The Routledge Handbook of English Language Education in Bangladesh

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David Nunan, *Professor Emeritus, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

"The period of borrowing language norms and pedagogical practices from Europe or North America is over. Even in English Language Teaching, local communities are defining their own norms and rewriting their history. *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Education in Bangladesh* is an inspiring example of local scholars researching, theorizing, and implementing educational practices their people need in terms of their rich linguistic and intellectual traditions. Beyond relevance to this country, the Handbook will provide a radical vision to other communities in the Global South on how they can define their own norms and pedagogies for English Language Teaching."

Suresh Canagarajah, *Edwin Erle Sparks Professor, Pennsylvania State University, USA*

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THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

This *Handbook* is a comprehensive overview of English language education in Bangladesh. Presenting descriptive, theoretical, and empirical chapters as well as case studies, this *Handbook*, on the one hand, provides a comprehensive view of the English language teaching and learning scenario in Bangladesh, and on the other hand comes up with suggestions for possible decolonisation and de-eliticisation of English in Bangladesh.

The *Handbook* explores a wide range of diverse endogenous and exogenous topics, all related to English language teaching and learning in Bangladesh, and acquaints readers with different perspectives, operating from the macro to the micro levels. The theoretical frameworks used are drawn from applied linguistics, education, sociology, political science, critical geography, cultural studies, psychology, and economics. The chapters examine how much generalisability the theories have for the context of Bangladesh and how the empirical data can be interpreted through different theoretical lenses.

There are six sections in the *Handbook* covering different dynamics of English language education practices in Bangladesh, from history, policy and practice to assessment, pedagogy, and identity. It is an invaluable reference source for the students, teachers, researchers, and policy makers interested in English language, ELT, TESOL, and applied linguistics.

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Edited by

Shaila Sultana, M. Moninoor Roshid, Md. Zulfeqar Haider, Mian Md. Naushaad Kabir, and Mahmud Hasan Khan

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FOREWORD

Reclaiming ELT in Bangladesh

Alastair Pennycook

This important *Handbook* suggests a coming of age for English Language Teaching (ELT) in Bangladesh. A new generation of Bangladeshi scholars is taking over the project, a process that is as much about epistemological and political change as generational shift. This is about taking ownership of ELT in Bangladesh, about gaining control of the ELT enterprise from its former Northern masters. A *Handbook* such as this shows us ways forward in thinking about ELT in Bangladesh and elsewhere, announcing that this is now part of a project of doing things on local terms, of provincialising foreign expertise, of viewing English as part of South Asian multilingualism, of working out how a critical, decolonial English Language Teaching project can serve local goals and aspirations rather than those of regional elites and external powers. There is much here for the rest of the world to learn about language policy, pedagogical practice, assessment, literature, identity, and economic development.

From Colonial English to English in Action

How did we get to this point? The seeds of English were, as elsewhere in South Asia, planted by colonialism. In Bangladesh, ELT receded in the years following colonialism and subsequent independence, as a struggle to create a nation from the mess of partition, and the dominance of Urdu-oriented West Pakistan, created a new emphasis on Bangla-oriented nationalism. English was, nonetheless, bound to creep back: English was delivered as part of the aid package to the impoverished country (Erling, 2017; Rahman, 2015); Bangladeshi elites were keen to ensure that they at least had had access to and control over this language of global power. As global politics started to shift as we entered the 21st century, Western powers sought to promote English to limit the perceived effects of Islamic education and to coerce poorer nations into a neoliberal world order (Tupas & Tabiola, 2017).

The massive *English in Action* project ('changing learning, changing lives') has been the most recent of many development-oriented programmes in Bangladesh, with its goals to change ELT in the country in order to ease the move into the global economy. The rise of neoliberal ideologies and practices sealed this progressive English creep: As limitations on English in schools were relaxed, English became a compulsory subject. An emphasis on human capital and participation in the global economy led to English being taught from an ever-younger age, with English being increasingly used as a medium of instruction, and a lure to private schools and universities. As

Bangladesh has sought to emphasise English as part of its ticket into a new status in the global economy (Hamid, 2016; Hamid & Erling, 2016), it has struggled to free itself from the tentacles of the Global North and its English-supportive institutions. The formal end of colonial rule by no means saw the end of *coloniality* (Maldonado-Torres, 2010).

English arguably remains the language of the Global North, not so much because its origins lie in geographically northern regions, but because it is so embedded in the institutions and injustices that the Global North has created that its prevalence and use cannot be separated from the political and economic forces that dominate the world. An English-speaking Bangladeshi elite is already closer to the Global North than to the Global South that surrounds it. In order to understand the localisation of ELT in Bangladesh, therefore, we have to keep our eyes on the broad horizons of global political and economic relations. English did not spread globally as if it had a capacity to take over the world without being pushed by many forces that saw an interest in its promotion, and pulled by many who also perceived value in acquiring it. The global spread of English, whether in Bangladesh, Japan, or Colombia, cannot be understood without an understanding of contemporary inequalities fostered by globalisation and neoliberal ideologies and the emphasis away from equity, welfare, and government spending towards privatisation, deregulation, and the rule of the market.

Neither, however, can it be understood without an understanding of the local conditions of class, religion, gender, and education that have an equal influence on what English is understood to be, who gets access to it, or who rejects its pernicious effects. These *entanglements of English* (Pennycook, 2020) draw our attention to the multiple levels and ways in which English is part of social and political relations, from the inequalities of North/South political economies to the ways it is connected to discourses and ideologies of change, modernisation, access, and desire. "Any discussion of English as a global language and its socioeducational implications", Rubdy (2015, p. 43) reminds us, "cannot ignore the fact that far from being a solution to the dismantling of 'unequal power' relations in the world, English is in fact often part of the problem".

The promotion, use, and teaching of English in contexts of economic development, military conflict, religious struggle, mobility, and tertiary access have to be understood in relation to the meanings English is expected to carry, as a language of progress, democratic reform, religious change, economic development, advanced knowledge, popular culture, and much more. These connections are by no means coincidental – they are a product of the roles English comes to play in the world – but they are at the same time contingent. They are a product of the many relations of power and politics with which English is embroiled. When we talk of English today, we mean many things, not many of them necessarily having to do with some core notion of language. The question becomes not whether some monolithic entity called English is imperialistic or an escape from poverty, nor how many varieties there may be of this object English, but rather what kind of mobilisations underlie acts of English use or learning. What is actually meant by parental demand for more English, state policies in favour of English medium education, test scores for English, media critiques of levels of English may differ widely. It is not English – if by that we mean a certain grammar and lexicon – that is at stake here; it is the discourses around English that matter, the ways in which an idea of English is caught up in all that we ineptly do in the name of education, development, and change.

Rather than the bland terms in which English is often framed – as a neutral medium of international communication, a language that holds out the promise of social and economic development to all those who learn it, a language of equal opportunity, a language that the world needs in order to be able to communicate – it is also an exclusionary class dialect, favouring particular people, countries, cultures, forms of knowledge, and possibilities of

development; it is a language which creates barriers as much as it presents possibilities. English language education may be quite irrelevant for many of the world's poor, and to argue that it might facilitate poverty reduction is to allocate resources away from where they are needed (Bruthiaux, 2003). Individually oriented access arguments – a person may have better job prospects if they learn English – have to confront larger concerns about education, class, and development.

