statements, journalists translate complex diplomatic activities into public narratives. These narratives not only inform citizens but also help construct national image and political meaning. Scholars argue that media does not simply report diplomacy; it actively participates in diplomatic communication through framing and language choice (Gilboa, 2005).

Language is central to this process. Diplomatic journalism usually values neutrality, caution, and professionalism. However, sociolinguistic and critical media studies show that language is never fully neutral because it carries power, ideology, and social hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 1995). Some languages and language varieties are considered more suitable for official communication, while others are viewed as emotional, informal, or inappropriate for elite discourse. These assumptions shape how journalists report diplomatic issues and which linguistic forms gain legitimacy.

In Bangladesh, language has strong political and cultural significance. Bangla is widely celebrated in cultural, educational, and political life. Yet its role in institutional domains such as diplomatic journalism remains more restricted. Diplomatic reporting often follows global professional norms and relies heavily on English-language press releases prepared for international audiences. As a result, journalists frequently work as translators or reformulators of English source texts rather than independent interpreters (Van Doorslaer, 2012). Bangla therefore functions mainly as a language of transmission, while the structure and tone of reporting continue to reflect global diplomatic discourse (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009).

Most studies on language and media in Bangladesh focus on nationalism, cultural identity, and political communication, emphasizing the historical and emotional importance of Bangla. However, limited attention has been given to how language operates

as symbolic power within diplomatic journalism. This paper addresses that gap by examining mother language as a form of institutional authority in diplomatic reporting.

Statement of the problem

Although language is central to diplomatic journalism, it is often treated as a neutral technical tool rather than a source of symbolic power. In professional journalism, certain linguistic styles are privileged because they are considered more suitable for international communication and institutional legitimacy. In Bangladesh, Bangla remains a powerful marker of national identity and collective memory (Rahman, 2010), but this symbolic recognition does not automatically provide authority within elite fields such as diplomatic journalism.

One major challenge is the dependence on English-language source texts prepared for international audiences. Consequently, Bangladeshi journalists often engage in translation and editorial reformulation rather than independent meaning-making. Bangla thus functions mainly as a language of transmission instead of a language of original interpretation (Van Doorslaer, 2012). This limitation is reinforced by professional norms that associate credibility with linguistic restraint and standardization (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009).

At the same time, standard language ideology in media institutions privileges formalized language over regional or everyday speech (Lippi-Green, 1994). This creates a gap between diplomatic reporting and the linguistic realities of ordinary people (Hasan & Rahaman, 2014). Although previous research on Bangladeshi media has explored nationalism and political economy, there is limited research on language as symbolic power in diplomatic journalism. This study therefore examines the gap between the cultural value of Bangla and its limited institutional authority in diplomatic reporting.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of mother language in diplomatic journalism from a theoretical perspective, using Bangladesh as an illustrative context. More specifically, the study aims to:

1. To conceptualize mother language as symbolic capital within the field of diplomatic journalism, rather than viewing it only as a cultural or emotional resource.
2. To explore how professional norms in diplomatic journalism influence language choice and limit the interpretive use of mother language.
3. To explain the impact of English-language source texts, such as official press releases, on the positioning of Bangla in diplomatic news reporting.
4. To examine how standard language ideology shapes journalistic practice, particularly through the preference for standardized registers and the exclusion of regional dialects.
5. To reflect on the implications of these linguistic practices for the long-term sustainability of mother language in upper-class public communication.

Literature Review

Existing scholarship on language, media, and power provides important foundations for understanding the role of mother language in journalism. However, these studies are often divided across nationalism studies, sociolinguistics, journalism studies, and translation studies. While each field offers valuable insights, limited attention has been given to how mother language functions simultaneously as a cultural symbol and a professional resource within diplomatic journalism.

Mother Language and National Identity

Mother language has long been understood as more than a communication tool in Bangladesh. Rahman (2010) explains that Bangla is constitutionally recognized and institutionally embedded in education, public life, and cultural production, giving it a central place in the national imagination. Research on language and nationalism consistently highlights the close relationship between Bangla and Bangladeshi identity. Bangla is often presented as the language of the people and a symbol of authenticity in contrast to colonial or global languages.

