



English for the EDI generation: Predicting and tracking the role of English and digital/mobile technologies in Higher Education across East and South Asia

First Progress Report



Submitted by The Open University to the British Council

30 November, 2022

Executive Summary

This report gives an account of the progress of the first phase of the Modish research project that started on 01 June 2022. It offers progress reports on the key activities, such as literature review, research instrument design and the ethics application, which have been completed. Searching relevant literature, globally, regionally, and within the target countries has helped the project team in conceptualising and furthering the understanding of the research issues in relation to teaching, assessment and learning of English (TALE) practices in higher education. The review of context specific literature provided an understanding of the situation within the research contexts and examined several issues such as EDI in higher education, how gender roles are seen in inclusive practices, whether students have equal access to technology for learning, how EDI and gender issues have been researched to date and the organisations involved. Most importantly, it helped us situate our research project within the context of the four target countries.

Following the literature review and informed by it, the project team has designed research instruments for the study. Since the ethics application for the project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Review Committee at The Open University, all project partners have been asked to pilot the research instruments in their respective countries to ensure that the instruments are contextually relevant. The search instruments will be revised based on the feedback that we receive from the pilot studies, if required.

One of the aims of the project is to create awareness among the concerned populations of EDI issues in higher education in relation to students' opportunities to learn the English language and use technology for learning and career development. To achieve this, the project team has set up a blog website (<https://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/Modish-English>) in which we aim to publish articles on the monthly basis. Five more articles have been planned for the next six months.

Looking Forward

The following eight activities have been planned for the next six months – December 2022 to May 2023 (for more details, please see Section 5):

- a. Revise research instruments based on the feedback received from pilot studies, if required
- b. Run workshops for in-country research leads and field researchers or research associates, with a special focus on ethics
- c. Conduct four co-creation workshops (one in each country) for stakeholders
- d. Develop a data management plan with a focus on storing and sharing data
- e. Complete data collection for the first phase (survey, FGDs and Padlet discussions with students; survey and interviews with teachers) in the four target countries
- f. Start data transcription and analysis
- g. Participate in a Community of Practice event organised by the British Council
- h. Give presentations at the OU and/or in national conferences

The Modish Project

In the last two decades, the English language has experienced changes in its use as well as in teaching, learning and assessment. Driven by the sharp rise of digital/mobile technology (DMT), equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and the ecological perspectives in language education - especially the rise of world Englishes (WE) - the future of English is undergoing tumultuous changes in its form, function and status globally. These changes have also been seen in the people's attitudes and perspectives on how English can be learned and used in the future, arousing tremendous interest in researching and examining the trends of its learning and use. We have coined a new term, "modish", to designate Mobile Digital English – for a new generation of English-speakers and English-learners concerned with issues of EDI, living and learning in a world of rapid change. This new word is now the acronym for our project.

The Modish project tracks and evaluates a set of three interconnected, predicted trends concerning the impact of the growing use of DMT on regional and local ecologies of teaching, assessment and learning of English (TALE) in the four most populous countries in East and South Asia – Bangladesh, China, India, and Indonesia. With a focus on higher education, the two-phase longitudinal study develops and validates an ecological research approach for tracking and assessing predictions and trends for English and TALE practices. It provides a comprehensive analysis of current practices surrounding English and its future trends in East and South Asia which will contribute to the British Council's global initiative on the future of English.

Project Team Members

The international and interdisciplinary team for this project is led by Professor Agnes Kukulska-Hulme and comprises nine members from six countries:

1. **Prof. Agnes Kukulska-Hulme** from The Open University has over 30 years' experience in research and development of digital, professional and organisational learning, distance education and use of mobile technologies for English language learning. She has worked with marginalised learners and published on marginalisation.
2. **Dr Ram A. Giri**, an academic (teaching and research) at Monash College/Monash University, Melbourne, has researched ELE issues extensively and published in international journals, written book chapters, and published co-edited books. His research interests include TESOL, language testing, and language (education) policy. He is currently Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of NELTA, and editor of TESL-EJ.
3. **Dr Philip Sergeant** works as Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics at The Open University, where he teaches and researches language and communication. He has written and edited a dozen academic monographs, textbooks and collections on topics ranging from World Englishes, language and social media to language and creativity.
4. **Dr Saraswati Dawadi**, a research associate at The Open University, has extensive experience of researching/working with marginalised students. Her research focuses

on girls' empowerment, roles of technology in promoting/reducing inclusion in education, technology use for teachers professional learning and school leadership.