While there is across the globe a huge popular demand for English and English-medium education, English language education has many deleterious effects, from the distortion of already weak primary education sectors (as English is increasingly promoted, other languages and areas of the curriculum suffer), to the further consolidation of disparity between urban elites and the rural poor (Ferguson, 2013). Ramanathan's (2005) study of English and Vernacular medium education in India shows how English is a deeply divisive language, tied on the one hand to the denigration of vernacular languages, cultures, and ways of learning and teaching, and, on the other, dovetailing with the values and aspirations of middle class Indians. A very similar case can be made for Bangladesh: While English opens doors to some, it is simultaneously a barrier to learning, development, and employment for others, deepening divides between the urban and rural, the religious and the secular, the wealthy and the poor.

Delinking English Language Teaching

The world Englishes (Kachru, 2005) and English as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2015) movements have both, in their own ways, sought to turn English into a language of the Global South. By insisting that English is the property of all, that ownership of English no longer rests in the hands of its so-called native speakers, that English can be understood as global, variable, and multilingual, proponents of these two related programmes have aimed to *delink* English from its origins and ownership and to shift the centre of English from the Global North. While both have arguably achieved some success in this endeavour – enabling many to see English as locally inflected, as no longer encumbered by conventional decrees, as no longer tied to particular speakers and places – such gains have only been partial. Neither framework provides the tools to engage with the political and theoretical *delinking* that is necessary to decolonise English (Kumaravadivelu, 2016). As Rubdy (2015) notes, we need to decolonise rather than just pluralise English as part of any emancipatory project. More politically engaged approaches such as linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 2009), meanwhile, have presented only a dystopian narrative of English domination, failing thereby to attend to the complex relations between English and its uses and users.

We cannot understand English in Bangladesh without detailed understandings of the ways in which English is embedded in local economies of desire, or ways in which demand for English is part of a larger picture of change, modernisation, access, and longing. It is tied to the languages, cultures, styles, and aesthetics of popular culture, with its particular attractions for youth, rebellion, and conformity; it is enmeshed within local economies, and all the inclusions, exclusions, and inequalities this may entail; it is bound up with changing modes of communication, from Facebook to text messaging; it is coupled to religious education, madrasas, and the choice between *din* (religious understanding) and *duniya* (material conditions). To understand the diversity of what English is and what it means in all these contexts, we need to avoid prior assumptions about globalisation and its effects and develop instead critical studies of the local embeddedness of English. We cannot therefore sensibly discuss ELT in Bangladesh without considering how all that is done in policy, practice, curriculum design, and assessment is connected to broader political and ideological questions. What are the wider implications of promoting an English-only

policy or encouraging first language use in a classroom, choosing between locally and internationally produced textbooks, deciding that 'furnitures' or generic 'isn't it?' is acceptable or unacceptable, choosing to work at a private language school or the state system, insisting on or ignoring the English spoken by so-called native speakers, assessing students according to grammars from elsewhere?

This *Handbook* marks, we can hope, the start of a movement away from particular forms of dependency (though not, of course, from questions of power and politics), a move away from a reliance on particular forms of English, practice or expertise. We would do well to question the linguistic, educational, and pedagogical ideologies behind "the one-classroom-one-language pedagogical straightjacket" (Lin, 2013, p. 540) that many current ELT approaches continue to endorse, and embrace instead a broader, multilingual approach to our classrooms. Rather than focusing so intently on English as the sole objective of our teaching, we can start to reimagine classes as part of a broader multilingual context, and indeed, following Motha (2014) to engage in a project of *provincializing English*. For a decolonisation of ELT in Bangladesh to occur, as in other areas of Applied Linguistics, struggles for social and cognitive justice (Santos, 2018) need to be combined with alternative ways of thinking about language, policy, teaching, and assessment that focus less on some putative variety of English and more on how English resources may be part of multilingual repertoires (Dovchin, Pennycook & Sultana, 2017; García, 2014; Sultana, 2014).

An emerging goal of ELT may be less towards proficient native-speaker-like speakers (which has always operated with a deficit-based view of language), nor towards proficient non-native-speaker-like speakers (which has equally accepted a problematic vision of ways of using English) but rather towards more fluid, polycentric understandings of resourceful speakers (Pennycook, 2014). This is not the polycentrism of a World Englishes focus, with its established norms of regional varieties of English, but a more fluid notion, based on the idea that students are developing complex repertoires of multilingual and multimodal resources. This brings the recent sociolinguistic emphasis on repertoires and resources into conversation with a focus on the need to learn how to negotiate and accommodate, rather than to be proficient in various varieties of English. It enables us to think in terms of ELT in Bangladesh aiming to develop resourceful speakers who are able to shift between styles, discourses, registers, and genres, and who can draw on multiple linguistic and semiotic resources.

Towards a *grammar of decoloniality*

While the idea of what counts as English has received a decolonising impulse from several directions – from World Englishes to postcolonial literatures – the methods of ELT have been slower to shift, linked as they are to major economic and cultural interests (Pennycook, 1989). Communicative language teaching – that harbinger of neoliberal times (Lin, 2013) – arrived in many countries with the experts and textbooks that were part of the neocolonial development package. The discourse of development that inhabits these programmes is a view that teaching methods in the South are outmoded, overlooking questions of contextual appropriacy, cultural practices, and the locus of the Northern gaze. Much that has been written on language in education in Applied Linguistics has focused almost entirely on how language is taught in the Global North, and how changes have emerged and developed in the North before spreading to the South. As critiques of the role of organisations such as the British Council in 'brokering English studies' in India (Rajan, 1992; Tickoo, 2001) have suggested, the tendency to assume that Northern knowledge and educational practices are both superior to and applicable to contexts in the South has a long and detrimental history. Phan (2017) makes a similar point in her critique of the

development of mediocre English medium education, as Western institutions sell their educational packages wholesale to regions of Asia.

A major challenge for a decolonised Applied Linguistics is to decolonise teaching methods and our understanding of them (Pennycook, 1989). Amongst other things, this implies engaging with the many other traditions of language education (and without inscribing them into the reductively 'traditional' of Methods discourse), in African, Meso-American, Asian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic educational thoughts and practices (Reagan, 2018). Everything in the classroom – from how we teach (how we conduct ourselves as a teacher, *mullah*, facilitator, organiser), what we teach (whether we focus only on English, on grammar, on communication, on tests), how we respond to students (correcting, ignoring, cajoling, praising), how we understand language and learning (favouring noise over silence, emphasising expression over accuracy), how we think of our classroom (as a site for serious learning or a place to express ourselves), to the materials we use (materials from the local community, government-provided textbooks, carefully prepared tasks), the ways we organise our class (in rows, pairs, tables, circles), and the way we assess the students (individually, collectively, in cognitive isolation or collaboration, against strict norms or in terms of varied language possibilities) – needs to be seen in terms of social and cultural practices that have broader implications than just elements of classroom interaction.

As southern theory and related movements start to challenge the epistemologies and institutional racism of the Northern academy (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020), it is becoming increasingly possible to present alternatives for how we can understand ELT in contexts such as Bangladesh. Drawing on the work of Mignolo (2010) and others, Kumaravadivelu (2016) stresses the importance of *delinking* from Eurocentric categories of thought, in order to *unfreeze* the potential for *thinking otherwise.* He calls for a *grammar of decoloniality,* a more useful idea, one might suggest, than a grammar of correct English, or at least something that every English teacher should see as equally important. He argues for the discontinuation of those patronising studies that seek to show that the non-native teacher can teach as well as their native speaker counterparts. What we need instead, he suggests, are "context-specific instructional strategies that take into account the local, historical, political, social, cultural, and educational exigencies" (Kumaravadivelu, 2016, p. 81). In the context of Bangladesh, this would mean not just other Englishes, and other forms of English literature, but other ways of teaching and learning.