Although this literature successfully explains the symbolic and historical importance of Bangla, it mainly focuses on cultural representation and political ideology. Less attention has been given to how Bangla functions within institutional settings such as journalism and diplomacy, where authority depends on professionalism, neutrality, and credibility. This gap is especially important for understanding diplomatic journalism, where national identity is communicated through global institutional norms. The present study therefore extends this discussion by examining mother language not only as identity but also as symbolic authority (Rahman, 2010).

Language as Institutional Authority

Research in translation studies shows that news reporting across languages involves restructuring rather than direct translation. Van Doorslaer (2012) argues that journalists frequently reformulate institutional and international source texts according to newsroom conventions. This process is particularly visible in diplomatic journalism, which relies heavily on official press releases and international documents.

Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) further argue that the dominance of English in global news production strongly shapes this practice. Reports produced in other languages often retain the structure and terminology of English originals. In Bangladeshi diplomatic journalism, this means Bangla operates with limited scope for independent or locally grounded interpretation (Van Doorslaer, 2012; Bielsa & Bassnett,

2009).

Journalism Professionalism and Language Norms

Studies of newsroom culture show that professional journalism is closely linked to expectations about how news language should sound. Authority in journalism is often associated with impersonal tone, conceptual distance, and standardized language practices. This tendency is especially strong in foreign affairs and diplomatic reporting, where emotional or culturally specific expressions are discouraged (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). Critical scholars challenge the idea that these conventions are neutral. Fairclough (1995) argues that standardized language appears objective while privileging upper-class ways of speaking. As a result, locally grounded or everyday language is often excluded from elite journalism. This helps explain why mother language, despite its social importance, remains tightly regulated in diplomatic reporting.

Standard Language Ideology and Linguistic Hierarchy

Standard language ideology is based on the belief that one approved form of language is naturally correct and suitable for serious communication. Media institutions reinforce this belief by consistently favoring standardized language as a sign of competence and credibility (Lippi-Green, 1994). In Bangladesh, research shows that this creates a hierarchy within Bangla itself, where formalized language varieties are valued more highly than everyday speech (Hasan & Rahaman, 2014). This pattern is especially visible in institutional journalism and provides an important framework for examining language practices in diplomatic reporting.

Research Gap

Although existing studies provide valuable insights into language, journalism, and power, there remains a clear gap in the literature. Most research either focuses on nationalism and cultural identity or examines journalism norms without sufficient attention to language as linguistic authority. There is limited theoretical work that connects

mother language, diplomatic journalism, and symbolic power in the Bangladeshi context. This study seeks to fill that gap by offering a conceptual analysis of mother language as institutional legitimacy and examining its implications for linguistic sustainability in elite journalistic discourse.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How can mother language be understood as a form of institutional authority in diplomatic journalism?
2. Why does mother language, despite its strong cultural and historical value in Bangladesh, hold limited authority in elite diplomatic news discourse?
3. How do professional norms of diplomatic journalism influence language choice and restrict the interpretive use of mother language?
4. In what ways does reliance on English-language source texts shape the role of Bangla in diplomatic reporting?
5. How does standard language ideology affect the inclusion or exclusion of regional varieties of Bangla in diplomatic journalism?
6. What are the implications of these linguistic practices for the long-term sustainability of mother language in upper-class public communication?

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in a sociological understanding of language as a form of power rather than simply a tool of communication. To explain the position of mother language in diplomatic journalism, the study mainly draws on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital along with insights from journalism studies and translation studies. Together, these perspectives help explain how language choice in

diplomatic reporting is shaped by institutional norms, professional authority, and global power relations.

Language as Institutional Legitimacy in the Diplomatic Field

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic capital and the linguistic field. Bourdieu (1991) argues that language functions within a "linguistic market" where some language varieties carry greater legitimacy than others. A language becomes symbolically powerful not because it is linguistically superior, but because influential institutions such as the state, media, and education system recognize it as authoritative. As a result, speakers who use institutionally accepted language are viewed as professional and credible, while non-standard forms are often considered informal or unsuitable for serious discourse.

