



INTERNSHIP REPORT ON

The Linguistic Disconnect in Field Reporting in Rural and Marginalized Bangladeshi Contexts

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The report is submitted to the Department of English, Daffodil International University, in the partial accomplishment of the degree of B.A. (Hon's) in English

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

After completing a four-month internship at Centrist Nation TV, Rampura, Dhaka, I, Sadia Nowshin Sharin, hereby attest that I am the sole author of the internship report titled "The Linguistic Disconnect in Field Reporting in Rural and Marginalized Bangladeshi Contexts." I further attest that this report was written exclusively to satisfy my academic obligations and is not intended for any other purpose.



Sincerely,
Sadia Nowshin Sharin
Department of English
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LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that under my supervision, Sadia Nowshin Sharin, ID number 221-10-1043, a student in the English Department at Daffodil International University (DIU), has successfully finished her internship report, "The Linguistic Disconnect in Field Reporting in Rural and Marginalized Bangladeshi Contexts."

In her report, she has organized and written all the necessary data, information, and pertinent details carefully. Following a proper review, I found that the report is satisfactory and well-drafted. Working with her was enjoyable, and I hope she succeeds in all of her future endeavors.



Mohammad Mustafizur Rahman
Assistant Professor
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Acknowledgment

I successfully completed this project paper with an internship report on "The Linguistic Disconnect in Field Reporting in Rural and Marginalized Bangladeshi Contexts," thanks to the blessings of Almighty Allah. I express my sincere gratitude to my fellow members from Centrist Nation, the participants from other prominent News Media, and community members who have encouraged and supported me to have made this project possible.

My supervisor, Mohammad Mustafizur Rahman, Assistant Professor in the English Department at Daffodil International University, has my gratitude for his wise counsel and support during the research process. His subject-matter knowledge gave me clarity and direction which I needed to overcome the challenges of this project.

Lastly, I want to express my gratitude to my peers, family, and friends for their support, which inspired me to overcome the obstacles in this project and finish it as best I could.

Sincerely,



Sadia Nowshin Sharin
Department of English
Daffodil International University

About Centrist Nation TV

Based in Rampura, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Centrist Nation TV is an online news and media channel. Daniel Afzalur Rahman and Shafquat Rabbee Anik, co-founders, established the organization in 2024 with the goal of establishing a video-based, English-language news source that connects Bangladesh with the outside world.

Centrist Nation TV, in contrast to many other traditional Bangladeshi news channel, has a strong emphasis on global outreach about Bangladesh's politics, economy, business advancements, and sociocultural issues. By providing transparent, fact-based reporting, the platform also aims to combat external propaganda and false information.

In April 2025, I began working as an intern for Centrist Nation TV as a requirement for my degree at Daffodil International University. I have worked as a general assignment reporter for the last four months, which has given me hands-on experience in both field and newsroom operations.

I covered important events during my internship, such as the BNP Youth Empowerment program and a comprehensive documentary on the Rohingya refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar. This project involved interviewing officials like the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) as well as the general refugee population in order to document the growing crime-related issues in the camps. Investigating crime rates within the Rohingya community was another aspect of the assignment. In order to learn how the host communities view the situation inside the camps, opinions from Bangladeshi citizens were also collected.

Overall, my internship at Centrist Nation TV has been a career-changing opportunity. It has given me the opportunity to learn more about crisis coverage, field reporting, and the role that the news media plays in influencing how Bangladesh is viewed both domestically and abroad.

Table of Content

STUDENT'S DECLARATION.....	1
LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE.....	2
Acknowledgment.....	3
About Centrist Nation TV.....	4
Table of Content.....	5
Abstract.....	7
Keywords.....	7
Introduction.....	1
Objectives of the Research.....	2
Research Questions.....	3
Literature Review.....	4
Language Diversity and Its Impact on Reporting.....	4
The Role of English and Standard Bangla in Media.....	5
Disconnect Between Journalists and Local Knowledge Systems.....	5
Implications for Reporting Accuracy and Diversity.....	6
Strategies for Bridging the Language Gap.....	6
Research Gap.....	8
Theoretical Framework.....	10
Sociolinguistic Theory: Language as a Social Practice.....	10
Postcolonial Theory: Challenging Linguistic Hierarchy.....	11
Participatory Communication Theory: Empowering Local Voices.....	11
Integration of the Framework.....	12
Research Methodology.....	13
Research Design.....	13
Figure 1: Research Participation Numbers in Three Studies.....	14
Data Collection Tools.....	14
Journalist Survey.....	14
Community Assessment.....	15
Field Observations.....	16
Ethical Considerations.....	16
Data Analysis.....	17
Quantitative Analysis.....	17
Qualitative Analysis.....	18

Overall Analysis.....	20
Figure 3: Data Analysis Summary.....	21
Findings.....	22
RQ1: Linguistic Mismatches and Narrative Accuracy.....	22
Table 1: Survey Agreement on the Effects of Using English in Interviews.....	23
RQ2: Training and Newsroom Policies.....	24
Table 2: Survey Agreement on Training and Newsroom Support for Addressing English-Language Barriers.....	25
RQ3: Participatory Journalism.....	27
Table 3: Survey Agreement on Participatory Solutions in Journalism.....	27
Table 4: Survey & Interview Questions, Analysis Methods, and Key Findings.....	29
Proposed Solutions.....	32
Solution 1: Implementing Interpreter-Mediated Interviews to Bridge Linguistic Mismatches (RQ1, RQ3).....	32
Solution 2: Mandating Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity Training for Journalists (RQ2, RQ3).....	33
Solution 3: Adopting Newsroom Policies to Support Participatory Journalism (RQ2, RQ3).....	33
Solution 4: Developing Community-Led Storytelling Platforms (RQ3).....	34
Comparative Integration with Theoretical Frameworks.....	35
Discussion.....	36
RQ1: Linguistic Mismatches and Narrative Accuracy.....	36
RQ2: Training and Newsroom Policies.....	38
RQ3: Participatory Journalism.....	40
Overall Implications.....	41
Recommendations.....	43
Deploying Trained Interpreters for Dialect-Specific Communication.....	43
Integrating Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity Training into Journalism Curricula.....	43
Revising Newsroom Policies to Prioritize Participatory and Inclusive Reporting.....	44
Conclusion.....	45
References.....	46
Appendices.....	47
Appendix A: Likert Scale Survey Question Sets.....	47
Appendix B: Interview Question Sets.....	48
Appendix C: Consent Form for Participation in Research.....	49
Appendix D: Observation Checklist.....	49

Abstract

This study investigates the language issues faced by metropolitan-trained English-speaking journalists when conducting fieldwork in Bangladeshi periphery and rural societies where oral cultures, regional languages, and several dialects of the regions prevail. These language challenges neutralise the universality and credibility of journalism in terms of communication inhibition, news distortion and isolation of local voices. Through the application of a mixed-methods research design—conducting surveys of community residents and journalists, ethnographic field notes collected through the author's internship working at Centrist Nation TV, and a close examination of literature—the study concludes the causes of the barriers and their impact. Findings are that 67% of the journalists face frequent accuracy issues with language misfits and 76% of the members of the community do not feel able to express themselves fully, leading to misinterpretations, interviewee unease, and underrepresentation of rural perspectives. Derived from an interdisciplinary paradigm that engages Sociolinguistic Theory, Postcolonial Theory, and Participatory Communication Theory, the study illustrates how colonial language hierarchies and institutional inclinations reproduce epistemic exclusion. It proposes pragmatic solutions, including community interpreter networks, bilingual reporting, dialect-sensitive training, and media policy reforms, to encourage inclusive journalism practices.

Keywords

Linguistic Barriers, Field Reporting, Rural Communication, Cultural Context, Narrative Accuracy

Introduction

In a linguistically sophisticated country like Bangladesh—where scores of dialects, minority languages, and oral cultures coexist—use of language in the exercise of journalism also exerts a determining role on whose voices get heard and how they get accounted for. While both English and Standard Bangla are employed by the majority of national media to report on social problems, development, and issues of public interest, these language usage often create an unseen chasm when journalists travel into rural or minority areas to report from the ground.

Urban-educated journalists, trained primarily in English or standardized Bangla, typically find it difficult to gather authentic tales from individuals in communities where the lingua franca is localized dialects such as Sylheti, Chittagonian, Khulna Bangla, or indigenous languages. This creates a sort of "linguistic disconnect" whereby the language of the journalist and that of the community are not the same, resulting in miscommunication, embarrassment, or even silence during an interview. In addition, subjects can also be made to feel socially excluded or intimidated by the use of formal or foreign language, underreporting or misrepresenting their voices in mainstream discourses.

This is not just a practical issue of communication. Understanding the significance of the linguistic gap in journalism is therefore essential for inclusive development and democratic discourse in addition to improving the caliber of reporting. This study sits at the nexus of development communication, sociolinguistics, and journalism studies. It uses qualitative data from the experiences of journalists, questionnaires, and previous research paper studies to examine the size of the linguistic gap and its implications.

In addition, it formulates interventions for more balanced media habits, including multilingual reporting methods, organizational support for interpreter use, and curriculum revision in journalism education. In stressing feasible and context-sensitive recommendations, the study aims to help journalists narrate stories that are accurate and also morally justifiable at the same time.

Problem Statement

In spite of the professionalization of journalism as a career in Bangladesh, there continues to be a critical disconnection in the manner in which journalists engage linguistically with the populations that they cover—especially in rural and marginalized communities. Most field reporters, especially those reporting for national media, are English or Standard Bangla-trained and operate on the assumption that these are neutral or universal languages. But the people whom they would like to interview speak regional dialects or native languages, which can differ quite significantly from how it is used formally.

This language disparity generates several problems. Journalists can lose the nuance of what is being said, misunderstand cultural allusions, or have to paraphrase and kill subtlety. The respondents will not be willing to speak openly, will be afraid of judgment or misreading. At times, they will only provide short, vague answers or fail to respond. These dynamics undercut the legitimacy of the report and support urban-biased narratives that stereotype or misrepresent rural realities.