Kumaravadivelu's (2016) argument makes clear that although some areas of Applied Linguistics have been subject to a decolonial critique, there is a very long way to go. We need to decolonise language pedagogy, and especially the teaching of "colonial languages that overcelebrate Eurocentric values while sacrificing ways of being and speaking of people who do not fit the white, middle-class mold" (Macedo, 2019, p. 12). "How languages are learned and taught, the political economy of the organisation of language curricula and language policies", Phipps (2018, p. 1) suggests, "favour the world's colonial and imperial languages". Both Phipps and Macedo ask how we can decolonise the field of foreign language education, its ideologies, languages, structures, and organisations. A *Handbook* such as this points to ways in which this can happen, as a new generation of scholars takes ownership of ELT in Bangladesh, showing how English language policy, pedagogical practice, assessment, literature, and identity can be rethought. This does not mean discarding all that has gone before but rather relocating English within a multilingual Asia, reclaiming ELT as a project in and of Bangladesh. Such a project makes it possible for wider audiences to learn from Bangladesh, to see that ELT in Bangladesh is a bigger and more interesting project than, say, ELT in the UK, that ELT practitioners and researchers in Bangladesh have much to teach the rest of us about many facets of English Language Teaching.

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PROLOGUE

The trajectory of the *Handbook*

The moment seems surreal for all of us. The *Routledge Handbook of English Language Education in Bangladesh* has kept us preoccupied for more than a year. We have spent numerous hours in meetings at the Department of English Language, Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka, countless emails with contributing authors from home and abroad, and many sleepless nights in reviewing and finalising the chapters. Finally, keeping 25 chapters on board and maintaining the pace for deadlines – when different personal and professional commitments have distracted them and us, and motivating our own selves when the progress was hampered by unwanted and unwarranted events – have altogether been challenging and daunting. That is why writing the Prologue to the *Handbook* and getting it ready for the final stage is overwhelmingly emotional for us. In this *Prologue*, hence, we intend to narrate our collective journey that has culminated in this special moment.

The life trajectory of the *Handbook* started quite casually. One of our editors (M. Moninoor Roshid) approached another editor (Shaila Sultana) with the idea of working on a book project together. Neither knew the other in person earlier – only that both returned from Australia to their home workplace, University of Dhaka, in different institutes (i.e. Institute of Education and Research and Institute of Modern Languages, respectively) after completing their PhDs and that both wanted to do something for English language education in Bangladesh. In 2018, they met again in a conference, where all of us were present – as a panel member, a paper presenter, or a workshop facilitator. We managed to have our very first meeting then and there during the lunch break and identified the possible nature of the *Handbook*. Eventually, we wrote the Call for Book Chapter (CoBC) and developed a book proposal within two weeks of the conference.

Within a month, the dice was rolled – the CoBC was circulated among possible contributors. We earnestly wanted the English language teachers and researchers working at various levels of the education sector in Bangladesh to contribute to the *Handbook*, share their experiences and perceptions, and make their voices audible. We received immense support and encouragement from our senior academics who are the forerunners of English language education in Bangladesh, namely, Professor Arifa Rahman, Professor Hamidur Rahman, Professor Dil Afroze Quader, Professor Rubina Khan, and Harunur Rashid Khan. Distinguished Professor Alastair Pennycook, University of Technology Sydney, Australia, also took a keen interest in the *Handbook* and agreed to write a foreword to it. Dr. Obaid Hamid from the University of Queensland, Australia,

who has conducted intensive research on English language education in Bangladesh and published extensively, also came forward and showed his genuine willingness to help us.

Meanwhile, we received a total of 72 abstracts from both home and abroad. Out of them, after a careful peer review, a total of 52 abstracts were selected for full chapter submission of which 45 chapters were received in time. Following a blind peer review process, a total of 25 chapters were finally accepted on the basis of the selection criteria set by the panel of editors. A formal book proposal along with the selected abstracts was sent to Routledge UK. We did have lots of apprehensions, fearing if we would be able to manage the mammoth task for a reputed publishing company like Routledge UK – a *Handbook* on the past, present, and future of English language education in Bangladesh – which had not been done before in Bangladesh. Katie Peace from Routledge pleasingly informed us that our book proposal initiated a discussion to have a series of handbooks on English language education in different Asian countries. We ultimately received the contract for the *Handbook* after a long spell of waiting.

This *Handbook*, nevertheless, was meant to happen. We all have met at the right time at the right turn of our lives. Five of us have recently finished our Ph.Ds and we want to contribute to the field of English language education and applied linguistics in Bangladesh with our insights developed from our intense doctoral research and publications. In addition, we consider it our responsibility to create a platform for the young academics and scholars in Bangladesh and encourage and support them to research. We are also respectful to the forerunners of English language education in Bangladesh. They have paved the way for introducing English language education in the 1980s in Bangladesh and have done the groundwork for us to pursue our academic and research careers in English language education and applied linguistics. Thus, we want the *Handbook* to be a collaboration of the experienced and budding English language educators from home and abroad, working in the context of Bangladesh. In this *Handbook*, we also expect to connect the past, present, and future of English education, develop a critical awareness about the emergence of the English language industry, and create a dialogue among ourselves for bringing about positive changes to English language learning and teaching and, in general, to the practices in Bangladesh. We also want to deeliticise the coloniser's English, so that it loses the power to marginalise some and empower others and the English language may be used to decolonise the society and education system in Bangladesh.

In addition, we intend to extend our support to young Bangladeshi potential academics and researchers who have just started their careers. We feel privileged to showcase their work, because they are conducting research without much academic support and are constantly challenged by contextual constraints and limited resources. We believe that the *Handbook* has created an opportunity to make the young researchers visible and their voices audible. We also feel the need for ensuring the availability of research studies done on English language education in the context of Bangladesh. On many occasions, we could not locate relevant research while we were doing our own doctoral research. Our experiences of researching and writing also indicated that only a few academics, researchers, and English language educators in Bangladesh publish internationally; locally published research journals are also not available online for academics and researchers located abroad; even when journal articles and books are available in local journals, they are based on theoretical constructs and conceptual frameworks from the 1980s and 1990s, which may not have relevance in 2020s; and finally, the research areas are usually limited to methods and approaches in English language teaching. In other words, involving the young Bangladeshi English language educators and researchers, we want to overcome the existing limitations and challenges and generate academic discourses about locally relevant and contextually appropriate English language teaching to ensure optimal learning experiences for our students in Bangladesh.

Moreover, we feel that the changing status of the English language and the nature of English language education in the local context need to be comprehensively presented, specifically because of the initiative taken by the Government of Bangladesh to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and the vision of a Developed Nation by 2041. Keeping the development agenda and the ambition of the government in mind and keeping in consideration the increased globalisation, mobility, migration, labour market, and the global and local economy, we also see the necessity of changing English language pedagogies and practices to identify the factors that may ensure the supply of linguistically competent human resources in Bangladesh for both local and global markets.

To put it in simple terms, we are aware that there is hardly any comprehensive book that covers different facets of English language education in Bangladesh for stakeholders, such as policy makers, language teachers, textbook writers and materials developers, academics, and researchers. We consider the *Handbook* the first constructive effort to address all the possible dynamics of English language education in Bangladesh, starting from English language education policies to curriculum design, assessment to socio-economic dynamics of English language learning and teaching. The *Handbook* is a complete reference book for English language educators, researchers, and policy makers, specifically for those who have interests in the South Asian contexts. In addition, the *Handbook* identifies the possible areas, which require our attention in terms of research in future. *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Education in Bangladesh* thus gives a bird's eye view of English language education in Bangladesh and provides directions to areas that require attention for further research in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

English language and English language education in the multilingual ecology of Bangladesh: Past, present, and future

Shaila Sultana and M. Moninoor Roshid

Introduction

The People's Republic of Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with an estimated population of 164.6 million (till 1 July 2018) living in 147,570 sq. km. It means that around 1116 people live in per sq. km (BBS, 2019). It is one of the developing countries as well, with 21.8% of its population living below the poverty line (Asian Development Bank, 2018). The adult literacy rate in Bangladesh is 73.9% in 2018 (BBS, 2019, p. xxxvii). Despite the stark realities that exist in Bangladesh, that it is a densely populated third-world country beset by problems of flood, famine, and poverty, Bangladesh is gradually developing itself through its steady growth through sustainable development – initiated and supported by the government of Bangladesh.