This perspective helps explain the institutional nature of diplomatic journalism. Diplomatic journalism operates as a specialized discursive field with its own professional rules and forms of legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1991). Since journalists covering foreign affairs work closely with governments, diplomats, and international organizations, their language choices are strongly influenced by the need to appear professional and institutionally credible (Gilboa, 2005). Within this field, standardized and internationally recognized linguistic practices are rewarded. Consequently, journalists are expected to follow restrained and formal language styles aligned with global diplomatic discourse. This explains why mother language, despite its emotional and cultural importance, may hold limited authority in diplomatic journalism.

Standard Language Ideology and Linguistic Discipline

The concept of Standard Language Ideology further explains how linguistic hierarchy is maintained within journalism. This ideology refers to the belief that one standardized variety of language is naturally correct, neutral, and superior, while other varieties are considered inappropriate or less professional (Lippi-Green, 1994).

Media institutions play an important role in reinforcing this ideology. Fairclough (1995) argues that standardized language is often presented as objective and professional, whereas vernacular or regional forms are excluded from serious communication. As a result, language in journalism becomes highly disciplined, stripped of regional variation, and reshaped according to institutional norms. This process limits linguistic diversity and strengthens class-based language hierarchies by privileging speakers who are already fluent in standardized forms.

Translation, Transediting and the Role of the Journalist

Insights from translation studies further strengthen this framework. It views that rephrasing assumes a clear relationship between a source text and a target text. However, research on news translation challenges this assumption. Van Doorslaer (2012) argues that journalists often rewrite, summarize, and restructure texts rather than translating them directly. In diplomatic journalism, this process is particularly relevant because journalists frequently rely on English-language source texts such as official press releases and international news reports.

Dimension	Cultural capital of Bangla	Symbolic capital in diplomatic journalism
Historical role	Language Movement, identity	Limited institutional authority
Emotional value	High	Low
Professional legitimacy	Secondary	Dominated by English
Domain of use	Culture, ceremony	Textual adaptation, not interpretation

Table 1. Cultural capital and symbolic capital of Bangla in diplomatic journalism

By integrating symbolic capital theory, journalism professionalism, standard language ideology, and news translation studies, this framework provides a comprehensive explanation of the position of mother language in diplomatic journalism. It allows the study to move beyond viewing language as a neutral tool and instead examine how linguistic authority is produced, regulated, and distributed.

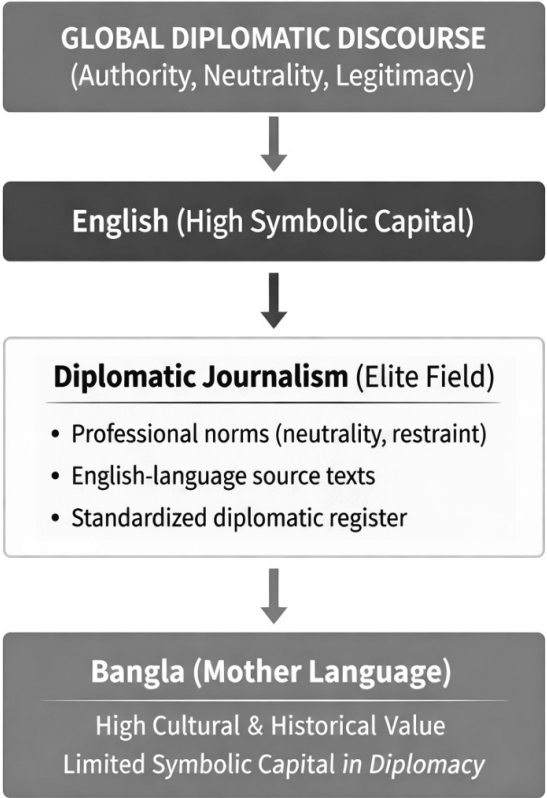


Figure 1. Conceptual positioning of mother language as symbolic capital in diplomatic journalism

Research Methodology

This study follows a theoretical and conceptual research approach. The aim of the research is not to collect empirical data or conduct statistical analysis, but to develop a conceptual understanding of how mother language functions as linguistic authority in diplomatic journalism. The analysis is based on established theories from sociolinguistics, journalism studies, and translation studies, particularly Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic capital and research on media discourse (Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 1995). These theoretical perspectives are used to

interpret commonly observed language practices in Bangladeshi diplomatic journalism.