5. **Prof. Amol Padwad** is the Director of the Centre for English Language Education, Ambedkar University Delhi, and Secretary, AINET Association of English Teachers. His areas of interest include teacher development, teacher networks, history of ELE, rural ELT and decentring in ELT.
6. **Prof. Jinlan Tang** is the Dean and Professor in the Institute of Online Education, and a researcher at the Artificial Intelligence and Human Languages Lab, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China. Her research covers language assessment, teacher training, EFL teaching and learning in the e-learning environment. She serves as the Co-Editor-In-Chief of the Journal of China Computer-Assisted Language Learning.
7. **Dr Mian Md. Naushaad Kabir** is associate professor of English Language at the Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka. He co-edited The Routledge Handbook of English Language Education in Bangladesh (2021). He is the founder executive editor of the BELTA Journal, and the vice president of the TESOL Society of Bangladesh (2022-23).
8. **Dr Imroatus Solikhah, M.Pd** is a lecturer in the English Language Department, Languages and Cultures Faculty of UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Indonesia. She is interested in EAP, TEFL, Research Methodology, Curriculum, and English Material Development, she has published in national and international journals and has written a textbook. She also has experience as a reviewer of journal articles, both national and international.
9. **Dr Julian Edwards** is a Research Fellow at The Open University, an expert in quantitative social research and a tutor in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. He has published on a range of topics including work-related quality of life, and has conducted longitudinal research.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Looking Forward	i
The Modish Project	ii
Project Team Members	ii
Table of Contents	iv
1 Project Introduction	1
2 Literature Review	1
2.1 <i>Identifying relevant literature</i>	1
2.2 <i>Global perspectives on the trends</i>	2
2.3 <i>Regional perspectives on the trends</i>	3
2.4 <i>Conceptualising trend setters</i>	5
2.4.1 EDI in Higher Education	5
2.4.2 Gender in Higher Education	7
2.4.3 English in Higher Education	8
2.5 <i>Articulating the Gap</i>	8
2.5.1 Country Perspectives:	10
2.5.1.1 Bangladesh	10
2.5.1.2 China	12
2.5.1.3 India	14
2.5.1.4 Indonesia	17
3 Research Methodology	17
3.1 <i>Participants</i>	18
3.2 <i>Research Tools</i>	19
3.3 <i>Data Collection Procedures</i>	19
3.4 <i>Ethics Approval for the Study</i>	20
3.5 <i>Higher Education Contexts and Research Sites</i>	20
3.5.1 Bangladesh	20
3.5.2 China	22
3.5.3 India	23
3.5.4 Indonesia	25
3.6 <i>Data Collection Procedures</i>	25
3.7 <i>The Pilot Study</i>	27
4 Project Dissemination/Blog Website	27
5 Synthesising Summary/ Reflection	28
6 Way Forward to Next Phase	28
6.1 <i>Pilot Studies in Each Country</i>	28

6.2	<i>Researchers' Orientation Workshops on Ethics and Safeguarding</i>	28
6.3	<i>Co-creation Workshops</i>	29
6.4	<i>Data Management Plan: Storing and Sharing Data</i>	29
6.5	<i>Data Collection for the First Phase</i>	29
6.6	<i>Data Transcription and Analysis</i>	30
6.7	<i>Community of Practice</i>	30
6.8	<i>Project Dissemination</i>	30
	References	31

1 Project Introduction

Over the years, the English language has changed in terms of its form, substance and the ways in which people use it. These changes are largely driven by four factors: digital and mobile technology (DMT), social media facilitated by DMT, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and the emergence of local variants of English known as local Englishes, global Englishes, and more popularly world Englishes (WE). The first two decades of the 21st century witnessed dramatic changes in the use of the English language and its teaching, learning and assessment. Judging by the sharp rise of digital technology, artificial intelligence, and the ecological perspectives in language education, it appears that the future of English is far from settled. English is set to experience tumultuous changes in its form, function and status globally in the years ahead. In the virtual communication space, local forms of English are increasingly accepted and even repurposed to convey a range of (new) functions and attitudes. A process of de-standardisation, and the emergence of competing tools and norms of usage has begun.

The Modish project examines these interconnected drivers of change, along with several predicted trends concerning the impact of the growing use of digital/mobile technology (DMT) on regional and local ecologies of teaching, assessment and learning of English (TALE) in the four most populous countries in East and South Asia – Bangladesh, China, India, and Indonesia. These include (a) how technological innovation, which drives contemporary learning and communication in English, is shaping the future of the language in education, particularly higher education; (b) whether issues of gender, equality, diversity and inclusion will be an important consideration in the future of English; (c) the role that English plays as a linguistic resource alongside other languages; and (d) policy and practice implications for the development of English in Asia. Since these changes cover diverse concepts such as technology, demography and multilingualism, with different theories attached to each of them, the project is studying these phenomena through multiple theoretical lenses.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Identifying relevant literature

The method applied to identify, collect and review literature for the Modish project may be termed as semi-systematic literature review (Snyder 2019) as a host approach. This approach enables an overview of broad topics that have been conceptualised differently and studied by different groups of researchers in diverse research contexts, and these topics could not be drawn together through a more restrictive full systematic review process (Snyder 2019; Wong, et al., 2013). It is a useful approach for identifying themes and common issues. As a host approach, it allows the collation and analysis of different constituent review methods.