According to the World Economic Forum, the world is facing various challenges, including poverty, inequality, unemployment, underemployment, and skills gaps, and it is important to reach the UN's declared Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both the global and the government's main agenda is to achieve SDGs, ensuring poverty reduction, quality education, skills development, and promoting economic growth. In order to achieve SDGs by 2030, in the meantime, the government of Bangladesh has taken various visions (e.g. Vision 2021; 2041) and steps. One of the important steps of the government is considering English as a means of development to fulfil economic, societal, educational, and personal needs. However, English education in Bangladesh is encountering challenges for language policies, language curriculums and syllabuses pedagogies, materials, and assessment, which seem to be developed without considering the contextual realities of Bangladesh. This *Handbook* on English language education (ELE) has addressed those challenges and tensions and showed the future directions to policy makers, researchers, syllabus designers, material developers, and educators.

The introductory chapter to the *Handbook* provides a critical reflection on the historical development of ELE in Bangladesh. An overall view of ELE from the primary to the tertiary level of education in Bangladesh is given too. Then a brief summary of the chapters is outlined so that readers may navigate their ways through 25 chapters based on their areas of interests. The sections in this chapter address the main themes covered in the *Handbook*, namely history, language-in-education policy and planning in Bangladesh, English language curriculum reformation and pedagogical practices, assessment and testing in English language teaching

(ELT), teaching English with the aid of literature, language learning and construction of identity, and teacher education and English for economic development.

ELE in Bangladesh

Historically, English has changed its status over the years to become a significant language of the social landscape. Its presence can be explained with reference to three broad phases of the political history of Bangladesh, starting with the introduction of ELE to the Indian subcontinent by the British colonial empire. Historically, politically, and socially, English and Bangla have always occupied different hierarchical positions in terms of usage, and these hierarchies have progressively created a web of linguistic ideologies. The interrelationship between language and class has also been sustained and nurtured by educational institutions and practices. In addition, these practices have for centuries simultaneously created scope for resistance, transgression, and yearning for freedom and independence, while at the same time reinforcing inequalities, hierarchies, and linguistic, social, and cultural marginalisation. An understanding of these historical, political, social, and ideological dynamics is significant for unravelling the ways in which ELE has been sustained and taken different directions in the Indian subcontinent and later on in Bangladesh.

ELE in the Indian subcontinent (1835–1947)

Bangladesh, along with West Bengal, the province situated in eastern India, was historically a part of the Indian subcontinent. For nearly 200 years, until 1947, it had a similar colonial history to India under the British coloniser. During the reign of the East India Company for around 100 years till the earlier half of the 18th century, Bangla was one of the many languages in use in the subcontinent; others were Arabic, Hindi, Persian, Portuguese, Sanskrit, and more (Clark, 1956). During the latter half of the 18th century, when the British Government took over the management of the Indian subcontinent from the East India Company by passing the 'Government of India Act of 1858', English began to replace Persian, the language of the Muslim ruler, in all domains, including administration, law, and the courts. It clearly became the prestige variety of language and a key to success for the professional middle class, who wanted to be a part of the bureaucracy (T. Rahman, 1997). Moreover, the support of a group of local Indians, led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who were in favour of English education for learning more about the scientific and philosophical enlightenment of the West (Paranjape, 2013), made it easier for the British imperialists to promote English in education and government. In the region, Clark (1956) suggested that many of the upper class and probably the majority of the new middle class wanted to learn English for utilitarian motives, such as access to a profitable career. Their incentive grew stronger when Lord Bentinck opened more senior civil service posts to Indians. Therefore, Mazumder [as cited in (A. Rahman, 2007, p. 70)] stated, "English education was introduced into this country, not by the British government but in spite of them".

Interestingly, even though English education was restricted to the privileged few, it historically instigated social mobility and introduced a new kind of social hierarchy and power play that restructured class boundaries. There was a rise of bureaucratic and professional elites to positions which previously had been occupied by landed gentry. "The professional middle class, especially the bureaucracy, increased, and the state became the biggest employer. This meant that the language chosen by the state to run the bureaucracy was the key to power" (T. Rahman, 1997, p. 146). Expensive English-medium schools were established, which had a lasting impact on the socio-economic conditions within society. For example, the masses did not have access to chiefs' colleges which were established in the early 19th century on the model of the elitist British

public school system. The masses received their education in the vernacular, such as Bangla, in government schools. The aristocrats sent their sons to chiefs' colleges where they could "learn the English language, and [become] sufficiently familiar with English customs" [Raleigh (1906) as cited in T. Rahman (1997, p. 147)].

Only the sons of the princes of India were allowed admission to chiefs' colleges, whereas the sons of the professional middle class went to European or convent schools, which excluded most Indians based on birth or poverty (Clark, 1956). The cost per student to attend Anglo-Indian and European institutions was Rs. 156, while all types of institutions from a university to a primary school were only Rs. 14 [Education in India, 1941 as cited in. T. Rahman (1997)]. The vernacular Bangla gradually became the only language of government primary education, the Indian press, and the lower branches of official administration (Clark, 1956). Eventually, these two types of education gave rise to class-based hierarchies in the society: the anglicised elite, who were educated in English-medium institutions and held the powerful positions in the bureaucracy, and a class of people educated in the vernacular language, who aspired to and obtained subordinate positions in the lower bureaucracy.

The hegemonic role of English, sustained and nurtured by the vested interests of a class of people, had not been accepted without struggle, contestation, and conflict. Out of this segregation, for example, rose the anti-English lobby – the masses educated in the vernacular, who were considered appropriate for subordinate positions in the bureaucracy, while the powerful positions were reserved for Englishmen and elite English-educated Indians. Both the British monarch and the English language were officially displaced in 1947. Uprooting English overnight was, however, an ambitious plan when a segment of the society had been nurtured by the ethos of the British imperialist, driven by the utilitarian motives and ambitions of the collaborators in colonialism and by the presence of a new type of citizen who "saw his future only in the study of the English language and in the slavish imitation of Western manners" and pretended "that English was his own language" (Clark, 1956, p. 474). English was meant to prevail for generations even in the post-imperialist era.

ELE during the Pakistani period (1947–1971)

Strong resistance against and repulsion for the British ruler led to none of the countries in the Indian subcontinent – India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, or Nepal – selecting the English language as its national language, although English remained a *de facto* official language in the domains of administration, legal profession, and higher education. This was inevitable because political leaders and high officials were educated in English (Banu & Sussex, 2001a; Musa, 1989, 1995). It was also significantly important for the communication of the two wings of Pakistan – the East and the West, which had no common language other than English for administrative purposes. Note that Pakistan with its two parts, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan, was linguistically and culturally different, but was separated from the Indian subcontinent in 1947 on the basis of the dominant religion of those regions, Islam. There were also 1200 miles of Indian territory between the two parts.