The study uses illustrative examples drawn from publicly recognizable patterns such as diplomatic press releases, journalistic rewriting practices, and institutional language norms. These examples are not treated as empirical evidence but as analytical tools to clarify theoretical arguments.

Analytical Discussion

This section uses illustrative examples to clarify how institutional practices, professional norms, and language ideologies shape the role of Bangla in specialized diplomatic reporting.

Source Text Dependency and the Constraint on Mother Language

One of the main structural factors shaping diplomatic journalism in Bangladesh is the language of the source text. Official press releases are usually prepared in English so they can be shared with foreign governments, international organizations, and global media. These documents are commonly written in a standardized diplomatic style shaped by international conventions.

As a result, Bangladeshi diplomatic journalists often depend on English-language texts as their primary source of information. When these texts are published in Bangla, journalists generally translate, summarize, or rewrite them rather than producing independent interpretations. For example, diplomatic expressions such as “strengthening bilateral cooperation,” “reaffirming mutual commitment,” or “enhancing regional stability” are commonly rephrased into Bangla while keeping the same abstract and formal structure. Although these translations communicate the intended meaning, they rarely include local explanations about how such diplomatic decisions affect ordinary citizens or national realities.

This process keeps the authority of the message connected to the original English source text, while Bangla performs a secondary role. From Bourdieu’s (1991) perspective, symbolic authority in

diplomatic journalism therefore remains tied to English rather than the mother language itself. Even when reports are written in Bangla, their vocabulary, structure, and framing largely originate from global diplomatic discourse. As a result, Bangla has limited ability to independently shape meaning within institutional journalism.

Professionalism and Linguistic Discipline in Diplomatic Journalism

Professional journalism norms also reinforce the limited position of mother language by associating authority with neutrality and objectivity. In Bangladeshi diplomatic journalism, Bangla is carefully controlled to appear serious, restrained, and credible. This creates a formal and standardized style that follows international professional norms while avoiding expressive or emotionally rich language.

This linguistic discipline is visible in news headlines and the reporting of official statements. Headlines often use generalized expressions such as “Bangladesh seeks stronger ties” (বাংলাদেশ সম্পর্ক সুদৃঢ়করণে আগ্রহী) instead of more culturally expressive or conversational language. Similarly, when political leaders speak in colloquial Bangla, journalists frequently reformulate those statements into formal expressions such as “reiterating the official position” (আনুষ্ঠানিক অবস্থান পুনর্ব্যক্ত করা). Fairclough (1995) argues that such standardized language appears objective and neutral while reproducing existing institutional power relations.

Another visible feature of this discipline is selective code-switching and transliteration. Terms such as “regional security” (রিজিয়নাল সিকিউরিটি), “carbon footprint” (কার্বন ফুটপ্রিন্ট), and “LDC graduation” (এলডিসি গ্রাজুয়েশন) often appear in Bangla reports without explanation. These English-derived terms function as markers of professionalism and global relevance. By using them, journalists signal their alignment with international diplomatic discourse and reinforce the idea that complex strategic concepts are more naturally expressed through English-based terminology.

As a result, Bangla is not excluded from diplomatic journalism,

but it is strictly regulated. Its legitimacy depends on how effectively it mirrors the structure and prestige of global English discourse.

Professionalism and Linguistic Discipline in Diplomatic Journalism

The preference for formalized and internationally aligned language may also reflect the practical demands of diplomatic reporting. Because diplomatic journalism deals with sensitive international issues, journalists often prioritize precision, neutrality, and terminological consistency over conversational accessibility. In this sense, linguistic discipline can be interpreted not only as institutional control but also as a professional strategy for avoiding ambiguity and maintaining credibility in global communication (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009).

Standard Language Ideology and the Hierarchy within Bangla

Standard language ideology also shapes the role of mother language in diplomatic journalism. This ideology promotes the belief that one standardized and refined variety of language is naturally more suitable for official communication than other forms (Lippi-Green, 1994). Media institutions reinforce this belief by consistently favoring standardized language in formal reporting.