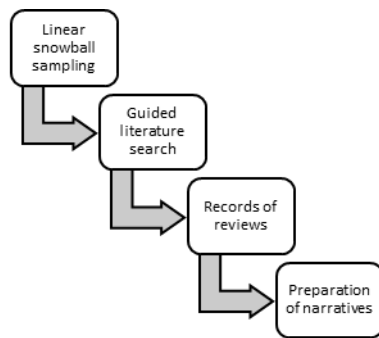


Figure: Steps of literature review

The literature review has been conducted in four steps:

- In the first step, using our research questions and broad categories of relevant terms as a guide, we identified and sampled primary resources which we used to find related literature, applying a Linear Snowball Sampling method (Frey, 2018). Using these primary literatures and their references as sources, further literature sources were identified, such as globally available literature, United Nations reports and government policy reports.
- The second step was the Guided Literature Search, in which the project’s in-country researchers in Bangladesh, Nepal, Senegal and Sudan were provided with broad classifications of materials, a range of themes/questions, keywords and their synonyms, and a list of databases to search.
- In the third step, the reviews and sources obtained from the two prior steps were recorded in a Literature Review Recording Matrix (Klopper, et al., 2007).
- Finally, we prepared narratives which included an evaluation of the selected literature as well as reflections. Our purpose was to identify the most pertinent research issues and to reveal any gaps in the literature.

2.2 Global perspectives on the trends

It is now four decades since a focus on World Englishes became an established part of the discussion in English language studies and set out a research agenda for examining and analysing the way that English is used and evaluated in diverse world contexts (Kachru, 1992). The aims of the early work in this field sought to research the forms, cultural histories, and educational and ideological contexts that shape the existence of English around the world, with the explicit aim of validating these varieties as Englishes in their own right. These same basic aims continue to be important in research into global Englishes, particularly in terms of cultural politics (e.g., O’Regan, 2021) and approaches to the teaching and learning of English (Rose et al., 2021).

This has continued alongside two related trends in sociolinguistics: (1) critiquing the way languages are conceptualised and how this supports a hegemony of standardised versions (Metz, 2019), with issues such as the ‘native speaker’ ideology still at the forefront of this (Faez, 2011); and (2) a focus on the complex ways in which people actually interact and

communicate with each other by drawing on the resources available to them, particularly in terms of translanguaging (see, for example, Conteh, 2018, for translanguaging in ELT, and Liu and Fang, 2022, for practitioners' attitudes to this).

The relationship between cultural and linguistic resources, and how this is approached within English language education, is also important in recent research into English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), and how theoretical debates about ELF may apply to the classroom realities of teaching practice in specific contexts (e.g., Yu & Liu, 2022). Similarly, the issue of a gap between inclusive education and the embedded biases within assessment frameworks highlights some of the challenges that exist for applying Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) aims out in the wild (Pfnsthor, 2022).

Beyond this, EDI approaches are focused predominantly on issues related to access, social mobility and representation. The concept of an 'English Divide' – i.e., the way that different groups have different levels of access to English education, and how this in turn feeds into the opportunities which English skills provide (e.g., Shin & Lee, 2019) – is of relevance to the first two of these (access and social mobility). Similarly, the ways that English language education operates as a 'global industry' and how English is positioned as a commodity, has implications for the 'costs' that this requires students to invest in it and how these reinforce structures of social inequality (Piller et al., 2010).

A related issue is representational harm as this applies to the stereotypes or limited/skewed scope of cultural representation in the content of English language lessons (Weninger & Kiss, 2013); for example, there are studies on the representation of gender in language teaching materials, and the ways this can encode discriminatory ideologies which can have a harmful impact on learners (e.g., Dahmardeh & Kim, 2019). This has implications for the role of the English language teacher in diverse world contexts (Marr & English, 2019). Of particular relevance here is a shift in perspective from, as Chan and Coney (2020) put it, 'liberal to critical forms of multiculturalism', and an approach aligned to the broader aims of decolonising the curriculum (Meighan, 2020).

Beyond this, the impact that new technology will have on people's communication habits, particularly in terms of the advances in machine translation and the ways this will be integrated into everyday life, are likely to have a notable effect on the role English plays around the world in the future (Sergeant, 2023).