The independence from the British monarch eventually proved to be significant for Bangladesh. The social and cultural significance of Bangla and the birth of Bangladesh are closely tied to the political events that took place during the Pakistani era. The political leaders, particularly Muhammad Ali Jinnah in West Pakistan, ignoring the fact that Bangla was spoken by 56.4% of the entire Pakistani population, announced on 21 March 1948 that Urdu, which was spoken by the dominant group in West Pakistan who represented only 3.27% of the population, would be the only official language (Maron, 1955). The 'one state one official language model'

was a new form of linguistic colonisation for the East Pakistanis, that is, Bangladeshis. The newly established Pakistan again started to splinter because of language. In fact, Bangla became the steering force for a political, historical, social, and cultural movement that united Bangladeshis to resist linguistic and political marginalisation by West Pakistan (Musa, 1996).

An attempt by the central government to enforce Urdu (the mother tongue of the West Pakistanis) as the official language and give preference to West Pakistan and West Pakistanis in the allocation of national revenues, development projects, and government posts violated the rights of East Pakistanis. The state-language controversies made the East Pakistanis realise that the privileged position of the British and the upper class Hindus had been occupied by the West Pakistanis. The West Pakistanis were the "non-Bengali imperial guardian" (Maron, 1955, p. 133), enjoying an upper status nationally, socially, culturally, and linguistically. It was another long-term process to relegate East Pakistanis to inferior status: East Pakistanis or Bangladeshis would be handicapped in competitive examinations and consequently would not be able to hold important positions in the bureaucracy. It was also a way of subordinating the majority by the minority (Maron, 1955).

This issue of language controversy started a language movement, as a result of which several students and citizens were killed by the police on 21 February 1952. Because of this nation-wide movement and loss of life, West Pakistan had to give due recognition to Bangla. Bangla was declared as a provincial language in the first constitution of Pakistan on 23 March 1956. The events left a deep scar on the relationship between the two provinces. The nations were eventually divided in 1971. Bangla, a significant marker of Bangladeshi identity since 1952, was revalidated in the Liberation War of 1971 and eventually led Bangladesh to independence from Pakistan (Musa, 1989, 1995). Bangla, which had been politically and socially afforded lower status than English during the imperial era, and again in relation to English and Urdu during the Pakistani era, for the first time achieved status as a politically and historically significant language in the independent Bangladesh.

ELE in the independent Bangladesh (1971 to date)

The People's Republic of Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in 1971. As one of the causes of the breach between West and East Pakistan was the legitimisation of the Bangla language and Bangladeshi nationalism, Bangla inevitably became the national language, as well as the official language – a symbol of national identity and freedom from oppression, exploitation, and subjugation (Musa, 1996). Klaiman [1987 as cited in Banu (2005)] identified that Bengali identity is neither genetic nor religious. The name of the country, Bangladesh, is made of Bangla and *desha*. Bangla refers to the language, not the people or the territory of Bengal, and *desha* means 'country'. With the new fervour of nationality, English was displaced, along with Urdu. Even though the bureaucrats were more comfortable using English for administrative purposes, Bangla was constantly favoured by nationalist leaders and ministers. The "anomalous linguistic situation" arose because the key leaders were grassroot politicians with rural backgrounds (Banu & Sussex, 2001b, p. 126).

While the decision to determine the national language reflected the collective emotion about Bangla in the newly independent country, the centralistic, government-induced, and government-controlled decision to promote Bangla gave rise to two distinct streams of education, English and Bangla, which eventually led to a divide between 'haves' and 'have-nots', as had been observable in the British era. The statal and suprastatal rules prescribed Bangla as the only official language, without providing adequate instruction on how to phase out the use of English from other domains of life; for example, the practical hurdle of

the non-availability of Bangla textbooks for higher education was not addressed (Choudhury, 2001). Overall, the emphasis on Bangla meant that people's long history of experience with English was ignored. As a consequence, despite being instructed to switch to Bangla, English-medium schools kept the English-medium education system active through the patronage of the elite (Banu & Sussex, 2001b). English remained in two forms in the education system: as a content-based subject for the majority in government schools and as a medium of instruction (MOI) and means to dynamic education for the elite minority in private English-medium schools (Imam, 2005; A. Rahman, 2007; S. Rahman, 2009; Sultana, 2003). The education system now resembles that of the former imperialist period when elite children went to private schools and the masses went to the vernacular public schools.

The nationalistic orientation in education policy was later revised to redeem English language learning and teaching, considering the necessity of English as a language of development, only to encourage yet another form of extremism. In 1992, English was made a compulsory subject in primary and higher secondary education from years 1 to 12, and subsequently for the first-year undergraduate students in the tertiary education in Bangladesh (Hamid, Jahan, & Islam, 2013). Since the government struggles to maintain a balance between nationalistic and developmental discourses, English education in Bangladesh presumably experiences the conflicts and tensions that accompany ideological instability.

English in the education system in Bangladesh

The public primary, secondary, and higher secondary education system in Bangladesh, considered to be one of the largest centralised systems in the world (Imam, 2005), struggles to provide a decent education to a huge number of students with a limited budget. Because of the inadequate number of teachers, classes are not held regularly, and the number of classes is few and alarmingly low. Years 1 and 2 students complete only 444 hours of classes per year in total (Imam, 2005). The standard of education in public schools is also unsatisfactory. On average, 28% and 44% of students achieved the minimum level of competence in written Bangla and Mathematics, respectively, after five years of basic education (World Bank, 2000). The standard of English education in Bangla-medium schools has also been in decline.

By contrast, the English-medium schools and colleges carry the ethos and heritage of elite English private schools established during the British rule. Only a privileged few of the student population attend these schools (Hossain & Tollefson, 2007). These schools have high tuition fees; hence, only rich parents can afford them; for example, the monthly fee for a public school in Dhaka is only around Taka 250 (approximately US $2.95), whereas the fee in an English-medium school can range from Taka 3,000 to 18,000 (approximately US $35.5–213) per month, according to the age of the student. Most of the schools have highly proficient qualified teachers, some of whom are native speakers of English. The schools are located in expensive areas and provide all the amenities necessary for effective teaching and learning. They follow the curriculum and syllabuses developed by the Cambridge International Examination Board (an examination board in the United Kingdom), and the exams ('O' level and 'A' level) are administered by the British Council in Bangladesh. The scripts are marked by registered examiners in the United Kingdom, and the textbooks for all courses except Bangla and religious studies are published in the United Kingdom (Hossain & Tollefson, 2007; Imam, 2005).

It is not only the medium of education that has made these two kinds of schools and colleges different. The standard of education, materials taught in class, methods of teaching, number of trained teachers, number of classes held, amount of learning and teaching resources, and the overall ambience between these two kinds of education system in general are starkly different.

In most of the Bangla-medium schools, knowledge is dealt with as a "monolithic entity, a finite, inflexible object, to be accepted whole and to be memorised and regurgitated" (A. Rahman, 1999, p. 241). Classroom practices, particularly in rural and sub-urban contexts, resemble the 'banking concept of education' (Sultana, 2003), which, according to Freire (1970, p. 36) is an "instrument of dehumanisation". In fact, this sort of teaching and learning practice seems to be a logical consequence of the disparity between the financial conditions of the respective educational institutions. The stark differences between the two education systems have given rise to two classes of people, as in the imperialist period. Similar to Asia Pacific countries such as China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam, English as a medium of education has created division and discrimination between the "haves and have-nots and city and rural area dwellers" (Nunan, 2003, p. 605). Thus, institutional affiliation becomes complex for students as the affiliation implicitly reflects their socio-economic background (Sultana, 2014, 2018).