Diplomatic journalism in Bangladesh mainly uses a highly standardized form of Bangla associated with education, urban professionalism, and institutional authority. In contrast, everyday spoken Bangla is largely absent from diplomatic reporting. This creates a linguistic hierarchy within Bangla itself.

For example, when people from border areas, migrant communities, or rural regions are quoted in reports related to labor migration or cross-border issues, their speech is often edited into standardized Bangla. Journalists justify this practice as necessary for clarity and professionalism. However, it also removes regional identity and linguistic diversity from the final report. Hasan and Rahaman (2014) argue that such practices reinforce the belief that only standardized language is suitable for authority and intelligence.

From Bourdieu's (1991) perspective, this can be understood as

symbolic violence, where dominant language norms are imposed as natural and unquestionable. By privileging one formal linguistic style, diplomatic journalism excludes many people from seeing their own language reflected in discussions of foreign policy. Consequently, Bangla becomes marginalized not only in relation to English but also within its own internal hierarchy.

Ceremonial visibility and strategic silence

The role of Bangla in diplomatic journalism also changes depending on the type of diplomatic event being reported. Bangla receives greater visibility in ceremonial and symbolic contexts, while its role becomes more limited in strategic or policy-oriented reporting.

For example, reports on International Mother Language Day, cultural exchange programs, or heritage diplomacy often allow journalists to use expressive and emotionally rich Bangla. In such contexts, Bangla is celebrated as a symbol of national identity, history, and cultural pride. In contrast, reports on trade negotiations, climate diplomacy, or multilateral summits usually maintain a restrained and standardized tone. In these cases, Bangla closely follows the structure of global diplomatic English. Cultural references are either minimized or included only as background information. This creates a clear division between symbolic visibility and strategic silence.

From Bourdieu’s (1991) theoretical perspective, this reflects the distinction between cultural capital and institutional legitimacy. Diplomatic journalism positions Bangla mainly within the emotional and ceremonial domain, while strategic diplomacy remains connected to globally standardized institutional language. This division limits the role of Bangla in shaping policy-oriented discourse and national image.

Context	Language Style	Role of Bangla
Cultural diplomacy	Expressive	Symbolic
Trade & security	Restrained	Rephrasing

Context	Language Style	Role of Bangla
International summits	Standardized	Controlled
Policy analysis	Abstract	Limited

Table 2. Contextual use of Bangla in diplomatic journalism

National Image Construction through Linguistic Discipline

Diplomatic journalism plays an important role in shaping how a nation is represented to both domestic and international audiences. Through careful language choice, news reports help construct an image of the country as stable, responsible, and aligned with global norms. This image is produced through restrained and standardized language. Reports on international summits and multilateral forums frequently use expressions such as “commitment to international cooperation” (আন্তর্জাতিক সহযোগিতার প্রতি অঙ্গীকার), “peaceful resolution” (শান্তিপূর্ণ নিষ্পত্তি), and “shared global responsibility” (যৌথ বৈশ্বিক দায়বদ্ধতা). According to Van Doorslaer (2012), journalistic rewriting and textual adaptation play an important role in constructing national image.

By selecting formal institutional language and avoiding emotional or locally grounded expressions, journalists present Bangladesh as calm, rational, and globally responsible. Linguistic discipline therefore becomes part of diplomatic image management. National credibility becomes associated with conformity to global diplomatic discourse rather than with linguistic authenticity.

Implications for Linguistic Sustainability

The limited role of mother language in diplomatic journalism has important implications for linguistic sustainability. Fishman (1991) argues that languages decline not only when people stop speaking them, but also when they lose access to prestigious institutional domains such as governance, science, and diplomacy.

Diplomatic journalism is one of the main domains through which new global ideas enter public discussion in Bangladesh. Concepts such as “Indo-Pacific Strategy,” “Blue Economy,” and “climate diplomacy”

are often introduced through diplomatic reporting. However, these concepts are usually presented through direct transliteration instead of fully developed Bangla alternatives. This practice strengthens the perception that Bangla is less capable of expressing complex international issues. Over time, this creates a cycle of dependency. Because Bangla is rarely used to independently explain advanced diplomatic concepts, it becomes viewed as unsuitable for such discussions. Because it is viewed as unsuitable, it continues to be excluded from these domains. This cycle limits the long-term functional development of mother language.