2.3 Regional perspectives on the trends

English made its entry into Asia in general, and in South East Asia (SEA) and South Asia (SA) regions in particular as an imperial language and through colonisation. As an elitist and dominant language, English entered the domains of government, administration, judiciary, education, commerce and the media, and now it has become the *de facto* lingua franca of

education, international trade and religion in the regions (Low & Hashim, 2012). English increasingly serves as a unifying language, playing a dynamic role in intra-nation and international communication. The language education of the regions passed from an Orientalist phase to an Anglicist phase following the formulation of the language education policy modelled on British language education. This policy had a profound impact on the spread of English in the regional higher education. As an elite language of higher education serving the elitist ideology, English came to be a part of the 'socio-politics, a linguistic capital, and a class-maker facilitating socio-economic and professional mobility' (Cheng & Xu, 2022). The negativity towards English as a neo-imperial language has given way to a more positive attitude which sees it as an essential language for regional and international cooperation which responds to the practical needs of business and diplomacy (in countries such as Japan, China, South Korea), an instrument to unify multilingual societies (in India, Singapore, Malaysia), and a crucial means to higher education (in Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Indonesia).

Higher education in the Asian regions, particularly, SEA and SA regions, is multi-scalar. It is global, regional, national and local at the same time, though the relationships between educational activities in these differing scales, and the extent to which global prototypes or discourses shape local possibilities, vary from country to country and institution to institution. At a global level, higher education in Asia and its development, according to Marginson (2022), are focused on the transformation that began as Western-driven modernisation. In order to prepare their students to succeed in their educational and professional pursuits in the competitive world, the higher education institutions have increasingly adopted western models of education with English at the centre. Accordingly, if a person wants to get world class education, they need to adopt the language of world class education, i.e., English. However, the geo-politics regarding the ideology behind the adoption of English as the language of higher education are now more ambiguous. Some Asian countries, such as Singapore, South Korea, and the Philippines, for example, are more open towards its adoption than others. China also seems to have adopted an approach what may be translated as "thinking through the world (*tianxia*)", which embraces a significant presence of the English-language literature in higher education. Some countries however, are concerned about the western cultural dominance in education. For example, presenting technical and applied subjects as a case study, Marginson (2022) suggests that in the internationalisation and/or globalisation of science (and allied subjects) education is associated with cultural homogenisation and the exclusion of non-English language knowledge. This means that only the knowledge available in the English language is given space in higher education in these subjects. Such institutions often use global benchmarks, and the countries with large non-English language outputs, and fewer in English, can appear to be impoverished (Chan & Coney, 2020).

At a regional level, as Spolsky and Sung (2015) suggest, the Asian region has witnessed a greatly increased emphasis on the use of English. The establishment of regional cooperation organisations such as ASEAN, SAARC, and SEMEO which have chosen English as the language of their operation, has triggered the use of English in higher education as the member countries of these organisations aim at producing graduates that are employable in the respective regions. They also want to prevent students or graduates going to other countries, or the phenomenon known as 'brain drain', by making their own education regionally competitive. Increasingly, Englishisation of their education is seen as a necessary (first) step in this direction. Looking at the case studies of the nation states, Spolsky and Sung (2015) suggest that the nations of the South East Asia regions have had an increased emphasis on the development of secondary schools' English, responding in part to evidence around the value of earlier English instruction, and to cater to the growing demand for the economic advantages of mastery of this globally important language. They conclude that for these nations, secondary school English serves as a vital bridge to the mastery level aimed at by tertiary level teaching, but also has to provide some useful working proficiency for the many who will not go on to university or advanced instruction. The authors, however, warn the readers of some great concerns related to ELT in the Asian context. These concerns include issues regarding the hegemonic roles of English, its dominant place in the local language ecology and (lack of) equality in learning the language.

Finally, at the local scale, the high-sounding policies do not get implemented effectively. So, there are discrepancies between what the policy in the nation states says and what actually happens at the ground level. English language teaching (ELT) encounters a number of practical challenges because of bureaucratic difficulties, and inadequate and inefficient support mechanisms for developing and implementing changes. In consequence, English becomes an exclusionary factor which plays gate-keeping roles at the practice level. The discrepancies and lack of clarity in their policies raise issues in balancing the status of national mother tongue(s) and English. The poor support mechanism at the implementation stage creates local-global tension in terms of maintaining a balance in the teaching and human resources, restricts the use of local languages giving, opens rooms for the dominance of the native varieties of English, and, most importantly, creates unequal access to learning for all thereby disadvantaging some groups of university goers.