As English education is not accessible to the poor and the rural, people believe in the superiority of the English-speaking population (cf. Ramanathan, 2005 on the vernacular and English divide in India). People in general seem to have positive attitudes towards English and English-speaking Bangladeshis (Sultana, 2016). The English-speaking population is small, as in Japan (Kubota, 1998), but it enjoys supreme prestige and status in the society. Thus "functioning in the manner of a huge classificatory machine" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. xi), the education system also eventually divides students and inscribes identity attributes based on institutional affiliation and education practices on the micro level. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) stated, with reference to reproduction in education, society, and culture, that "the school helps to make and to impose the legitimate exclusions and inclusions which form the basis of the social order" (p. xi)

> in societies which claim to recognise individuals only as equals in right, the education system and its modern nobility only contribute to disguise, and thus legitimize, in a more subtle way the arbitrariness of the distribution of powers and privileges which perpetuates itself through the socially uneven allocation of school titles and degrees (p. x).

Moreover, according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, p. xi), the elite schools ensure "the perpetuation and legitimation of social hierarchies". Thus, the education system guarantees better positioning in the society for those who have received English education, even when Bangla is given respect as a national language for its crucial historical, political, and cultural roles in the independence of Bangladesh.

The linguistic scenario has become increasingly multifaceted in Bangladesh with the recent popularity and currency of English as a global language and its instrumental value in the job market. Private companies prefer to employ university graduates with a higher level of proficiency in English, thereby legitimising the mythical values of English. Even people in rural villages want their children to be proficient in English (Erling, Seargeant, Solly, Chowdhury, & Rahman, 2012). Parents and private universities have started putting emphasis on English to prepare students for the job market, and it has been easier for the private universities to opt solely for English as the medium of education because of the absence of an explicit education policy for higher education. In addition, unlike public universities, these universities do not have historical, political, and social commitments towards nationalism. As Hamid et al. (2013, p. 151) have noted,

> MOI [Medium of Instruction] denotes a divide between public and private sector higher education. Being controlled by macro-level policies, the former is underpinned by linguistic nationalism, protectionism and additive bilingualism, while the latter is

> informed by linguistic instrumentalism … the public-private divide marked by linguistic dualism – English only in the private sector and Bangla + English in the public sector.

Hence, ELE in Bangladesh occupies a precarious position in the Bangladeshi society deeply affected by its historical, political, social, cultural, and contextual realities. The *Handbook* tends to unravel some of the complexities in order to identify an effective future direction for ensuring linguistic equity and social justice through ELE in Bangladesh.

English in the multilingual ecology of Bangladesh

The political, historical, and social and cultural significance of ELE in Bangladesh indicates that it is either the language of 'linguistic imperialism', 'linguistic hegemony', and inequality; or the symbol of social status, class, and education and hence a language of 'pride'; or the language of globalisation, internationalisation, and commodification, and consequently, the language of 'profit'. This framing of English, however, is problematic since the polarised approach gives a partial view of the language at the macro level or the grassroots level in Bangladesh. This does not allow a critical understanding of English with reference to national and official languages or individual and collective engagement with all the languages or the learning and teaching contexts that exist in the multilingual ecology of Bangladesh. These dichotomous roles and their consequences for ELE are dealt with in the *Handbook*.

Section 1 *History, Language-in-Education Policy and Planning in Bangladesh*, contains a total of three chapters. These chapters identify the tension created because of the conflicting ideologies promoted and sustained in the name of colonisation, nationalism, and globalisation. These chapters also explain how a bi-/multilingual language-in-education planning can be a balancing act and hence can ensure a peaceful co-existence of languages and nurture multilingual ecology in Bangladesh.

In Chapter 2, Shakila Nur, Megan Short, and Greg Ashman explore the complex nexus of history and policy of ELE in Bangladesh, by critically reviewing the historical, political, sociocultural, and ideological factors that influence English Language Education Policy (ELEP) development process in Bangladesh. They argue that in ELEP development process, there is a series of influences where colonisation, nationalism, and globalisation have played a central role. They identify the unsatisfactory and, in some cases, unplanned extent of policy implementation initiatives as the main cause for the overall dismal outcomes of ELE. Reconsidering the provision of ELE, culture of English language teaching and learning, and support for ELT professionals, a more context-driven, rational, synchronised, and holistic approach to ELE policy development process has been suggested at the end of the chapter.

In Chapter 3, identifying the national language-in-education planning as a thorny matter from the perspective of emotional attachment interface of growing popularity of English in Bangladesh, Tania Rahman's chapter proposes a sequentially bi-/multilingual framework integrating education in the country's national language Bangla and the international language English. She considers languages as having instrumental value besides strong nationalistic sentimental attachments. Such orientation makes room for considering the potentials of languages in national resource management that may contribute to economic development and national/ethnic identity maintenance.

While the above-mentioned chapters give a general picture of ELE policy and planning in Bangladesh, A. M. M. H. Rahman's Chapter 4 critically analyses the history of ELT in Bangladesh from the British period to the present time and discusses how ELT methods and materials have

been influenced by various socio-political situations and pedagogical approaches and have been eventually changed. The chapter provides future directions for ELT in the country.

English language 'curriculum reformation,' pedagogical practices, assessment, and testing

While Section 1 indicates the history and politics behind the uniform and unilinear process of ELE policies from the top and/or the West, Sections 2 and 3 take interest in English education as taken, realised, and experienced at the bottom, when preferences and choices are made by teachers, students, and examiners themselves in their day-to-day lives, based on their social, economic, and contextual realities. Specific languages and specific learning and teaching methods and approaches and testing and assessment systems may be forced down by the colonisers/elite segments of the society/the policy makers, but choices of using these specific languages and testing and assessment systems are not simple, unidirectional, or unidimensional. The chapters in Sections 2 and 3 present how the success and failure of different curriculums, syllabuses, and testing systems initiated by the government in support of international donor agencies depend on the contextual realities and multilingual ecology of the Bangladeshi society.

Section 2 titled *English Language Curriculum Reformation and Pedagogical Practice* comprises three chapters. In Chapter 5, Rizwan-ul Huq aims to understand how the mundane language practices – in the presence of an institution-specific, *de facto* English-only policy – take place in a school during teaching activities. He identifies that the compliance of the given policy (i.e. the interactional patterns of conforming or yielding) is achieved through three types of approaches, that is, compliant, semi-compliant, and minimal-compliant modes. The chapter thus indicates how an English classroom operates within the policy expectations and their influences on collective interactional patterns.

While Chapter 5 presents a microanalysis of teacher–student interaction in an institutional policy-governed setting and unravels its impact on interactional patterns, Chapter 6 deals with the role of input in teaching grammar. Even though a communicative approach to language teaching is encouraged in the English language curriculum, both teachers and students in Bangladesh mostly rely on the traditional rule-based English grammar books for achieving competence in the target language (TL) grammar. In Chapter 6, Akhter Jahan and Subramaniam Govindasamy assume that in such classroom context, Textual Enhancement of input may serve as an effective teaching technique for drawing students' attention to any targeted forms by increasing the perceptual salience of those features in written input through typographical manipulations. They argue that contextualised exposure to the target forms will enable learners to grasp grammatical forms for use in any type of communication both spoken and written. Moreover, protracted support will enable acquisition of the TL and subsequently develop communicative competence, which is an indelible aim of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach.

It is a hard reality that classroom practitioners usually do not participate in research and academic activities, such as writing research papers or attending conferences and seminars at home and abroad. In Chapter 7, Md. Golam and Kazi Mafizur Rahman advocate for promoting Research Informed Teaching practice in Academic English (AE) programmes at Bangladeshi universities. Adopting a mixed-method approach, they identify four areas to consider for implementing research-based AE education. They suggest rethinking the wider educational goals of AE programmes, enhancing teachers' personal research capacity, ensuring research support mechanisms within universities, and embedding applied features in AE learning and teaching. Chapters 6 and 7 thus explore whether language teaching practices already successful in the Western world may be introduced in the context of Bangladesh. In principle, we are sceptical

and may not agree to importing teaching techniques from the Western world, but we also are respectful to suggestions from the young Bangladeshi scholars and look forward to seeing the changes they may bring to ELE practices in Bangladesh by their innovative approaches and methods.