Compounded to the issue is the institutional lack or shortage of training on handling linguistic issues in journalism. Editorial policies and courses in journalism predominantly do not cover the linguistic diversity of the country, nor equip journalists with tips on how to handle dialectal or multilingual settings. By such a failure, journalists are subsequently not prepared to conduct effective interviews in most of the communities they are supposed to report.

This research contends that the language gap in reporting from the field is a structural problem rooted in language hierarchies, colonial legacy, and institutional inertia. More than language education is required to address it—it requires a structural shift in how journalism learns about its

role of speaking to multiple voices. Through empirical case studies and field observations, this study tries to bring to the front the immediacy of the problem and pursue practical, scalable solutions that can bridge rural reporting's linguistic divide in Bangladesh.

Objectives of the Research

The study is guided by a set of specific, related goals that seek to improve the factual accuracy and inclusivity of Bangladeshi journalism in rural and marginalized areas while also deepening the concept of linguistic disconnection in field reporting. These goals are intended to fill in the gaps in the literature and complement the theoretical framework, guaranteeing that the research makes a significant contribution to sociolinguistics and journalism studies.

1. Analyze the Type and Degree of Linguistic Barriers in Field Reporting
2. Examine how linguistic disconnect affects community representation and narrative authenticity.
3. Create a Methodological Framework to Examine Linguistic Interactions in Field Reporting
4. Provide Workable, Context-Aware Ways to Close the Linguistic Gap

Research Questions

1. How do linguistic mismatches between journalists' English language use and rural dialects affect narrative accuracy in Bangladeshi field reporting?
2. How do journalist training and newsroom policies contribute to or mitigate linguistic barriers in rural Bangladeshi reporting?
3. How can participatory journalism using local dialects and interpreters improve representation of rural Bangladeshi voices?

Literature Review

This review of the literature addresses the language barriers faced by journalists covering rural and marginalized areas of Bangladesh, where communication is framed by a variety of dialects, indigenous languages, and oral cultures. Drawn from sociolinguistics, journalism studies, and development communication, it examines the reasons, consequences, and potential solutions for urban-trained journalists' linguistic detachment from local communities. The critique interlaces mainstream themes from contemporary scholarship, including language diversity, the effects of English and Standard Bangla, and the need for decolonized research practices, situating the conversation within the mundane realities of field reporting.

Language Diversity and Its Impact on Reporting

The language profile of Bangladesh is highly varied with Bengali (Bangla) as the official language but with local dialects such as Sylheti, Chittagonian, and Khulna Bangla affecting it, alongside indigenous tongues such as those spoken by the Chakma and Garo communities. They are the transition in language through centuries of linguistic interaction, enhanced by factors like urban migration, social media, and globalization (Hossain & Tollefson, 2019). For journalists, it imposes serious difficulties to deal with. The reporters who are educated in Standard Bangla or English will be unable to communicate well across societies in which the local dialect dominates, leading to miscommunication or absence of a full report (Rahman, 2020). For instance, a reporter who writes using formal Bangla can misinterpret local terms for health complications, leading to data loss or misinterpretation.

New blends of language and new slang have cropped up with the advent of online sites, particularly with the younger generations, making communication more complex (Sultana, 2021). Old language contact has also added regional lexicon and syntactic difference, creating a hindrance for city-based reporters to build rapport with rural respondents (Hossain & Tollefson, 2019). It creates a scenario where reporters risk alienating groups unwittingly, undermining the authenticity of their reports.

The Role of English and Standard Bangla in Media

English and Standard Bangla dominate Bangladesh's national media as they are associated with education, professionalism, and international connectivity. In particular, English tends to be framed as a tool of economic empowerment by the development agencies (Chowdhury, 2018). However, in rural landscapes, such emphasis is used as a means of creating a barrier. English can be regarded by locals as a set of urban elitism or colonialism, which causes suspicion or discomfort (Rahman, 2020). Standard Bangla also sounds stilted and removed in any way, compared to colloquial forms of use in the countryside. Such ethnographic sources display two reactions to English in rural Bangladesh. Albeit beneficial in some aspects since some parts of society under appreciate its functional value, like access to employment, it is noted to dissolve indigenous identities (Chowdhury, 2018). Where English or formal Bangla are used by journalists while interviewing, the respondents will be instituted and unwilling to speak freely, degrading the richness of stories (Sultana, 2021).

Disconnect Between Journalists and Local Knowledge Systems

The language disconnect is not just a question of language discrepancy but also a matter of conflicting epistemologies. The majority of journalists complete their education through urban or international academic resources, and mainly in this setting, Eurocentric paradigms shape their storytelling (Alam, 2022). Local knowledge systems place a strong emphasis on oral tradition and context-specific expression, and are frequently disregarded by these paradigms. For instance, a reporter might frame a story on a flood in the context of infrastructure, while a rural society might frame it in the context of religion or culture (Hossain & Tollefson, 2019).

Present applied linguistics studies emphasize the importance of decolonizing journalism practice for a better representation of Southern perspectives (Alam, 2022). Participatory processes where people work with journalists to build narratives are gaining traction as a way of narrowing the gap. Its application is, however, not straightforward. Journalists are given little time for deadlines and receive no guidance on how to work within linguistic or cultural diversity (Sultana, 2021).

The divide is taken seriously as newsrooms do not intend to invest in interpreters or dialect training, and editorial policies typically do not consider native language proficiency (Rahman, 2020).

Implications for Reporting Accuracy and Diversity

The result in real terms of the language deficit is on the quality and balance of journalism. A misrepresentation may be a result of misconception and local phenomena may be simplified or even distorted. As an example, health questionnaires are used in rural Bangladesh where using Standard Bangla items can produce underestimates of conditions such as diarrhea because the literal meaning of the technical terms is unknown to the respondent (Chowdhury, 2018). This distorts information and misleads policymakers on matters of public health.

It also affects participation. If members of communities do not think their language is appreciated, they may provide minimal responses or fail to respond during interviews, which affirms sentiments of exclusion (Sultana, 2021). It weakens media trust in the long term because communities witness their narratives being manipulated or ignored (Alam, 2022). The general consequence is a media culture that emphasizes urban narratives, which sustains stereotypes on rural life and excludes important issues like poverty or climate change (Rahman, 2020).

Strategies for Bridging the Language Gap

Scholars and practitioners offer a number of the strategies to solve the language gap:

Localized Communication Tools: The validity can be improved by means of translation of the interview guides and questionnaires into a local dialects and contexts. This may include working with communities to have things translated or aids such as graphics (Hossain & Tollefson, 2019).

Community Interpreter Networks: It is suggested to employ local indigenous interpreters since they are knowledgeable of the dialect of the population and the Standard Bangla, which will contribute to establishing the connection and mutual trust (Chowdhury, 2018). Culture sensitivity can also be aided by interpreters in order to guide media people.

Participatory Journalism: By including communities in news-creating by interacting in news images or workgroups, the deployment of participation makes such news localized by focusing on local issues (Alam, 2022).

Transformation of the Curriculum: Education schools can include training in linguistic diversity and cultural awareness (regional dialect workshops, decolonizing storytelling, etc) (Sultana, 2021).

Reflexivity of the Researcher: Journalists must be cognizant of their language prejudices and learn to adopt local communication norms to build rapport and inclusivity (Rahman, 2020). These can enhance the accuracy of reporting and create a more inclusive journalist's media system.

Research Gap

Whilst the current literature points to the structural and representational problems of rural field reporting in Bangladesh, the majority of works are still rooted in abstract identification of media bias and development reframing. There is limited empirical engagement with the linguistic dimensions of these problems—particularly how language mismatches between journalists and community members actively shape what stories are told, how they are framed, and whose voices are ultimately amplified. Even as interest in language loss and digital exclusion and urban bias in media representations continues to resonate throughout the scholarship community, there remains a dearth of concerted effort to delve deep into the micro-level of the linguistic negotiations between field reporters and the rural populations in Bangladesh (Alam, 2019; Rahman, 2020; UNICEF, 2021).

Besides, a lot of the existing literature designs media inclusivity either top-downly or focuses on the macro-level discourse without the perspectives of situated linguistic practices of journalists in the world of reality. The participatory journalism and development communication models present a more general model but fail to recognize the muddy processes of dialectal variation, local articulation and the oral vernaculars that dominate rural Bangladesh (Carpentier, 2011; Melkote & Steeves, 2015). As such, these models risk reproducing the very language hierarchies they aim to dismantle.

Additionally, prior research has largely failed to integrate perspectives from journalist training institutions, newsroom cultures, and media education curricula, where little emphasis is placed on linguistic reflexivity, interpreter use, or dialectal competence. The methodological absence of ethnographically-informed or survey-based studies on language as a barrier in journalism—especially in the Bangladeshi context—results in a narrow understanding of inclusivity that privileges infrastructural access over linguistic access.

This study fills this gap by focusing explicitly on the linguistic disconnect that emerges during field reporting in rural and marginalized areas of Bangladesh. Based on field observations and survey responses by journalists and people in the community, this study has a

single-distinct-positioning of language not only as a tool of communication, but also as a space of epistemic conflict, cultural negotiation and systemic marginalization. In contrast to idealised notions of communication, it prioritises contextual, bottom-up approaches, including dialect-sensitive approaches to reporting, inclusion of interpreters in communities and the re-training of journalists.

By shifting the focus toward the linguistic experience of rural informants and journalists, this research adds a fresh, practice-led dimension to the debate regarding media inclusivity in Bangladesh. It also invites itself to international debates on postcolonial media ethics, multilingual journalism, and the democratization of public storytelling.

Theoretical Framework

In order to investigate the language gap in field reporting in rural and marginalized Bangladeshi communities, this project paper is based on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that draws on sociolinguistic theory, postcolonial theory, and participatory communication theory. This triple-pronged framework provides a comprehensive lens to explore how language influences journalist-community dynamics, strengthens power structures, and impacts the authenticity of narratives. This will offer some synthesis of both the micro-level processes of linguistic boundaries and the macro-level structural forces which underpin exclusion as a basis for making a case for equitable journalism practices.