From a sustainability perspective, the issue is not linguistic weakness but institutional practice. Bangla has historically shown its ability to adapt and develop. However, without stronger institutional support in elite fields such as diplomatic journalism, its symbolic authority remains limited. Ensuring linguistic sustainability therefore requires reconsidering how mother language is positioned within institutional and policy-oriented communication.

Case study: LDC Graduation Discourse and the Institutional Position of Bangla in Diplomatic Journalism

This case study examines the article titled “অর্থনীতি বহুমুখীকরণের মাধ্যমে এলডিসি উত্তরণের চ্যালেঞ্জ মোকাবেলা সম্ভব” published in বর্ষিক বার্তা (Haq, 2025). The article discusses Bangladesh’s transition from Least Developed Country (LDC) status to developing-country status and demonstrates how Bangla functions within diplomatic-economic journalism through institutional legitimacy, professional norms, and globally dominant policy discourse.

The article strongly reflects Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic capital. According to Bourdieu (1991), language gains authority because institutions recognize it as legitimate. In this article, Bangla is the language of communication, but authority comes mainly from internationally recognized institutions and frameworks such as “জাতিসংঘের উন্নয়ন নীতি কমিটি,” “বিশ্ব বাণিজ্য সংস্থা (ডব্লিউটিও),” and “ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়ন”. Bangladesh’s development is explained through

internationally approved indicators including “মাথাপিছু আয়,” “মানব উন্নয়ন সূচক,” and “অর্থনৈতিক ও পরিবেশগত দুর্বলতা.” Development is therefore presented as a globally regulated process rather than a culturally interpreted national achievement. The article also reflects Bourdieu’s idea of diplomatic journalism as a specialized linguistic field where professional legitimacy depends on recognized institutional language. The Bangla used throughout the article is highly formal, administrative, and policy-oriented. Expressions such as “অর্থনীতি বহুমুখীকরণ,” “রফতানি পণ্য বৈচিত্র্যকরণ,” “উদার বাণিজ্য নীতি প্রণয়ন,” “বৈদেশিক শ্রমবাজার সম্প্রসারণ,” and “দক্ষ মানবসম্পদ তৈরি” belong to an elite bureaucratic register associated with diplomatic communication.

The article avoids colloquial or emotionally grounded expressions suitable for ordinary readers. This demonstrates how diplomatic journalism disciplines language according to institutional expectations and professional norms. For example, instead of “অর্থনীতি বহুমুখীকরণ,” the article could have written “একই পণ্যেও ওপর নির্ভর না করে নতুন নতুন খাতে আয় বাড়ানো”. Similarly, “রফতানি পণ্য বৈচিত্র্যকরণ” could have been written as “শুধু পোশাক নয়, অন্যান্য পণ্যও বিদেশে বিক্রি করতে হবে,” while “বৈদেশিক শ্রমবাজার সম্প্রসারণ” could have been simplified as “বিদেশে আরও বেশি মানুষের কাজের সুযোগ তৈরি করতে হবে”. Likewise, “উদার বাণিজ্য নীতি প্রণয়ন” could have appeared as “বিদেশের সঙ্গে ব্যবসা করার নিয়ম সহজ করতে হবে”. The same pattern appears in discussions of economic risks and opportunities. The article uses “রফতানি আয় কমে যাওয়ার আশঙ্কা রয়েছে,” whereas a more people-centered version could have been “এলডিসি সুবিধা চলে গেলে দেশের ব্যবসা ও মানুষের আয় ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হতে পারে”. Instead of “বিদেশি বিনিয়োগকারীদেও আস্থা বাড়বে,” it could have written “বিদেশিরা বাংলাদেশে ব্যবসা করতে বেশি আগ্রহী হবে”. Technical terms such as “অর্থনৈতিক ভঙ্গুরতার সূচক” could also have been explained as “দেশের অর্থনীতি কতটা ঝুঁকির মধ্যে আছে তার হিসাব.” Similarly, “রিজিওনাল কানেক্টিভিটি” could have been replaced with “পাশের দেশগুলোর সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ ও ব্যবসা বাড়ানো”. However, the article deliberately prefers institutional vocabulary because it creates an image of expertise, neutrality, and professionalism.