An important dynamic of curriculum is assessment and testing. In Section 3 titled *Assessment and Testing in ELT*, a total of three chapters are included. Assessment is a vital issue in the secondary and higher secondary teaching–learning processes. Highlighting the gaps in the current testing system, in Chapter 8, Rubina Khan provides an overview of the secondary and higher secondary assessment scenario in Bangladesh and examines washback effects of the two major public examinations, that is Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) examinations. She also identifies the harmful impact of these high-stake examinations. In addition, she shows that test items given in the exam are too easy and, consequently, the items fail to discriminate between students with higher and average abilities.

While Chapter 8 identifies the limitations of test items in the SSC and HSC English language exams, Sabrin Farooqui, in Chapter 9 with a catchy title, investigates how and to what extent the SSC examination influences teachers' use of the new English language textbook. She identifies that teachers do not use the textbook in the way it is expected to be used because of students and their preoccupation with testing and obsession with ensuring higher grades in exams.

Chapter 9 leads to Chapter 10 in which Md. Zulfeqar Haider, Robiul Kabir Chowdhury, and Jack B. Holbrook report the findings of a research study that examines the quality of test items and the way these items are marked in the SSC English examinations. The chapter reveals that some alarming features of the SSC English Paper I examination paper that question the overall validity and reliability of such test. The questions are also too easy and, thus, fail to discriminate between students with higher and average abilities.

Sections 2 and 3, thus, complement each other, showing that the current practices of determining students' abilities through their performance in the final year examinations do not reflect the expectations set out in the language policies, communicative curriculum, and testing and assessment processes.

Teaching English language versus literature

Section 4 includes four chapters on the theme, titled *Teaching English Language versus Literature*. Shamsad Mortuza, in Chapter 11, explores the various issues related to language, literature, and ideology that have contributed to the reshaping of English departments in the Bangladesh tertiary education. He expresses his concern about the future of English studies in Bangladesh and recommends making policy with a holistic approach instead of solely relying on the decisions of either the donors or the myopic policy makers.

In Chapter 12, Mashrur Hossain takes into account the problems and potential of the use of Anglophone literatures in Bangladeshi English language classroom. Suggesting that literature is engaging and instrumental in enriching students' language skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills, performance skills, and management skills, he offers a guideline for an effective use of literature in teaching – learning seven skills in a language classroom and outlines critical – affective pedagogy, which intends to develop both sensitivity and critical awareness in students.

In Chapter 13, addressing the pros and cons of using literature in language teaching in a communicative manner, Mian Md. Naushaad Kabir critically examines *English for Today* (*EfT*) textbooks designed by National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) for Classes XI–XII and Alim. He argues that *EfT*, specifically, fails to include relevant theoretical implications from

the field of Applied Linguistics. Four components of CLT framework have not been followed in writing *EfT*. A balanced approach towards 'conventional schemata' and 'literary schemata' is not found either. He underscores the importance of 'cautious' and 'judicious' selection of literary contents according to the contextual factors, and skilful creation of tasks and activities.

In Chapter 14, Asif Kamal gives more specific examples of tasks for integrating English literature into language classes. He also examines whether adapting Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) lessons is effective for developing students' literary cognition and enhancing English language skills simultaneously. He identifies that CLIL lessons help improve students' knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure as well as the knowledge of literary content in undergraduate English literature classes, but these lessons may not be effective for students with better competence in the English language. Therefore, he suggests following a need-based application of CLIL in literature classes.

Section 4 thus deals with how literature needs to be judiciously introduced in English language textbooks at the secondary and higher secondary levels of education as well as in any language classroom in Bangladesh. This section also suggests ways to use literature effectively in order to enrich students' language skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills, performance skills, and management skills.

English language learning and construction of identity

Section 5 *Language Learning and Construction of Identity* is relatively bulky in volume and includes seven chapters. The chapters empirically show the pervasive role of English in the society and its impact on students' and teachers' negotiation of identity and their locatedness in society. These chapters also problematise the ironical role of English, identifying how it affects students' and teachers' participation in classroom activities and negotiation of identity.

Utilising the construct of language ideology and the concepts of 'capital' and 'habitus', in Chapter 15, Iffat Jahan examines the connections between language and identity with reference to the notion of social class in the discursive domains of news and social media. Based on critical discourse analysis of media and social media data, she demonstrates that Bangla and English in the form of MOI may be a factor in the representation of self and other. The study suggests that MOI/language divides in post-colonial Bangladesh reflect the social divide based on power, 'capital', and 'habitus'.

While Chapter 15 looks into the discursive construction of identity in media and social media data, in Chapter 16, Shaila Sultana explores how university students in Bangladesh use two popularly known words – the Bangla word 'khaet' (hick) and the English word 'fast' – to construct a discursive sense of 'us' and 'them' based on Bangla- and English-medium education and position themselves in their educational landscape. She observes that individual interpretation and use of 'khaet' and 'fast' are intricately intertwined not only with their educational background, but also with the historical, political, and ideological roles of English in society and students' individual life trajectories, which are again influenced by their socio-economic and geographical backgrounds.

In Chapter 17, with reference to the Weberian view of socio-economic class identity as a conceptual framework, Saima Akhter looks into the relationship between 'linguistic capital' and individual socio-economic identity. In the context of Bangladesh, English pronunciation plays a significant role in performing upper class identity and ensuring privileged position in society. At the end, the chapter concludes that young adults' English pronunciation and socio-economic class identity are entangled with other social and psychological variables, such as their academic and regional affinity, fear of alienation, and then desire to move upward.

In Chapter 18, Mahmud Khan and Shaila Sultana explore the critical reflections of MA in ELT students about the status of English as a global language and English as an MOI in their classes at a private university in Bangladesh. They indicate that the symbolic valorisation of English makes language-based discrimination acceptable both to students and to teachers in the university. The university is the site of social and cultural reproduction and both students and teachers, and the university authority perpetuate and effectuate the social, political, and ideological relations. In addition, they identify the English language as a significant hinder to students' involvement in and engagement with 'meaningful' learning experiences. At the end, they suggest allowing students' access to bilingual education both in English and in Bangla, so that these students may own and contribute to the locally generated knowledge and eventually become endowed with critical and intellectual bent of mind.

Chapters 15–18 deal with students' language practices and their identity at the micro level. By contrast, Chapter 19 analyses ELT materials. In her chapter, Afroza Suchana investigates gender equity in an English language textbook at the primary level of education in Bangladesh and identifies the presence of gender discrimination in language, images, and illustrations. Consequently, she exposes the unfair and oppressive state of social and economic relationships introduced to school students at a young age.

In Chapter 20, Kakoli Chowdhury and M. Moninoor Roshid explore how government college English language teachers in Bangladesh negotiate their professional identity construction and how that constructed identity influences their professional behaviour and performance. The chapter shows that identity construction process of English teachers in government colleges in Bangladesh is quite complex and problematic and it affects their quality of performances as English language teachers.

Chapter 21, from an auto-ethnographic perspective, provides a critical reflection on English and ELT in Bangladesh. Obaidul Hamid, based on his own life experiences in relation to English, reflects on the interrelations of English, mobility, identity, and belonging within and beyond national boundaries in a fluid world. His life trajectory, in fact, tells the tale of a '*musafir*' as he calls himself and epitomises the desires and tensions between mobility and stability, home and homelessness, belonging and lack of belonging, and visibility and invisibility experienced and realised by a post-colonial being in the context of Bangladesh.