2.4 Conceptualising trend setters

2.4.1 EDI in Higher Education

Mahn (2012) looks into the challenges the South Asian and South East Asian regions are faced with. He describes English education in higher education institutions (HEIs) as a **fashion policy** to attract foreign students for career reasons, and to curb the high number of talented domestic students studying abroad. Usually a top-down policy, the main goals of ELT are human resource enhancement in the age of global integration, technological advancement and internationalisation of education. His study finds the following issues of concern:

- Although English in HEIs is an appropriate response to globalisation, there are interfering factors at micro levels that must be thoroughly addressed to prevent failures.
- Students are not supported adequately.
- There is a decline of quality education because of overemphasis on English education.
- Insufficient focus on the quality of the English spoken by the students and teachers.
- Social inequality as proficient English speakers are favoured for socio-economic and educational opportunities.
- Disadvantaged students who do not have access to resources in English.

ELT in HEIs is likely to cause socioeconomic inequality, since English education seemingly benefits only the well-off minority of students with access to English. This policy marginalizes most students from rural areas because of their lower level of proficiency in English. The technological and professional knowledge taught in English will be inaccessible to these linguistically disadvantaged students, who will subsequently be unable to compete for jobs on an equal basis with students who are fluent in English. In addition, they may not have the same opportunities for professional development and career advancement. Socioeconomic inequality may promote socioeconomic and political instability (see for example, Chan & Coney, 2020).

The regions face a number of opportunities and challenges:

- a. The involvement of the private sector has the potential to drive capacity, boost financing and improve quality, though more robust regulation is required.
- b. The relatively low current quality of higher education has affected the employability of university graduates. There is a disconnect between the needs of the employment market on the one hand and courses offered and teaching methods on the other.
- c. The demand for education within South Asia from foreign providers is very strong. While this is a potentially exciting market, bureaucratic hurdles have hampered progress to date.
- d. Female student participation and female university leadership are both lacking. South Asian women continue to be under-represented, with 74 females enrolled in tertiary education for every 100 males, though the gap is narrowing.
- e. Weak governance and low salaries remain an issue. There are examples of politicisation of higher education across South Asia, raising questions of the extent to which this is hindering the development of higher education.

2.4.2 Gender in Higher Education

Gender in HE in Asia, particularly Southeast Asia and South Asia, is a marker of inequality which intersects with and compounds other categories of difference and disadvantage including (but not limited to) geography (rurality), ethnicity, and class/caste (Tang, 2019; Navani, 2019). According to Cuthbert, et al. (2019), despite efforts of the respective governments, HEIs, and global policy agents such as UNESCO and the World Bank to address issues related to gender inequity in access to and participation in HE, gender-based inequities in terms of access persist as the participation of women – students and faculty– increases. The compounded disadvantage has adverse effects on: 1. access, retention, completion, and career progression; 2. the interface between gender and wealth-based disparities; 3. field of study, horizontal segregation by discipline, and impact on academic career and postgraduation earnings; 4. the everyday experiences of students and faculty, including sexual violence and intimidation on campus and in the classroom; 5. The essence of inequality in its form and substance (UNESCO, 2010: 1–5).

There is a *glass-ceiling* when it comes to women’s access to and their participation in HE, particularly in the management and leadership positions and in some disciplinary areas. Nobody publicly acknowledges this, nonetheless, everyone knows that such an inequality in HE exists. For example, there are a handful of female leaders in higher education in South Asia, but women in general remain highly underrepresented in senior management positions. Female representation in leadership remains low by any benchmark. For some countries, this is due to cultural barriers, and for others, a natural outgrowth of the continued male overrepresentation in faculty departments in universities (British Council, 2014; Dahmardeh & Kim, 2019)). Thus, it can be inferred that some populations in these regions, especially women, are under-presented in higher education and professional settings because of their socio-ethnic and linguistic and sexual background.

An abundance of literature exists on how to address the situation of women in academia. International organizations (such as UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank) have produced multiple policy briefs on gender issues in higher education recommending a number of interventions (Neubauer & Kaur, 2019; Ling, & Nasri, 2019). Morley (2013:10) summarises these interventions as follows:

- A. fix the women—enhancing women’s confidence and self-esteem, empowerment, capacity building, encouraging women to be more competitive, assertive, and risk-taking.
- B. fix the organization—gender mainstreaming such as gender equality policies, processes, and practices; challenging discriminatory structures, gender impact assessment, audits, and reviews; introducing work/life balance schemes including flexible working.
- C. fix the knowledge—identify bias, curriculum change, for example, introduction of gender as a category of analysis in all disciplines, introduction of gender/women’s studies (cited in Neubauer & Kaur, 2019:15).

2.4.3 English in Higher Education

The so-called 'English mania' phenomenon is sweeping Asia, and the target countries are no exception to this. Educational institutions, both public and private, concerned parents, teachers, and above all, students go to any length to be a part of the greatest linguistic tsunami the world has ever experienced which can be seen the world over (Lin, 2016). To give an illustration, children will be sent to kindergartens where English is taught, and then to private English medium schools instead of local government schools as long as their parents can afford it (Kirkpatrick, 2014: 16). The global push to cater to the growing need, and also to modernise and internationalise education has essentialised English in these contexts. Consequently, there has been an increasing trend of adopting English Medium Instruction in respective education systems. Thus, influenced by the global English-mania phenomenon, countries adopt EMI to enhance English language abilities, develop human capital, and facilitate access to the global economy (Sah, 2022).