These examples support the theory of Standard Language Ideology discussed by Lippi-Green (1994) and Fairclough (1995). Media institutions establish one standardized language variety as objective

and credible while marginalizing conversational forms. Even when discussing export dependency, foreign debt, or unemployment, the article maintains technical expressions such as *কর-জিডিপি অনুপাত*, “*শুল্কমুক্ত সুবিধা*,” and “*স্বল্প সুদে বৈদেশিক ঋণ*”. Through this linguistic discipline, Bangla is reshaped into a professionalized language suitable for elite diplomatic journalism. The article also reflects Van Doorslaer’s (2012) theory of translation and transediting through its use of transliterated global policy terms such as “*স্মুথ ট্রানজিশন স্ট্র্যাটেজি (এসটিএস)*,” “*ট্রিপস চুক্তি*,” “*জিএসপি প্লাস*,” “*ইকোনমিক পার্টনারশিপ এগ্রিমেন্ট (ইপিএ)*,” “*রিজিওনাল কম্প্রিহেনসিভ ইকোনমিক পার্টনারশিপ (আরসিইপি)*,” and “*এনহ্যান্সড ইন্টিগ্রেটেড ফ্রেমওয়ার্ক (ইআইএফ)*”. Although written in Bangla script, these concepts remain structurally dependent on English-language global policy discourse. Bangla therefore functions mainly as a language of institutional transmission rather than an independently interpretive language.

Recommendations

Although this study is theoretical, it offers several recommendations regarding language use in diplomatic journalism. Media institutions and journalists should recognize that language is not simply a technical tool but also a form of symbolic authority (Bourdieu, 1991). Greater awareness of this issue may encourage more meaningful use of mother language beyond ceremonial or symbolic contexts. Diplomatic journalism should create more space for accessible Bangla in analytical and policy-oriented reporting. This does not mean abandoning professionalism or neutrality. Rather, complex diplomatic and economic issues can be explained in clearer and more reader-friendly Bangla without losing credibility. As Fairclough (1995) argues, dominant language norms are socially constructed and can be reshaped through reflective practice.

Besides, greater attention should be given to developing Bangla equivalents for emerging global concepts. Excessive dependence on untranslated English terminology limits the conceptual growth of Bangla in institutional communication. Expanding Bangla terminology in diplomacy, trade, and global governance can strengthen its functional range and symbolic authority (Fishman, 1991).

Future studies may explore diplomatic journalism through empirical methods such as discourse analysis, newsroom observation, or audience research. Such research could provide deeper understanding of how journalists negotiate language choice and how readers interpret diplomatic news in mother language.

Conclusion

This study examined the position of mother language in diplomatic journalism using Bangladesh as an illustrative context. Drawing on theories of symbolic capital, journalism professionalism, standard language ideology, and news translation, the study shows that the limited authority of Bangla in diplomatic journalism is shaped by institutional practices, professional norms, and dependence on English-language global discourse. Although Bangla possesses strong cultural and historical importance in Bangladesh, this symbolic value does not automatically translate into institutional authority within diplomatic journalism. The field continues to privilege restrained, standardized, and internationally recognizable language forms. As a result, Bangla is often limited to translation, adaptation, or symbolic representation rather than independent interpretive authority.

At the same time, the preference for standardized and internationally aligned language may also reflect the practical demands of diplomatic journalism, where precision, neutrality, and terminological consistency are professionally important (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). Nevertheless, the study argues that excessive dependence on externally dominant discourse can restrict the development of Bangla as a language of complex global communication.

By treating language as symbolic power rather than a neutral medium, this study contributes to discussions on language, media, and sustainability. It argues that ensuring the meaningful presence of mother language in institutional journalism is important not only for cultural representation but also for inclusive and sustainable public communication.

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