In these chapters, we thus get a detailed picture of how students, teachers, and different stakeholders in the society engage with English within their spatial and temporal realities. Hence, we develop the political, historical, epistemological, spatial, social, and textual understanding of English in the multilingual eco-system and the material, discursive, and ideological processes that influence their use of English. The section, most importantly, critically unravels the long-run effects of the government's stern effort of decolonisation.

English teacher education and English for economic development

Another polarised and yet hugely popular representation of English is that English is the language of science and technology, globalisation, modernisation, internationalisation, and transnationalisation. From this perspective and contrary to the linguistic imperialism viewpoint discussed above, the English language is not considered as a threat to local languages, but a means to sustainable development in Bangladesh. English is the language of 'pride' or the language of globalisation, internationalisation, and commodification, and consequently, a language of 'profit' (Tollefson, 2000).

Section 6 focuses on *Teacher Education and English for Economic Development*. This section contains six chapters. Chapter 22 by Arifa Rahman presents a comparative analysis of three

English Language Teachers Associations in South Asia, specifically in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal. The chapter identifies the differences in the contextual realities and compositions of these associations and reviews the products and services these associations offer to their stakeholders. It also considers how diverse factors impact on the robustness and vitality of these products and services and highlights the ways in which the associations address challenges and progress.

In Chapter 23, Anwar Ahmed describes how a curriculum of English language teacher education in Bangladesh may develop them as transformative practitioners. He provides an outline of English Language Teacher Education curriculum in Bangladesh and suggests a re-conceptualisation of the curriculum in order to prepare English language teachers as transformative practitioners. He engaged in an autoethnographic reflective inquiry and explored how Morgan's critical work might be helpful to design and implement curriculum as a vehicle for democratic and justice-oriented language education. He suggests that pre-service teacher education programmes need to focus specifically on identity, community, and social justice.

In Chapter 24, Maksudul Ali and Obaidul Hamid argue that English for human capital development has emerged as an ELE policy trend in developing societies in the context of globalisation. In this backdrop, the analysis of chapter reveals that development of citizens' communicative competence in English is considered critical for the country's access to the globalised market and for a competitive edge in the neoliberal economy.

With reference to the framework of business English as a lingua franca, in Chapter 25, M. Moninoor Roshid explores the linguistic competence and its forms needed for effective communication in ready-made garments (RMG) global business. The chapter shows that in RMG global business, clear mutual intelligibility is more important than standard English usage in terms of grammar and pronunciation. In addition, a sound knowledge and skills in using appropriate garment-specific lexis along with general vocabulary are considered as one of the key factors for effective communication.

Interface of economic development discourse, drawing findings from two qualitative research projects in Bangladesh – one on local people's attitudes towards English as a development tool and another one on Bangladeshi returnee migrant workers – in Chapter 26 Qumrul Chowdhury and Elizabeth J. Erling critically discuss the nexus between the local ideologies of English and economic development in the context of Bangladesh. They argue that people in rural Bangladeshi communities have strong ideologies of English as a language of economic development. Learning English develops local people's ability to give them access to local and global economic participation. The chapter also identify the structural inequality due to determining influence of English. At the same time, they argue that learning English facilitates the local people to break structural challenges and global inequality.

However, the chapters in Section 6 also identify that it will be wrong to ignore the role of locality in mobilising globalisation and side-track the complexities of experiences of students, teachers, migrant workers, and business associates in relation to English, even though the experiences may vary based on their socio-economic background and geographical locations. There is a necessity of understanding how "the powerless postcolonial communities may find ways to negotiate, alter, and oppose political structures, and reconstruct their languages, cultures, and identities to their advantage" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 2). English no longer belongs to the colonisers or to the superpowers. It is a 'heteroglossic language' owned by Bangladeshi teachers, students, and migrant workers. The chapters in Section 6 in the *Handbook* show in what ways English is taken up at the grassroots level and used as a tool of financial development beyond the boundaries of classrooms.

Conclusion

The *Handbook*, in general, presents a detailed picture of the overall ELE, as it is practised 'endogenously' in Bangladesh through theoretically comprehensive and globally understood terms. It sheds light on the historical development, shifting paradigms and practices, and presents condition of ELE in Bangladesh, bringing out critical perspectives on ELE and colonial and postcolonial history, ideologies, and values in terms of the English language policy and the rapid development of the ELE industry in Bangladesh. The *Handbook* also deals with issues at the micro level, such as English language textbooks, English curriculum, assessment and evaluation, pedagogies, use of literature for ELT, MOI and negotiation of identity, teachers' professional development, graduate employability, and sustainable development. Presenting descriptive, theoretical, and empirical chapters as well as ethnographic and case studies, this *Handbook*, on the one hand, gives a comprehensive view of English language teaching and learning scenario in Bangladesh and, on the other hand, comes up with suggestions for possible decolonisation and deeliticisation of English in Bangladesh.

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Notes

1 By the term ESL, in this chapter, I mean all sorts of English as Second Language education available in Bangladesh including government-approved national curriculum *English-version* schools, International Standard *English Medium* schools, and private *Kindergarten* schools (see details in Huq, 2018).
2 By the term *naturally occurring*, I mean the CA-based concept of participants' talk-in-interaction as it has happened in real-time situation without any exogenous, top-down influences (or inputs) of any sort in the form of experiments, surveys, interviews, or other methods during data collection process. It means the interaction has taken place in the way it should have happened anyway.
3 The term *sequence*, in CA's terminology, implies here the ordered positioning of participants' verbal or vocal utterances or embodied actions (Sacks et al., 1974).
1 "England is sick, and … English literature must save it. The Churches having failed, and social remedies being slow, English literature has now a triple function: still, to delight and instruct us, but also, to save our souls and heal the State" (Eagleton, 2003, p. 20).
2 From the title of a Bob Dylan song.
3 Based on comments made by participants of three streams of education who took part in FGDs on 'Evaluating English Language Teaching and Learning in Bangladesh'. Mortuza, Khan, Yasmin, and Rahman (2018).
4 From Emily Dickinson's poem 'A Narrow Fellow in the Grass'.
5 See Fakrul Alam's "Revisioning English Studies in Bangladesh in the Age of Globalisation and ELT" in Chowdhury et al. (2018). Also, see the study on the 'organised hypocrisy' in EIA programme by a group of Malaysian scholars. The research shows the lack of commitment, efficiency, and transparency which affected the desired outcome of the project (Karim, Mohamed, Ismail, & Rahman, 2018).
1 *Alim* refers to the educational level in madrasa system (Islamic education system) equivalent to the higher secondary level of the mainstream education system.
1 The name of the university and the participants are pseudonyms. For a detailed description of the research method, please see Sultana (2014b).
2 Data coding
1 The terms social class and socioeconomic class have been used interchangeably in this chapter.
2 A community of practice is a collection of people who engage on an on-going basis in some common endeavour. The construct was brought into sociolinguistics (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992) as a way of theorising language and gender – most particularly, of responsibly connecting broad categories to on-the-ground social and linguistic practice. The value of the notion *CoP* to sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology lies in the fact that it identifies a social grouping not in virtue of shared abstract characteristics (e.g. class, gender) or simple co-presence (e.g. neighbourhood, workplace) but in virtue of shared practice.
3 The frequency list of words is available at http://www.wordfrequency.info/free.asp?s=y.
1 This problem is not limited to the Bangladeshi context only. For a critique of the global ELTE curriculum, see Anwaruddin (2016b).
1 https://www.eiabd.com/