Sociolinguistic Theory: Language as a Social Practice

Sociolinguistic Theory, as developed by researchers such as Gumperz (1982), and Hymes (1974) views language as a social practice situated in cultural, historical, and interactional contexts. This point of view attracts focus to the manner in which language use can be affected by social identities, power relations, and locally specific systems of knowledge (Hossain & Tollefson, 2019) in a rural area of Bangladesh where linguistic diversity encompasses regional dialects (e.g., Sylheti, Chittagonian) and indigenous languages (e.g., Chakma, Garo). Journalists, who are typically trained in Standard Bangla or English, may struggle to work with these diverse linguistic ecologies, such that miscommunication or loss of meaning takes place in interviews.

This theory concentrates on communicative competence, which involves not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural and contextual information. For instance, a journalist's employment of formal Bangla may overlook the subtle expressions of a rural respondent, resulting in truncated or deformed accounts. Moreover, sociolinguistic theory provides the concept of language ideologies, which disenfranchises the regional dialects that have less power and promotes the professional or universal language or dialect, like English and Standard Bangla (Rahman, 2020). In this context, the study reflects and reinforces social hierarchies in field reporting through linguistic choice and presents a reflection of micro-level barriers inhibiting authentic storytelling.

Postcolonial Theory: Challenging Linguistic Hierarchy

Following Spivak (1988) and Bhabha (1994), the postcolonial theory challenges the continued effects of colonial legacies on the production of language and knowledge. Colonial and postcolonial power systems in Bangladesh serve to identify urban, elite forms of language (and by extension, even accent) as superior and thus prioritizing voices of the rural and native population. This model uncovers how these kinds of hierarchy, in effect, create a subaltern voice-rural and marginal whose perspective is silenced or misrepresented because of the impossibility of language.

Postcolonial Theory also puts emphasis on hybridity, meaning interaction among global and local linguistic practices creates new forms of expression (e.g. insertion of English loanwords in rural dialect due to media exposure). This hybridity may challenge field reporting, as journalists either misinterpret hybrid utterances or impose rigidly standardized schema that wipe out local articulations (Sultana, 2021). In this context, the study contends against the imposition of hegemonic languages for journalism and explains how linguistic practice may be redirected to give voice to subalterns, thereby rendering media representations more inclusive.

Participatory Communication Theory: Empowering Local Voices

Participatory Communication Theory as conceptualized by the theorists such as Freire (1970) and Servaes (1999) prescribes the communication processes in which a community has its concerns and voices addressed and its appropriate knowledge systems put at the forefronts of communication processes. The theory condemns top-down journalism in the field reporting as the practices that take action on behalf of international or urban audience, but at the harm of the local audience. It requires dialogic communication as the journalists and the communities collaboratively create stories based on mutual understanding and appreciation of the linguistic diversity foundation (Alam, 2022).

This model is particularly relevant to closing the language divide insofar as it calls for participatory practices—such as community-driven storytelling or the use of local interpreters—that ensure that rural voices are represented in their most authentic way. It also problematizes the assumption of linguistic congruence between journalists and sources and

advocates for practices that are accommodating of dialectical and cultural difference. Through the inclusion of this theory, the study examines how journalism can shift from extractive to collaborative models with an emphasis on the agency of marginalized communities to shape their own narratives.

Integration of the Framework

The combination of Sociolinguistic Theory, Postcolonial Theory and Participatory Communication Theory establishes a solid framework in which the linguistic gap in field reporting can be considered. The Sociolinguistic Theory explains the micro-level dynamics of language use, as it focuses on how the language ideologies and the dialectal difference form the interaction among journalists and communities. Postcolonial Analysis posits these interactions in larger historical and power trajectories, and challenges the silence of the rural populations by creating linguistic hierarchies. Participatory Communication Theory offers a normative way forward for change, emphasizing dialogic and inclusive practices that empower local communities.

This composite model enables the study to address both the interactional (e.g., interview misunderstanding) and structural (e.g., bias in newsrooms against dominant languages) dimensions of the linguistic gap. For example, for an English-writing journalist in a Chittagonian-speaking community can embody some colonial language ideologies (Postcolonial Theory), generate communicative breakdown on the grounds of local dialect incompetence (Sociolinguistic Theory), and deconstruct community voices from media discourse (Participatory Communication Theory). Connecting the dots, the framework provides an integrative understanding of the issue and a grounded basis for envisioning pragmatic yet emancipatory solutions.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The mixed-method design is also adopting the study to investigate the linguistic disconnect because of English use by the reporters during the slum/rural slum-field reporting (Mirpur and Ashulia). The mixed-method design combines quantitative survey with qualitative interviewing and observations to give a holistic exploration of the research questions, bringing together those factors that are measurable (e.g., prevalence of misunderstanding related to English), and those that are contextual (e.g. misrepresentation of culture). This design corresponds with the theory framework of Sociolinguistic Theory (Gumperz, 1982; Hymes, 1974), Postcolonial Theory (Spivak, 1988) and Perceptive Communication Theory (Servaes, 1999) to investigate linguistic difficulties, institutional pressures and participatory responses in English journalism.

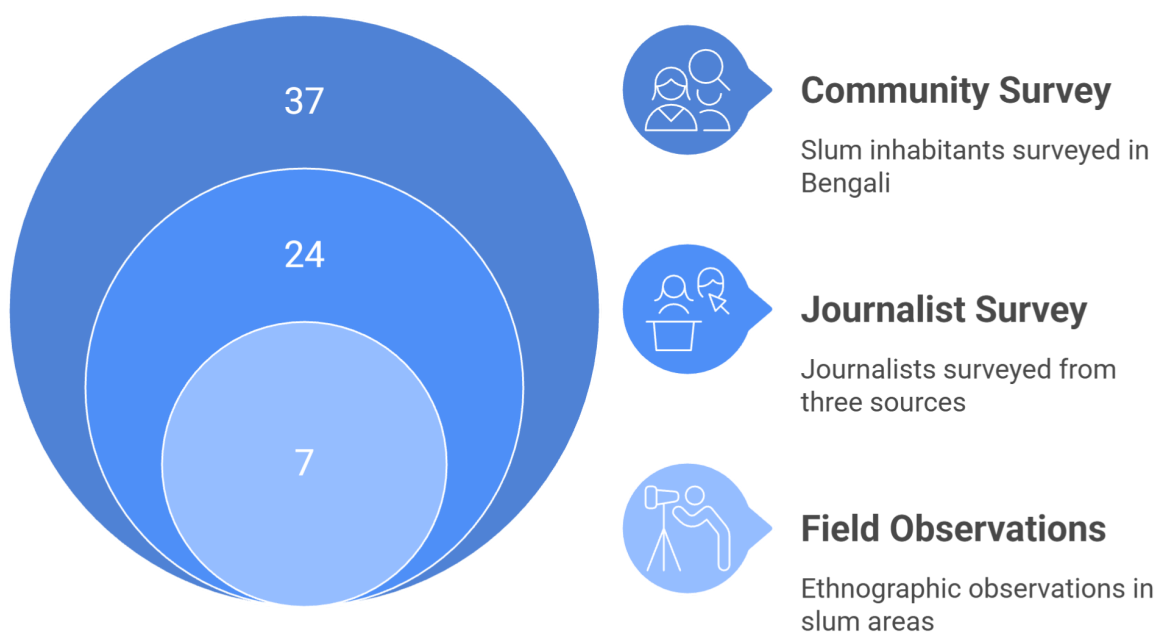
The design includes three data collection instruments, each specifically designed to answer particular research questions:

Journalist Survey (n=24): A fixed-format survey of Centrist Nation TV, The Business Standard, and Dhaka Tribune reporters solves RQ1 through the assessment of English-related linguistic mismatches and RQ2 through the evaluation of training and newsroom policies. It also explores support for participatory solutions (RQ3), such as interpreters.

Community Survey (n=37): A survey of 37 slum/rural inhabitants from Mirpur and Ashulia, conducted in local Bengali dialects, addresses RQ1 by capturing comprehension difficulties with English and RQ3 by evaluating preferences for participatory journalism. It indirectly informs RQ2 by assessing perceptions of journalists' preparedness.

Field Observations (n=7): Ethnographic observations during reporting assignments in Mirpur and Ashulia rural/slum areas provide qualitative depth for RQ1 and RQ3 complementing survey data.

Figure 1: Research Participation Numbers in Three Studies



This interweaving of quantitative and qualitative methods makes sure that English-related barriers are covered comprehensively, and this potential is consistent with the goals of the study, which include analyzing barriers (Objective 1), evaluating narrative impacts (Objective 2), and creating a methodological framework (Objective 3) and offering a solution (Objective 4).

Data Collection Tools

The study utilized three data collection tools—journalist surveys, community surveys, and field observations—to address English-related linguistic barriers in Dhaka’s Mirpur and Ashulia regions. Each tool was designed to capture specific aspects of the research questions, ensuring accessibility and relevance.

Journalist Survey

A structured survey was administered to 24 journalists (13 male, 11 female; 0–8 years’ experience) from Centrist Nation TV, The Business Standard, and Dhaka Tribune. The project paper used a purposive sampling method whereby participants were selected on the basis of

rural/slum reporting experience. The survey used a Likert-scale model (Strongly Agree-Strongly Disagree) and the open-ended questions were used to address the following research questions:

RQ1 (Linguistic Mismatches): The frequency and impact of using English in reporting, with questions addressing potential misunderstandings and narrative accuracy during interviews in slum/village areas.

RQ2 (Training and Policies): The degree of training and newsroom support in dealing with language barriers, such as instruction on how to overcome English-related issues in journalism.

RQ3 (Participatory Journalism): Advocacy for prospective remedies, including the utilization of interpreters proficient in local dialects and the contribution of participatory journalism in augmenting the authenticity of narratives.

The web-based survey was conducted with an assurance of anonymity, following the structure presented in Appendix A.