Taking SEA and SA regions as an example, economic policy institutes (such as the Asia Foundation, ASEAN, SAARC, South Asia Institute, The World Bank, UNESCO, etc.) suggest that paying more attention to "horizontal skilling" should be a boon to productivity, with the value of "soft skills" such as English language and communications enhancing the competitiveness of workers in key sectors such as business process outsourcing and hospitality. The export-led models of SEA, for example, required workers to have specific technical skills related to manufacturing, but for South Asia, it is the value of "soft skills" such as English language and communications that will enhance the competitiveness of workers in key sectors such as business-process outsourcing and hospitality.

The considerations of "which English" are becoming less important when it comes to the standard varieties of English (SEs). Nevertheless, it has become highly contested if and how the local Englishes could be accepted as a part of HE. While innovations in English around the globe are being studied and defended as legitimate, there is another side to this battle that cannot be ignored, those nicknamed the 'deficit linguists'. Taking the research field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) side and perspective, in which the target is the British and the American English Standards and anything else equals incorrectness, scholars fight any idea of legitimacy of varieties that goes against the hegemony of those two varieties. They even argue that those innovations are not English at all (Cheung & Xu, 2022; Huang & Fang, 2022). There are, thus, attitudinal issues with respects to the world Englishes. Da Silva (2016) explored people's attitudes towards local Englishes, especially foreign accents like the Brazilian. Using critical pedagogy as a theoretical framework, he elucidated the importance of including real-world English in teacher education curricula as well as in English language schools alongside the pronunciation system of a hegemonic variety (the "inner circle" variety).

2.5 Articulating the Gap

The gap in the available literature can be described in three ways. The first of these ways is that despite the increased documentation of the use and adoption of the English language in

all socio-economic and educational domains, there is a paucity of literature that suggests how, if at all, the widespread acceptance of English will determine the trends or roles of English in the lives of the people. For example, despite the fact that English is used as the de facto lingua franca in most regional political and diplomacy, socio-economic and educational forums, the literature falls short in indicating the future of English in the respective nations or whether the nations without colonial heritage will accord any official status to the language (Low & Hashim, 2012).

Secondly, the literature suggests that there is a disconnect between what higher education in these regions promises and what is actually delivered. In other words, there is a disparity between the labour market needs and higher education provisions in these regions. For example, despite the information, communication and technology (ICT) boom in the region, particularly the South Asian region, there is a shortage of skilled ICT workers in South Asia (Sah, 2022; Sah & Li, 2018). There is a discrepancy between the kind of skills demanded by labour markets and the number of graduates in key disciplines for SA and SEA nations, a phenomenon known as the *diploma disease*. This is because of the lack of coordination between higher education institutions and the governmental agencies. The literature suggests that there is a need, therefore, for a tripartite collaboration between policymakers, universities and employers. Reversing this “diploma disease” requires structural changes, at both policy and institutional levels: reassessing education received before students enter university, changing degree offerings and pedagogy at universities and developing policies that support total educational transformation.

Finally, there is a lack of literature that clearly points out the status and role of English and/or DMT in higher education in the Asian regions. The available literature does not clearly indicate if and to what extent DMT/English plays a role in the educational and professional lives of the university goers and/or graduates. Therefore, it cannot be concluded if English, and for that matter ICT, marginalise or disadvantage certain groups of people. The sporadic studies suggest there is not a uniform policy when it comes of the use of English and DMT. As higher education institutions are more or less autonomous and free to make their own decision, the policy regarding the use of English and DMT differs from one institution to another.

There is, thus, an exigency of concerted research that needs to examine the growing trends in the use and education of English in higher education in the Asian (SEA and SA) regions, their driving forces, and the emerging issues. The Modish project aims to address the gap by studying these trend-setters and the issues involved, and documenting the resultant collective knowledge.

2.5.1 Country Perspectives:

2.5.1.1 Bangladesh

There seems to be no explicit, clearly stated and de jure language policy regarding MOI and EMI across different institutes, including HEs in Bangladesh. Confirming this fact, a study by Rahman and Pandian (2019) further points out that Bangla is dominantly used in the public universities whereas English is used in the private ones (also see Karim et al. 2021); and the use of English in the STEM stream in public universities of Bangladesh is more predominant, while that of Bangla in humanities and social sciences departments of the public universities is more vital. Rahman, Singh and Karim (2020) argue that Bangla, the language of national identity, is the MOI in public universities whereas English, the language of internationalisation, globalisation and economic mobility is the MOI of private universities. The private sector of education is more laden with neoliberal ideologies whereas public universities are more interested in nation building. Karim, Kabilan, Ahmed, Reshmin and Rahman (2021) show that EMI in Bangladesh higher education leads to a division-based Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital. Higher education thus creates two different types of graduates/citizens with separate ideologies and separate career paths, leading to conflicting social stratification. English has become the language of prestige, power and fortune.