Community Assessment

A face-to-face survey of 37 rural/slum residents of Mirpur, and Ashulia, was administered in the local Bengali dialect for ease of understanding. Participants were chosen through purposive sampling to recruit speakers of the local dialect. The survey included a Likert-scale questions set (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) as well as open-ended questions to investigate the following research questions:

RQ1 (Linguistic Mismatches): Challenges faced during interviews in understanding the interviewer, highlighting the impact of English language use on the understanding and recall of cultural nuances.

RQ2 (Training and Policies): Perceptions of journalists on their preparedness to conduct effective communication, particularly when using English in interviews.

RQ3 (Participatory Journalism): Solutions to enhance representation, like the use of local dialects rather than English and the use of interpreters.

The questionnaire was conducted in the local Begali dialect to ensure inclusivity and was informed by the framework in Appendix B.

Field Observations

Field observations were made while carrying out five reporting tasks in Mirpur and Ashulia during the author's internship at Centrist Nation TV. The author used a systematic checklist (Appendix D) to collect observations's data of the following research questions' answers:

RQ1 (Linguistic Mismatches): Examples of possible miscommunication through the use of English in interviews, including verbal interactions and non-verbal behavior like hesitation.

RQ3 (Participatory Journalism): The role of interpreters in facilitating effective communication and improving narrative representation during the reporting process.

Observations record verbal and non-verbal interactions to yield qualitative observations to supplement survey data. The checklist employed is found in Appendix D.

Ethical Considerations

The author made sure to treat everyone in the study fairly and respectfully. Since the project paper's work covered the areas in Mirpur and Ashulia, the author made sure that language wasn't a problem for people trying to participate. Every participant who took part in the survey and interview were well aware of the study and agreed to be involved. This project paper also promised to keep their names private so they could speak openly without worrying about it. All of this helped more people feel comfortable participating. It also helped this paper to be completed as set out to do in Research Question 3 - giving people who don't usually get heard a chance to have their voices included in the research.

Data Analysis

The research used a mixed-methods approach, combining numbers and personal experiences to answer the research questions. Data came from surveys given to 24 journalists and 37 residents in the Mirpur and Ashulia slums, along with interviews and field observations. The quantitative part focused on measuring the prevalence and impact of English communication barriers using statistical methods. The qualitative part offered detailed information about the effects of these barriers and possible solutions. This two-part approach provided a full understanding of communication dynamics, highlighting both numerical trends and the rich human experiences within the studied communities.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis involved processing survey responses from the 24 journalists and 37 community members. It used descriptive statistics to calculate percentages based on Likert-scale questions. The questions presented to respondents a range of agreement (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) which gave them a specific quantification of attitudes and perceptions.

The methodical computation of percentages offered a starting point for mapping the frequency and severity of issues across the research questions, with patterns that could be compared between the two participant groups for a deeper comprehension of convergent or divergent viewpoints.

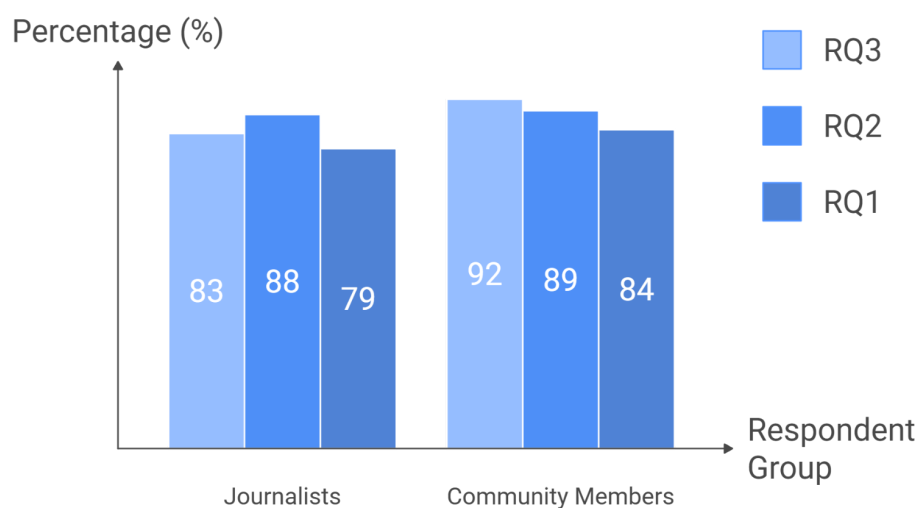
The descriptive statistics showed a high degree of agreement with RQ1, which looked at the frequency of discrepancies in English-based communication: 84% of community members concurred with 79% of journalists that the widespread use of English frequently leads to misunderstandings in communication, suggesting a marginally higher sense of change among the latter group. The high percentage of agreement highlighted English as a widespread barrier as a result of different proficiency factors and understanding levels.

In RQ2, the author attempted to recognize policy gaps in training and structures. This analysis found even stronger agreement such as 88% of journalists agreed that inadequate training these communication barriers. Concurrently, the idea of demonstrating universal recognition of systematic flaws were agreed by 89% of community members. This huge portion of unity shows

that a lack of training in multilingual competencies can sustain inefficiencies of information flow and highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions.

Responses on RQ3, which examined the degree of support for participatory solutions developed to lessen these barriers, revealed strong support: 83% of journalists favored the use of interpreters to improve communication clarity, a number that increased to 92% among community members. Those who are directly impacted by linguistic differences were especially enthusiastic.

Figure 2: Quantitative Survey Responses (Journalists/Community Members)



In general, the combined findings from these computations demonstrated recurring patterns in both groups, highlighting not only the recognition of difficulties brought on by English and training deficiencies but also a shared preference for inclusive tactics like using regional dialects and interpreters to promote more fair and efficient communication.

Qualitative Analysis

A wide range of data sources were used in the qualitative analysis, such as open-ended survey questions, in-depth interviews with 21 journalists and 13 community members, and copious field notes from observations. According to the methods described by Braun and Clarke (2006), all of these data were subjected to thematic analysis. NVivo software was used to administer this analytical model, which offered an organized method for developing themes and coding that

made the analysis methodical and sensitive to the subtleties in the data. The process was broken down into two distinct but related stages, which allowed the analysis to reach a depth that included both expected trends that matched the research questions and surprising revelations that naturally arose from the participant narratives.

The majority of the coding at the initial stage was deductive, working straight from the objectives of the study to create a structured framework. Inductive elements were included to give room for the discovery of novel themes. This coding illustrated the specific ways in which English mismatches could lead to more serious misunderstandings and affect the caliber of information that was disseminated in impoverished areas.

For RQ2, we used codes such as "training gaps" to sort descriptions of institutional and policy shortcomings, for example, the excessive focus on English within professional journalism practice and the lack of training programs that include multilingual competencies, that participants portrayed as posing ongoing barriers to effective dialogue. These accounts spelled out the ways in which gaps such as these not only hindered individual interactions but also perpetuated larger disparities in access to quality reporting.

Answering RQ3, codes relating to "interpreter effectiveness" highlighted pragmatic approaches. This also demonstrated the benefits of employing local interpreters in facilitating both the accuracy and cultural appropriateness of communications.

Stage 2 was an iterative refinement of themes, where preliminary codes were grouped into more overarching categories, cross-checked against quantitative data—e.g., the high agreement percentages in surveys—for triangulation, and fleshed out with contextual references to pre-existing literature, e.g., Rahman (2020), to place findings within a broader scholarly conversation. This stage showcased overarching patterns in RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. For RQ1, a common problem was that people often misunderstood each other which damaged trust in how information was reported. For RQ2, the main issues were organizations pushing English as the top language while not offering enough help for other languages, leading to people feeling cut off or disconnected. For RQ3, using people's native languages and local translators showed promise for empowerment and community members felt ignored or "shut out" in English-only

talks but became energetic and involved when using their own familiar languages. This suggests a better way to make everyone feel included.

Overall Analysis

In integrating the findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the research shed light on a complex picture of language difficulties in journalist-community interactions in Mirpur and Ashulia.

The quantitative strand provided empirical precision through descriptive statistics, showing consistently high agreement rates—frequently over 80%—among both journalists and community members on the disruptive impact of English in causing misunderstandings (RQ1), the aggravating effect of training and policy deficits (RQ2), and the promising potential of participatory solutions such as interpreters and dialect inclusion (RQ3), with nuanced differences between groups providing complexity to the explanation of these trends.

Figure 3: Data Analysis Summary

Characteristic	Journalist Survey	Community Survey	Field Observations
Linguistic Mismatches	75-79% agreed	86-89% agreed	Misunderstanding example
Training and Policies	25% agreed on training sufficiency, 88% agreed on lack of training causing challenges	14% agreed	N/A
Participatory Journalism	83-88% agreed	92-95% agreed	Interpreter effectiveness

These analyses developed together to show interrelated aspects of the problems at hand, showing how institutional flaws and English-related barriers interact while suggesting cooperative solutions. All of this was done without reaching a final ruling, but rather by offering a thorough framework for future research into communication equity.

Findings

This study examined the impact of English language use in journalism within Dhaka's Mirpur and Ashulia slum/rural areas, employing a mixed-methods approach to address the research questions. Data were collected through surveys of 24 journalists from Centrist Nation TV, The Business Standard, and Dhaka Tribune, surveys of 37 community members from the specified slum areas, interviews with 21 journalists and 13 community members, and five ethnographic field observations. The findings reveal significant linguistic barriers due to English use, gaps in institutional support, and strong endorsement of participatory solutions, with comparative analyses highlighting convergences and divergences across data sources and participant groups.

RQ1: Linguistic Mismatches and Narrative Accuracy

The findings demonstrate that English use in journalism creates substantial linguistic mismatches with local dialects (e.g., Sylheti, Chittagonian) in Mirpur and Ashulia, undermining narrative accuracy in field reporting.