It has already been shown how English leads to the creation of social divides. Rahman and Pandian (2019) further elaborate that EMI is prioritised as internationalisation of higher education is emphasised, English offers better financial benefits, and it readies students for the academy. Karim et al. (2021) find EMI to be responsible for exclusion in academia and within the nation. They (Karim et al., 2021) find Bangla medium students to be marginalised in EMI based education and comment that EMI and BMI produce two different types of graduates for two different types of purposes, thus leading to exclusion or division. Though most of the participants of the study (Karim et al., 2021) suggest replacing EMI with BMI, the authors suggest bilingual MOI.

Sultana and Roshid (2021) comment that the quality of education in English medium institutes is much better than that of Bangla medium institutes and such quality education can be afforded by learners from well-off families (35.5-213 \$ per month). However, even the rural people want their children to be taught in English so that they can secure a position in the job market (Sultana & Roshid, 2021). As the demand for English language-based education is high, private universities, being guided by neoliberal ideologies, capitalise on EMI. According to them, English in Bangladesh is both a language of linguistic hegemony, imperialism, and inequality; the symbol of status, pride, and prestige; and the language of globalisation, commodification and internationalisation.

Though rural people want to obtain better education for their children, Roshid et al. (2022) found that rural and suburban students from underprivileged backgrounds do not have *educational equity*. They do not have uninterrupted internet connectivity and required

amenities for participating in online classes. *Fairness*, and academic integrity in assessment has been questioned. *Social justice* has been found to be compromised. Educational institutes have not been able to suggest measures for eradicating discrimination against low-income people.

Even teachers working in different institutes seem to have conflicting perceptions regarding MOI. Rahman et al.'s (2020) study reveals that teachers in a public university think that knowledge creation is more important than developing English skills. These teachers also showed priority for Bangla, the language of the learners' family and their previous education. On the other hand, according to the study, teachers in a private university do not consider EMI as a threat to Bangla. They connect globalisation and economic benefits with English. The study further suggests that MOI policies in public and private universities in Bangladesh are nonidentical.

While commenting on the overall educational scenario in Bangladesh, Chowdhury and Sarker (2018) mention issues of access and equity with reference to financial capacity, natural disaster, and gender. Sultana and Roshid (2021) further comment how these two kinds of higher educational institutes lead to the creation of discrimination between the "haves' and 'have-nots' and city and urban dwellers".

Several challenges in the way of implementing the use of DMT for English in HE are mentioned in research nowadays, especially in the while- and post COVID contexts. The study by Khan et al. (2021) mentions internet access and affordability as major roadblocks to online teaching. They further add access to the internet, speed, cost of the internet, contextual and financial constraints and students' attitude towards online classes. Unreliable internet connectivity and high data costs were also mentioned. Khan et al. (2021) mentioned that many private universities even did not have the required technology, internet connectivity and logistic support for accessing online teaching and learning. Students from rural and remote areas were likely to be doubly disadvantaged (Khan et al. 2021), which would further widen the inequalities in education (Jahan et al., 2021). Though both Khan et al. (2021) and Jahan et al. (2021) mentioned several challenges, they seem to have appreciated how teachers and students coped with the situation and effectively dealt with the challenges.

Kabir et al. (in press, 2022) identified challenges in online assessment. The study reveal: the assessment process is affected due to challenges in logistic support including digital devices, connections and cost, . . . lack of training, lack of experience, anxiety, depression etc., and assessment literacy including teachers' (in)capacity to use alternative approaches in assessment, maintaining academic integrity, and dealing with traumatic experiences.

While talking about private universities, Khan, Jahan, et al. (2021) and Sultana et al. (2022) find clarity, fairness and reliability in online assessment to be a serious issue to be dealt with.

Khan et al. (2020) mentioned the similar issues while discussing assessment with regards to Bangladeshi public universities.

Other studies mention mental health issues in online education at the higher level (Rahman et al., 2021), including depression, anxiety, and stress (Islam, Barna et al., 2020; Islam, Sujan et al., 2020). Physical discomforts, such as back pain, blur vision, and headache because of the prolonged engagement with online activities were also referred to in the study by Sultana et al. (2022). They emphasised the wellbeing of the students engaged in online education.