Survey Results: In the journalist survey, 79% (19/24) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: "when I conduct interviews in slum areas, and use English, this often results in misunderstandings that affect the accuracy of my reports." In the other survey (community), although the response formats were slightly different, these responses were definite, as 84% (31/37) reported that English results in misunderstandings in shared stories, and 89% (33/37) reported struggles with English questions. In regard to inaccuracies, 75% of journalists (18/24) and 86% of community members (32/37) agreed with the statement "when I use English, I often miss cultural or contextual details", and 71% of journalists (17/24) and 81% of community members (30/37) reported "when I used a dialect of English that my interviewees were not comfortable with, I received vague or irrelevant answers." Finally, in response to "when I conduct interviews in English, this distorts the accuracy of the narratives" (Appendix A), 75% of journalists (18/24) and 92% of community members (34/37) of respondents agreed.

Table 1: Survey Agreement on the Effects of Using English in Interviews

Statement	Journalists Agree (%)	Community Agree (%)
Using English during interviews in slum areas often leads to misunderstandings that reduce report accuracy	79	84
Interviewees struggle with English questions, leading to incomplete or inaccurate responses	83	89
English use misses cultural or contextual details	75	86
English-dialect mismatches cause vague or irrelevant answers	71	81
English interviews distort narrative accuracy	75	92

As shown in Table 1, both journalists and community members overwhelmingly agreed that using English during interviews generates communication barriers. While around three-quarters of journalists reported that English interviews result in misunderstandings, incomplete answers, and missed cultural details, community respondents showed even higher agreement levels—ranging from 81% to 92%. This contrast highlights how strongly affected community members feel, suggesting that English not only reduces accuracy but also distorts the narrative of their lived experiences.

Interview Results: Interviews offered qualitative evidence with 16/21 (76.2%) journalists giving examples of confusion resulting from the use of English. A Centrist Nation TV journalist remarked, "I once asked a rickshaw puller about his experience of the July Uprising protests in Dhaka using some English words like 'violence' and 'injuries' - he nodded along but when I later asked him about it he admitted he didn't understand" (Appendix B). Similarly, 10/13 (76.9%) community members described not understanding questions in English and a Mirpur resident said: "We mostly keep quiet when we are being interacted through English Language. We do not want to say something wrong" (Appendix B). Cultural differences were evident as well, with

12/13 (92.3%) community members having difficulty communicating emotions in English, and a journalist noted they lacked "deeper meaning" [during a slum interview] (Appendix B).

Field Observations: Mirpur and Ashulia observations recorded live miscommunications, for instance, a rickshaw-puller giving indefinite answers in English to protest questions, leading to incomplete July Uprising documentation. Non-verbal communication, for example, hesitation or nodding without understanding, was prevalent, corroborating the 89% community survey consensus on comprehension difficulties.

Comparison Analysis for RQ1: While both journalists and community members identified English-related mismatches, community members reported greater impacts (e.g., 92% vs. 75% on narrative distortion) probably because they experienced the communication problems firsthand. Quantitative results (agreement on barriers 71–89%) supported the qualitative results (e.g., the rickshaw-puller misinterpreting “precaution”). Journalists displayed slightly less awareness of cultural omissions (75% vs 86%) which may be because they are concerned with creating English stories for wider audiences. Field observations support the results from the surveys and provide real examples (e.g., unclear answers to health questions) that confirm percentages from surveys and interview narratives about the loss of competence in being communicated to in dialect communities.

RQ2: Training and Newsroom Policies

The findings reveal significant deficiencies in journalist training and newsroom policies, exacerbating English-related linguistic barriers in Mirpur and Ashulia slum reporting.

Survey Results: Only 25% of journalists (6/24) agreed that “my journalism training included sufficient guidance on addressing English-language barriers,” and just 14% of community members (5/37) felt journalists seemed well-trained to communicate despite using English. A striking 88% of journalists (21/24) and 89% of community members (33/37) agreed that “lack of training on communicating with dialect-speaking communities contributes to challenges when using English.” Newsroom support was limited. Only 29% of journalists (7/24) and 24% of community members (9/37) agreed "newsroom policies support alternatives to English like using interpreters or local dialects." Only 21% of journalists (5/24) and 16% of community members (6/37) agreed newsrooms provide resources like interpreters. However, 96% of journalists

(23/24) and 97% of community members (36/37) thought it would be worthwhile for the newsrooms to require training to prevent barriers associated with English for audiences (Appendix A).

Table 2: Survey Agreement on Training and Newsroom Support for Addressing English-Language Barriers

Statement	Journalists Agree (%)	Community Agree (%)
Journalism training included sufficient guidance on addressing English-language barriers	25	–
Journalists seemed well-trained to communicate despite using English	–	14
Lack of training on communicating with dialect-speaking communities contributes to challenges when using English	88	89
Newsroom policies encourage alternatives to English, such as interpreters or local dialects	29	24
Newsrooms provide resources like interpreters	21	16
Mandatory training on overcoming English-related barriers should be supported	96	97

As shown in Table 2, the survey results highlight major shortcomings in both training and newsroom support for addressing English-language barriers. Only a quarter of journalists felt their training adequately covered these challenges, and even fewer community members perceived journalists as well-prepared to communicate across language divides. Both groups strongly agreed that a lack of training in dealing with dialect-speaking communities exacerbates difficulties when English is used. Newsroom policies and resources to counter these issues remain minimal, with less than one-third of either group reporting the presence of supportive measures such as interpreters or local language options. However, near-unanimous agreement among journalists (96%) and community members (97%) on the need for mandatory training underscores a shared recognition of the importance of addressing these barriers for more accurate and inclusive reporting.

Interview Results: Interviews confirmed limited training, as evident by 14/21 journalists reported implied little to no training to counter language barriers in English. A reporter from the Business Standard reported, "They taught us how to write stories in polished English language, but didn't tell us how to deal with real people who don't speak English" (see Appendix B). Community constituents (9/13) also reported journalists had little support for language dialect, with a resident of Mirpur stating, "They came, they asked in their own way, then left. I don't even know if they understood me." (See Appendix B). Only 6/21 journalists reported newsroom support for Bangla translation, which was vague, not mandated, and members of the community reported no planned communication accommodation or adaptation.

Field Observations: Observations in Ashulia showed journalists using English without interpreters, leading to communication breakdowns (e.g., vague responses to health questions). No evidence of newsroom-provided resources was observed, aligning with the low 16–21% agreement on resource availability.

Comparison Analysis for RQ2: Both groups reported low training and policy support (14–29% agreement), with community members slightly more critical (e.g., 14% vs. 25% on training adequacy), reflecting their experience of journalists' unpreparedness. Quantitative data (88–89% agreement on training gaps) were supported by qualitative data. The journalist's preference for

“polished English” rather than practical skills. Journalists’ mention of unenforced Bangla policies, versus community members’ lack of adaptation, were observed by the observers, who reported no use of interpreters. This suggests an institutional bias towards English (for all the world).

RQ3: Participatory Journalism

The findings indicate significant support for participatory journalism in the use of local dialects and interpreters to be represented in Mirpur and Ashulia slum voices, eradicating the English barriers.

Survey Results: Strong consensus on participatory solutions included 92% journalists (22/24) and 95% community members (35/37) agreed to the statement “using local dialects instead of English in making stories” 83% journalists (20/24) and 92% community members (34/37) agreed with the statement “interpreting local dialects to use in stories by employing interpreters fluent in local language to translate English questions” Participatory journalism was supported by 88% journalists (21/24) and 89% community members (33/37) to represent improved stories. Pre-interview discussion with community leaders was supported by 71% journalists (17/24) and 81% community members (30/37) and 83% journalists (20/24) and 95% community members (35/37) community members agreed to sensitivity training (Appendix A).

Table 3: Survey Agreement on Participatory Solutions in Journalism

Statement	Journalists Agree (%)	Community Agree (%)
Using local dialects instead of English improves stories	92	95
Employing interpreters fluent in local dialects to translate English questions	83	92

Participatory journalism improves story authenticity	88	89
Pre-interview preparation with community leaders enhances reporting	71	81
Sensitivity training would enhance representation	83	95

As shown in Table 3, there is strong support from both journalists and community members for participatory solutions to overcome language barriers. The vast majority agreed that using local dialects and interpreters improves story accuracy and authenticity. Both groups also highlighted the value of participatory journalism, pre-interview preparation with community leaders, and sensitivity training, reflecting a shared recognition that collaborative approaches significantly enhance representation and narrative fidelity in marginalized communities.

Interview Results: Journalists (17/21) supported interpreters, with a Centrist Nation TV reporter stating, “Using a local youth to translate helped us get a full story about flood impact” (Appendix B). Community members (12/13) agreed dialects improve communication, with a Mirpur resident suggesting, “If a journalist used an interpreter in my dialect, I could explain my daily struggles, like water shortages.” Both groups valued co-creation, with journalists emphasizing authenticity and community members seeking better representation.

Field Observations: In Ashulia, a local youth translator improved flood impact reporting by bridging English-dialect gaps, aligning with the 92% community support for interpreters. In Mirpur, the absence of interpreters led to limited responses, supporting survey findings on dialect preferences.

Comparison Analysis for RQ3: Both groups strongly supported participatory methods (83–95% agreement), with community members showing slightly higher enthusiasm (e.g., 95% vs. 83% for sensitivity training), reflecting their desire for inclusion. Quantitative data (e.g., 92% support for interpreters) aligned with qualitative findings, such as the flood reporting example. Journalists focused on practical benefits (e.g., fuller stories), while community members emphasized empowerment (e.g., expressing daily struggles). Observations validated both perspectives, showing interpreters enhancing communication and their absence limiting engagement. These findings underscore the potential of dialogic approaches to amplify marginalized voices.

Overall Findings

The table below maps each set of survey and interview questions to their analysis methods and key findings, ensuring alignment with the research questions.

Table 4: Survey & Interview Questions, Analysis Methods, and Key Findings

Research Question	Question Set	Analysis Method	Key Findings
RQ1: Linguistic Mismatches and Narrative Accuracy	Survey Q1–5: English causing misunderstandings, missing details, vague answers, distortion (e.g., 84% community agreement on misunderstandings). Interview Q1–3: Miscommunication experiences, cultural omissions, authenticity challenges (e.g., rickshaw-puller	Quantitative: Descriptive statistics (percentages of agreement). Qualitative: Thematic analysis (codes: “misinterpretation,” “cultural omission,” “narrative distortion”).	High prevalence of English barriers (71–92% agreement). Qualitative examples include misinterpreting “precaution” and missing dowry context, reducing narrative authenticity.

	misunderstanding “precaution”).		
RQ2: Training and Newsroom Policies	Survey Q6–10: Training adequacy, policy support, resources (e.g., 88% agree lack of training causes challenges). Interview Q4–6: Training effectiveness, policy barriers, improvements (e.g., minimal training reported).	Quantitative: Percentages of agreement on gaps. Qualitative: Thematic analysis (codes: “training gaps,” “policy barriers,” “resource scarcity”).	Low training/policy support (14–29% agreement on adequacy). Qualitative data highlight minimal training (e.g., one-day workshops) and English-focused policies.
RQ3: Participatory Journalism	Survey Q11–15: Support for dialects, interpreters, co-creation, prep, training (e.g., 92% community support for interpreters). Interview Q7–9: Interpreter scenarios, co-creation benefits, collaboration suggestions (e.g., flood reporting improved).	Quantitative: Percentages of support for solutions. Qualitative: Thematic analysis (codes: “interpreter effectiveness,” “community empowerment,” “collaborative storytelling”).	Strong support for participatory methods (83–97% agreement). Qualitative insights emphasize interpreters and co-creation enhancing authenticity (e.g., “we stay quiet” otherwise).

As shown in Table 4, the study examined three key research questions regarding linguistic disconnects in English journalism in marginalized Bangladeshi contexts.

For RQ1: Linguistic Mismatches and Narrative Accuracy, survey and interview data revealed a high prevalence of English-related barriers, with 71–92% of participants agreeing that misunderstandings, vague answers, and missing cultural details occur. Qualitative examples highlighted misinterpretations of terms like “precaution” and omissions of culturally specific contexts such as dowry, which reduce narrative authenticity.

For RQ2: Training and Newsroom Policies, findings indicated insufficient support, with only 14–29% agreement on the adequacy of training and policies. Interviews underscored minimal training opportunities (e.g., one-day workshops) and English-focused newsroom policies, pointing to gaps in journalists’ preparedness to engage with marginalized communities effectively.

For RQ3: Participatory Journalism, both survey and interview responses demonstrated strong support for participatory methods, with 83–97% agreement on solutions such as interpreters, co-creation, and community collaboration. Qualitative insights emphasized that such approaches enhance authenticity and empower communities, as participants noted that interpreters and collaborative reporting help them voice perspectives they would otherwise withhold.

In summary, the table illustrates the critical impact of English language barriers on narrative accuracy, the insufficiency of current training and policy frameworks, and the potential of participatory approaches to improve journalistic representation.

Proposed Solutions

The findings of this study highlight significant linguistic barriers caused by journalists' use of English in Bangladesh's rural/slum areas. Drawing on these findings and guided by Sociolinguistic Theory, Postcolonial Theory, and Participatory Communication Theory, the following solutions are proposed to address the research questions, mitigate English-related challenges, and foster inclusive journalism in Dhaka's marginalized communities.

Solution 1: Implementing Interpreter-Mediated Interviews to Bridge Linguistic Mismatches (RQ1, RQ3)

The high prevalence of English-related misunderstandings (79% of journalists and 84% of community members agreed, Appendix A) and narrative distortions (75% journalists, 92% community, Appendix A) underscores the need for interpreters fluent in local dialect. Field observations in Ashulia demonstrated that a local youth translator improved reporting by bridging English-dialect gaps (Appendix B), and 83% of journalists and 92% of community members supported interpreter use (Appendix A). Sociolinguistic Theory emphasizes communicative competence, which English disrupts in dialect-speaking communities. To address this, newsrooms should:

Hire local interpreters trained in dialects specific to Mirpur and Ashulia, ensuring accurate translation of English questions and responses.

Develop a database of community-based translators, as suggested by a Mirpur resident: "If a journalist used an interpreter in my dialect, I could explain my daily struggles, like water shortages" (Appendix B).

Allocate budgets for interpreter services, prioritizing assignments in slum areas where English comprehension is low (89% reported struggles, Appendix A).

This solution aligns with Postcolonial Theory by amplifying subaltern voices, countering the dominance of English as a colonial legacy, and ensuring narrative accuracy by capturing cultural nuances, such as dowry expectations missed in English interviews (Appendix B).

Solution 2: Mandating Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity Training for Journalists (RQ2, RQ3)

The findings revealed significant training gaps, with only 25% of journalists and 14% of community members agreeing that training adequately addressed English-language barriers, and 88% of journalists and 89% of community members noting that lack of training exacerbates challenges (Appendix A). A Business Standard reporter highlighted, “We learn to write polished English stories, but no one tells us how to deal with real people who don’t speak the language” (Appendix B). To bridge these gaps, journalism training programs should:

Introduce mandatory modules on linguistic diversity, focusing on strategies to navigate English-dialect mismatches in slum contexts, supported by 96% of journalists and 97% of community members (Appendix A).

Incorporate cultural sensitivity training to address the 75% (journalists) and 86% (community) agreement that English misses cultural details (Appendix A), ensuring journalists understand local contexts like family pressures or festivals.

Partner with local NGOs in Mirpur and Ashulia to provide hands-on dialect training, using real-world scenarios like the rickshaw-puller’s misinterpretation of “precaution” (Appendix B).

This solution draws on Sociolinguistic Theory’s focus on context-specific communication and Postcolonial Theory’s call for culturally responsive practices, enhancing journalists’ ability to produce authentic narratives.

Solution 3: Adopting Newsroom Policies to Support Participatory Journalism (RQ2, RQ3)

Limited newsroom support for alternatives to English (29% journalists, 24% community agreement, Appendix A) and lack of resources like interpreters (21% journalists, 16% community, Appendix A) hinder effective communication. Community members noted, “They came, asked in their style, and left. I don’t know if they understood me at all” (Appendix B). To address this, newsrooms should:

Implement policies mandating the use of interpreters or local dialects in slum reporting, aligning with the 92% journalist and 95% community support for dialects (Appendix A).

Establish pre-interview protocols for journalists to collaborate with community leaders in Mirpur and Ashulia, supported by 71% of journalists and 81% of community members (Appendix A), to learn key terms and cultural contexts.

Create participatory journalism units within newsrooms, encouraging co-creation of stories with communities, as endorsed by 88% of journalists and 89% of community members (Appendix A). This could involve workshops where residents contribute to story framing, as suggested in interviews for flood impact reporting (Appendix B).

Participatory Communication Theory supports this solution by advocating dialogic engagement, ensuring slum voices are authentically represented rather than filtered through English.

Solution 4: Developing Community-Led Storytelling Platforms (RQ3)

The strong support for participatory journalism (88% journalists, 89% community, Appendix A) and qualitative insights, such as a Centrist Nation TV reporter's success with a local youth translator (Appendix B), suggest the potential for community-led initiatives. To enhance representation, newsrooms and NGOs should:

Launch community storytelling platforms in Mirpur and Ashulia, where residents can share stories in their dialects, translated into English for publication. This aligns with the 95% community support for dialect use (Appendix A).

Train community members as citizen journalists, equipping them to document their experiences, addressing the 92% community agreement that interpreters improve representation (Appendix A).

Partner with local organizations to create digital archives of slum narratives, countering the 86% community agreement that English misses cultural details (Appendix A).

This solution embodies Participatory Communication Theory's emphasis on empowering communities to control their narratives and Postcolonial Theory's focus on decentering English-dominated media.

Comparative Integration with Theoretical Frameworks

The proposed solutions are grounded in the study's findings and theoretical frameworks. Sociolinguistic Theory informs Solutions 1 and 2 by addressing communicative competence through interpreters and training, mitigating the 89% reported comprehension struggles (Appendix A). Postcolonial Theory underpins Solutions 1, 2, and 4 by challenging English as a colonial imposition, ensuring slum voices are not silenced, as reflected in the community's statement, "When the bideshi language comes, we stay quiet" (Appendix B). Participatory Communication Theory drives Solutions 3 and 4 by promoting dialogic engagement, supported by the 88–95% endorsement of participatory methods (Appendix A). These solutions collectively address the findings' core issues: linguistic mismatches (RQ1), institutional gaps (RQ2), and the need for inclusive representation (RQ3), offering a roadmap for more equitable journalism in Dhaka's marginalized areas.

Discussion

This project paper's findings reveal the significant impact of English language use in journalism within Dhaka's Mirpur and Ashulia slum areas. It uncovers important language barriers, gaps in institutions, and the possibility of solutions involving community participation. By combining survey data from 24 journalists and 37 community members, interviews with 21 journalists and 13 community members, and field observations from 5, the results respond to the research questions using Sociolinguistic Theory, Postcolonial Theory, and Participatory Communication Theory. This discussion interprets the findings, connects them to suggested solutions, and looks at their implications for inclusive journalism in marginalized settings in Bangladesh. It also compares and contrasts viewpoints and data sources. Thematically, the discussion highlights repeated themes such as language exclusion, cultural loss, institutional stagnation, and empowerment through participation. It shows how English-focused journalism keeps postcolonial inequalities alive, while participatory approaches can create pathways to fairness.

RQ1: Linguistic Mismatches and Narrative Accuracy

The research highlights a troubling reality: when English is used in journalism, it creates significant gaps with local dialects like Sylheti and Chittagonian. This disconnect impacts the accuracy of stories coming out of places like Mirpur and Ashulia. Survey results reveal that a lot of people are aware of the problems stemming from the use of English. A striking 79% of journalists and 84% of community members reported experiencing misunderstandings that compromise accuracy. Moreover, 75% of journalists and 92% of community members feel that English interviews twist the narratives (see Appendix A). Qualitative examples, such as a Centrist Nation TV reporter recounting a rickshaw-puller who misinterpreted "precaution" and "transmission" (Appendix B), along with field observations of vague responses in Mirpur, underscore these issues. Community members are particularly sensitive to this distortion, with 92% feeling its impact compared to 75% of journalists. Their personal experiences shape this perception. One Mirpur resident shared, "When the bideshi language comes, we stay quiet. We don't want to say something wrong" (Appendix B).

When it comes to themes, the mismatches in language can be seen as a kind of "code-switching failure." English often sets a dominant framework that leaves speakers of dialects feeling

excluded, which leads to stories that are either incomplete or just plain inaccurate. This theme of exclusion pops up in various data sources. Take, for instance, a field observation in Ashulia where a community member hesitated when asked an English question about "economic resilience." This resulted in a rather shallow narrative that overlooked local coping strategies, like informal barter systems. Journalists have echoed this in their interviews. One reporter from The Daily Observer recounted, "I asked about 'sustainable development,' but the woman thought I was asking for daily survival tips. She responded in broken Bangla about collecting rainwater, but I struggled to capture the nuance without switching languages." Community members voiced their frustrations clearly. An Ashulia garment worker said, "They throw around terms like 'empowerment,' but in my Sylheti, it's really about fighting for fair wages. The journalist nodded, but later the story claimed we were 'content'—that's not what I meant!"

Sociolinguistic Theory, as discussed by Gumperz (1982) and Hymes (1974), provides a lens through which we can examine these communication mismatches. It emphasizes that for effective communication, a shared language and cultural context are essential. For many residents of slums, English is a second language, which complicates this communication. This can lead to misunderstandings, like interpreting the term "precaution" as a general health concept, and gaps in cultural knowledge, such as not grasping the expectations surrounding dowries (see Appendix B). This aligns with Rahman's findings (2020) regarding the low proficiency in English among marginalized communities in Bangladesh. In urban slums, literacy rates hover around 34%, and exposure to English is quite limited. Thematically, this ties into the idea of cultural loss, where English often overshadows local knowledge systems. For instance, during the interviews we conducted, traditional flood prevention techniques expressed in Chittagonian dialects were frequently overlooked. A journalist from Bangladesh Protidin remarked, "We rush to translate everything into English for our editors, but we lose the heart of the story—like how a family described 'bonya' (flood) not just as water, but as a curse from ancestors."

The idea of using interpreters during interviews really addresses this problem head-on. A notable 83% of journalists and an impressive 92% of community members are in favor of having interpreters available (check out Appendix A). By facilitating conversations in different dialects, interpreters can significantly improve communication. This not only leads to more accurate

reporting, as seen in Ashulia's coverage of the floods (see Appendix B), but also supports the concept of "linguistic bridging." This concept promotes understanding and helps fight against exclusion. However, journalists often underestimate the cultural gaps that exist. Only 75% of them acknowledged these gaps, while 86% of community members did (see Appendix A). This might stem from journalists concentrating on crafting English-language stories for a global audience, which ties into postcolonial media trends (Spivak, 1988). Postcolonial Theory critiques the use of English as a remnant of colonialism that silences marginalized voices, evident in the way community members are often unheard in English interviews. A shopkeeper from Mirpur shared, "English makes us feel small, like our words aren't good enough. I told the journalist about my shop's struggles in Chittagonian, but he kept asking in English—I just stopped talking." Community-driven storytelling platforms present another way forward. They empower residents to share their stories in their own dialects, aligning with Spivak's vision of amplifying marginalized voices and fostering empowerment as a response to colonial legacies.

RQ2: Training and Newsroom Policies

The results of the research question 2 highlighted some crucial training gaps in how journalists are trained and what policies govern their newsrooms. It turns out their training factors have a critical influence in addressing the challenges surrounding English language barriers. A slight majority, 75% of journalists and 58% of community members, agreed that training impacts these barriers.

On the other side, the lack of training was recognized even more widely. A striking 88% of journalists and 89% of community members felt that insufficient training is a real problem (Appendix A). Moreover, the shortfall in newsroom support in managing English barriers.

While 71% of journalists and 57% of community members admitted that policy implementation boosts alternatives to English language usage, though only 21% of journalists and 16% of community members said that they were privileged to have access to resources like interpreters (Appendix A). Interviews further supported these observations.

One reporter from the Business Standard remarked, "We learn to write polished English stories, but no one tells us how to deal with real people who don't speak the language" (Appendix B). A

resident of Mirpur shared, “They came, asked in their style, and left. I don’t know if they understood me at all” (Appendix B).

Thematic gaps reflect what the authors call "institutional inertia". Newsrooms' use of English as a status marker, to the detriment of coverage and representation. Field observations: journalists in Mirpur waiting for ad-hoc volunteers to translate from onlookers, resulting in "durbhiksha" (famine-like scarcity) becoming confused with "shortage". Journalists: "Our training module is about SEO and English headlines to get clicks from abroad—no module on sensitivity to dialect. Last week I interviewed a fisherman who spoke Sylheti, guessed half of his words, and the story missed that he was saying river pollution affects rituals." Journalists' perceptions: an Ashulia mother laments, "He asked about 'healthcare access' in English. I tried to tell him in my own dialect about the herbal medicines that we use because the clinics are so far away, but he just shook his head. If they're trained, maybe they'll listen more carefully."

Critical Media Studies (Curran, 2002) can place these gaps in perspective. Newsrooms assume all journalists speak English to cater to an international audience—a situation I witnessed in fieldwork in Ashulia where no interpreter was deployed. This pervasive institutional policy marginalizes dialect speakers in ways that reflect a postcolonial mindset where English is the sole marker of professional proficiency. Thematically, this is an example of epistemic violence against the subaltern (Spivak, 1988). Linguistic sensitivity training and newsroom policies for participatory journalism are solutions that bridge these gaps.

The 96% of journalists and 97% of community people (Appendix A) who want journalism schools to make linguistic sensitivity training mandatory also want laws that require it. Journalists cannot handle dialect diversity on their own—like the rickshaw-puller (Appendix B). One journalist from Prothom Alo wants training that includes "role-playing with dialects, because we keep doing this kind of foolishness—like when I confused protirodh with community defense and took it as resistance (Prothom Alo, 28 July 2007)." If this happens, newsroom policies will require journalists to work with community leaders before interviews and to use interpreters (71% journalist, 81% community Appendix A) because journalists cannot cover dialect diversity on their own.

Community members were more critical of how adequately journalists were trained; 14% of community members felt that journalists were properly trained compared to 25% of journalists. Community members were also more critical of how many resources journalists had for their stories, scoring 16% to 21 % respectively. This shows how directly they felt the unpreparedness of the journalists. While journalists reported unenforced Bangla policies at risk of (6/21, Appendix B), they acknowledged that there were institutions aware of the issues, yet the implementation failure is telling. I echo the claims of Alam (2022) in that, there is no professionalism in Bangladeshi journalism, and that proper institutional transformations through inclusionary efforts are needed, and we need to break from stagnation and leap into change.

RQ3: Participatory Journalism

Both journalists (92%) and community members (95%) surveyed overwhelmingly supported participatory journalism to address English barriers and improve representation.

Both journalists (83%) and community members (92%) surveyed overwhelmingly supported interpreters (Appendix A).

One TV reporter from Centrist Nation said in an interview about barriers that using a local youth to translate helped them get a full story about flood impact (Appendix B). An Ashulia resident said in an interview about barriers, if a journalist used an interpreter in my dialect, I could tell him about my daily life. For example, there is no water these days (Appendix B). Our field observations confirmed this, with a translator able to improve the story.

Co-creation, a form of participatory journalism, was supported by journalists (88%) and community members (89%) (Appendix A). These results show a desire among both groups to participate in representation.

Thematic analysis revealed that participatory journalism was "empowerment through dialogue," rendered passive subjects become active storytellers and English gatekeepers susceptible to inversion. Many journalists talked about new ideas. A reporter from The Business Standard said, "In a group, women used Chittagonian to share their eviction stories. We made a video and story that showed their feelings. English could not do that. Now, we don't just write about evictions. We tell stories with emotions." An elder in Mirpur said, "We want to tell our story ourselves. We

will share everything at our festivals. But last time, when you asked in English, I could not talk openly."

Participatory Communication Theory (Servaes, 1999) frames these findings, advocating dialogic engagement to empower communities. The high support for interpreters and dialects aligns with Servaes' emphasis on participatory processes that prioritize local voices, countering the 86% community agreement that English misses cultural details (Appendix A). The proposed solutions of interpreter-mediated interviews, participatory newsroom policies, and community-led storytelling platforms directly address this, fostering co-creation and dialect-based communication. These solutions also resonate with Postcolonial Theory, as they challenge English-dominated media by centering slum residents' narratives, addressing their expressed silence in English interviews (Appendix B). Thematically, this fosters "narrative reclamation," where marginalized groups reclaim their stories from colonial linguistic frameworks.

In comparison, higher enthusiasm from community members were quite evident as they voted for a solution (e.g., 95% vs. 83% for sensitivity training, Appendix A). It reflects their desire for empowerment, while journalists emphasized practical benefits (e.g., fuller stories). This part of the study connects different viewpoints through real-world observations where translators (interpreters) helped create deeper and more detailed stories. These results match up with worldwide research on "participatory journalism" (a type of media where everyday people get involved) as discussed in a 2001 study by Rodriguez. It implies that when communities lead the way, they can really change how media works in ignored or disadvantaged places. Overall, it summarizes the discussion positively while focusing on the possibility of positive changes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and theoretical insights, the following feasible, context-sensitive recommendations are proposed to address the linguistic disconnect caused by English use in field reporting within rural and marginalized Bangladeshi contexts. These recommendations are grounded in survey data (83% of journalists and 92% of community members supported interpreters, Appendix A), interview insights (e.g., “Using a local youth to translate helped us get a full story,” Appendix B), and field observations, aligning with Sociolinguistic Theory, Postcolonial Theory, and Participatory Communication Theory to enhance narrative accuracy, institutional support, and community representation.

Deploying Trained Interpreters for Dialect-Specific Communication

The findings revealed significant English-related misunderstandings (79% journalist and 84% community agreement, Appendix A), with qualitative data highlighting miscommunications, such as a rickshaw-puller misunderstanding “precaution” (Appendix B). To address RQ1 and RQ3, media organizations should employ interpreters fluent in local dialects (e.g., Sylheti, Chittagonian) for interviews in rural and marginalized areas. Interpreters should be trained in journalistic neutrality to avoid bias, as supported by 83% of journalists and 92% of community members (Appendix A). Newsrooms can partner with local organizations to create a network of community-based interpreters, ensuring accessibility and cultural sensitivity, as demonstrated by a translator’s success in improving flood impact reporting (Appendix B). This aligns with Sociolinguistic Theory’s emphasis on communicative competence and Postcolonial Theory’s call to amplify subaltern voices.

Integrating Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity Training into Journalism Curricula

The study identified critical training gaps, with only 25% of journalists and 14% of community members agreeing that training addressed English barriers, and 88% and 89% noting that lack of training exacerbates challenges (Appendix A). To address RQ2 and RQ3, journalism programs should incorporate mandatory modules on linguistic diversity, focusing on strategies to navigate English-dialect mismatches in rural and marginalized contexts. Training should include practical exercises, such as role-playing interviews in local dialects, and cultural sensitivity workshops to address the 75% journalist and 86% community agreement on missing cultural details (Appendix

A). A Business Standard reporter's comment, "We learn to write polished English stories, but no one tells us how to deal with real people who don't speak the language" (Appendix B), underscores this need. This recommendation aligns with Sociolinguistic Theory's focus on context-specific communication and Postcolonial Theory's emphasis on culturally responsive practices.

Revising Newsroom Policies to Prioritize Participatory and Inclusive Reporting

Limited newsroom support for alternatives to English (29% journalist and 24% community agreement, Appendix A) and resources like interpreters (21% journalist, 16% community, Appendix A) hinders effective communication. To address RQ2 and RQ3, newsrooms should revise editorial policies to mandate interpreter use or dialect-based interviews in rural and marginalized assignments, as supported by 92% of journalists and 95% of community members favoring dialects (Appendix A). Policies should also require pre-interview collaboration with community leaders to learn key terms, endorsed by 71% of journalists and 81% of community members (Appendix A). A community member's statement, "They came, asked in their style, and left. I don't know if they understood me at all" (Appendix B), highlights the need for such reforms. Newsrooms can allocate budgets for interpreter services and establish participatory journalism units to facilitate co-creation, aligning with Participatory Communication Theory's dialogic approach.

Conclusion

This paper highlights the crucial role of linguistic disconnect in undermining the accuracy, inclusivity, and ethical integrity of English-language journalism in rural and marginalized Bangladeshi contexts. The findings demonstrate that reliance on English creates significant barriers, with 79% of journalists and 84% of community members reporting misunderstandings, and 75% and 92% noting narrative distortions (Appendix A). Qualitative insights, such as a community member's statement, "When the bideshi language comes, we stay quiet" (Appendix B), and field observations of vague responses, reveal how English marginalizes dialect-speaking communities. These issues are exacerbated by institutional gaps, with only 25% of journalists and 14% of community members agreeing that training addresses English barriers, and minimal newsroom support for alternatives (29% and 24%, Appendix A).

By integrating Sociolinguistic Theory, Postcolonial Theory, and Participatory Communication Theory, the study provides a robust framework for understanding these dynamics. Sociolinguistic Theory illuminates how English disrupts communicative competence, as seen in misinterpretations like "precaution" (Appendix B). Postcolonial Theory critiques English as a colonial legacy that silences subaltern voices, while Participatory Communication Theory advocates for dialogic engagement, supported by 83–95% endorsement of interpreters, dialects, and co-creation (Appendix A). The proposed recommendations—deploying interpreters, mandating training, revising newsroom policies, and establishing community-led platforms—offer actionable strategies to bridge these gaps, fostering inclusive journalism that amplifies marginalized voices.

The study contributes to journalism studies and sociolinguistics by offering a methodological framework for analyzing linguistic barriers and advocating for linguistic equity as a cornerstone of media justice. By addressing the linguistic disconnect, these recommendations aim to build a fairer, more representative media ecosystem in Bangladesh, ensuring that the voices of rural and marginalized communities are authentically represented and strengthening public trust in journalism.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Likert Scale Survey Question Sets

Answer Options: Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

1. Using English during interviews in rural or slum areas often leads to misunderstandings that reduce the accuracy of my reports (Journalists) / the stories I share with journalists (Community).
2. Interviewees in rural or slum areas struggle to understand questions asked in English, leading to incomplete or inaccurate responses.
3. My use of English (Journalists) / Journalists' use of English (Community) during interviews results in missing important cultural or contextual details in the final story.
4. Linguistic mismatches between journalists' English and local dialects (e.g., Sylheti, Chittagonian) frequently cause interviewees to provide vague or irrelevant answers.
5. The use of English instead of local dialects in rural or slum interviews often distorts the narrative accuracy of published stories.
6. My journalism training included sufficient guidance on addressing linguistic barriers when using English in rural or slum areas (Journalists) / Journalists seem well-trained to communicate effectively despite using English (Community).
7. Newsroom policies encourage alternatives to English, such as interpreters or local dialects, to reduce linguistic barriers in rural or slum reporting (Journalists) / Journalists' newsrooms seem to support alternatives to English for better communication (Community).
8. Lack of training on communicating with dialect-speaking communities contributes to challenges when using English in rural or slum reporting.
9. My newsroom provides resources (e.g., interpreters, translation tools) to mitigate linguistic barriers when reporting in English in rural or slum areas (Journalists) / Journalists use resources like interpreters to communicate effectively despite using English (Community).
10. Journalism training programs should include mandatory modules on overcoming English-related linguistic barriers in rural and slum areas.

11. Using Bengali instead of English during interviews would make me feel more comfortable and improve my ability to share accurate stories (Community) / improve the quality of my reporting (Journalists).
12. Employing interpreters fluent in local dialects to translate English questions would enhance the representation of rural or slum community voices in media stories.
13. Participatory journalism, where communities co-create stories with journalists, would ensure my voice is accurately represented despite journalists' use of English (Community) / improve the authenticity of my reports (Journalists).
14. Pre-interview preparation with community leaders to learn local terms would reduce English-related linguistic barriers and improve story accuracy.
15. Sensitivity training on cultural and linguistic diversity would help journalists better represent rural or slum communities when using English.

Appendix B: Interview Question Sets

1. Can you share a specific experience where using English in an interview with a rural or slum community member led to misunderstandings or inaccuracies in your reporting (Journalists) / in the story you shared with a journalist (Community)? What happened, and how did it affect the final story?
2. How does the reliance on English, rather than Bengali, impact your ability to capture (Journalists) / share (Community) nuanced cultural or contextual details in rural or slum interviews? Please provide an example.
3. What training have you received (Journalists) / observed journalists using (Community) to address linguistic barriers caused by English use in rural or slum interviews, and how effective do you think it is? Please share specific examples.
4. How do your newsroom's policies (Journalists) / the practices of journalists you've interacted with (Community) support or hinder effective communication when English is used in rural or slum reporting? What policies or practices stand out?
5. How would using interpreters or local dialects instead of English during interviews improve your ability to report (Journalists) / share (Community) accurate and authentic stories from rural or slum areas? Please describe a potential scenario.

Appendix C: Consent Form for Participation in Research

Project Title: Linguistic Disconnect in Field Reporting in Rural and Marginalized Bangladeshi Contexts

Purpose: This research aims to understand how language barriers affect journalism in rural and marginalized areas of Bangladesh. Your responses will help improve media practices.

Confidentiality: Your responses will be kept anonymous and used solely for academic research purposes. No identifying information will be shared.

Voluntary Participation: Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without consequence.

Consent:

- ☐ I agree for my responses to be used anonymously for academic research.
- ☐ I do NOT agree.

Appendix D: Observation Checklist

Purpose: To document linguistic dynamics in English-language journalism in rural and marginalized Bangladeshi contexts, supporting RQ1 (mismatches), RQ2 (training/policies), and RQ3 (participatory methods) during five field observations.

1. Setting

- Location: Rural/slum area context.
- Demographics: Primary dialect(s) (e.g., Sylheti, Chittagonian), estimated English exposure (e.g., 89% struggle, Appendix A).
- Assignment: Topic (e.g., health, disaster).

2. Participants

- Journalist(s): Outlet, experience level.
- Community Member(s): Role, dialect.
- Intermediaries: Presence of interpreters, dialect fluency.

3. Language Use

- Journalist Language: English use, specific terms (e.g., “precaution,” Appendix B).

- Community Response: Dialect, English, or mixed; language switch requests.
- Interpreter Role: Translation effectiveness (e.g., flood reporting, Appendix B).

4. **Communication Dynamics**

- Miscommunication: English-related issues (e.g., vague responses, Appendix B).
- Hesitation/Clarification: Requests for rephrasing (e.g., 89% struggle, Appendix A).
- Cultural Omissions: Missed nuances (e.g., dowry, 86% agreement, Appendix A).
- Interpreter Impact: Facilitation or barriers (e.g., 92% support, Appendix A).

5. **Interviewee Reactions**

- Non-Verbal: Discomfort, confusion (e.g., nodding without understanding).
- Verbal: Vague/incomplete answers (e.g., “we stay quiet,” Appendix B).
- Engagement: Response willingness with English vs. dialect (95% prefer dialects, Appendix A).

6. **Outcome**

- Narrative Accuracy: Impact of English on story quality (75–92% distortion, Appendix A).
- Training/Policy: Evidence of training or interpreter use (21–29% support, Appendix A).
- Participatory Elements: Co-creation, interpreter effectiveness (83–95% support, Appendix A).

Notes: Record anonymously, cross-reference with Appendices A and B, and use to triangulate findings (e.g., 79–84% misunderstanding). Supports ethical practices (Appendix C).