Three major dynamics that inform the English language policy influence in Bangladesh - colonialism, nationalism, and globalisation and national development motives are identified by Nur, Short and Ashman (2021: 19). They (Nur et al., 2021: 29) argue that current de facto policies and practices create EL/ELE 'haves' and 'have nots'. Khan, Kabir and Haider (2021) explores the situation from a different perspective and argue that the use of local varieties of English in Bangladesh is increasing through the enhanced use of technology. English is the most used language in technology. It has been pointed out that the multilingual and multicultural character of Bangladeshi people has not been reflected in de facto education policies. The policies seem to champion a reductionist approach, positing one language against another, in a replacive way. It seems the ambivalent and ambiguous perception of English, instead of easing the situation, further complicates the educational and social ecology of the country.

2.5.1.2 China

In China, English is taught as a foreign language and it is a compulsory subject that students are required to take for the university entrance examination. Some universities require that students must pass their English examinations to a certain level before they can obtain their diplomas or degrees (Haidar & Fang, 2019). In fact, the government has never issued this policy. Therefore, there have been debates around this requirement. Since 2010, the mandatory regulation that students could not obtain diplomas without passing College English Test Band 4 (which is usually taken by students at the end of their second-year university study, and the language proficiency level is between B1-B2 of CEFR) has been gradually cancelled in one university after another.

In line with the requirements of the Ministry of Education, the National College Foreign Language Teaching Advisory Board (2018-2022) issued College English Teaching Guidelines (2020), according to which Chinese culture and values have been emphasised and the fostering of students' critical thinking and intercultural communicative competence have also been highlighted besides language knowledge, basic skills of listening/speaking/reading/writing and learning strategies (He, 2020).

China is a country with 56 nationalities. Putonghua is the standard form of mother tongue, alongside many dialects that are quite diversified. In such a context, although English is used as a lingua franca, a tension is that some people have concerns about whether the craze of English learning will threaten Chinese languages and culture, as well as many local dialects, and whether Chinese people will lose their national and cultural identity (Gao, 2009).

A number of reviewed studies investigated gender differences in English learning in Chinese higher education. Most of the research explored to what extent gender affects students' English learning strategies (Xu, 2020; Wang, 2021) and academic achievements (Gao, 2020; Zhao, 2022). Yang (2022) investigated the status of language learning motivation among Chinese university EFL learners and suggested that learners' gender played a very complicated role in L2 motivation. In addition, Cheng and Xu (2022) found that female students have more willingness to communicate in English than their male peers. Xiao and Liu (2021) focus on male and female undergraduate students' differences in autonomous English learning and independent learning ability. Moreover, studies on gender differences in mobile English learning are also conducted. For instance, Yu (2019) showed significant gender differences in cognitive loads, attitudes and academic achievements in mobile English learning.

China is a unified multi-ethnic country, where the ethnic minority people are mainly living in compact communities in developing areas. Some studies have investigated ethnic college students' English learning. A few studies have analysed their English learning difficulties and strategies to support English teaching (Li, 2020, Ru, 2020). Cao (2022) considered English teacher education and development in the minority area under the education digital transformation. Also, studies have illustrated that ethnic minority students have higher English learning anxiety and lower learning self-efficacy than others due to a relatively weak foundation of English (Yu, 2021).

Furthermore, given the widened access to Chinese HE, a large proportion of students studying at Chinese colleges come from rural lower-class families. Based on Bourdieu's social theoretical lenses, Wu and Tarc (2021) have explored how the interplay of capital, habitus and social fields affected students from rural-lower class families. Their narrow, test-oriented focus, and the lack of confidence and initiative in English language learning stemmed from their habitus formed in their situated socio-cultural and educational fields.

Mobile technology offers great potential for university students' language learning. Numerous studies have been conducted on utilising mobile technology in language learning in Chinese higher education. There are also some challenges: (1) the role of teachers and students in mobile assisted language learning should be well-designed to guarantee effectiveness, (2) designing rules to guide learners' behaviours could be important, (3) software developers should focus more on the learners' needs when designing the functions so as to increase learners' intention and interests, (4) learners' self-regulated learning skills

should be cultivated to facilitate learners' mobile language learning and lifelong learning (Lai et al., 2022). From another point of view, the teachers' digital literacy could also influence their course design which may restrict learners' language learning. So, conducting teacher training to improve teachers' digital competence could be an urgent issue (Zhao et al., 2021). On the one hand, there is an emphasis on the value of English in tertiary education. As English is the most widely used language, it has been recognized as an important tool for international communication and technology development. It also has the potential to foster students' overall development, including their cross-cultural understanding, critical thinking, global competence, etc. Besides, it is worth mentioning that a recent trend in higher education in China is that English as the medium of instruction (EMI) has been adopted as an emerging method for many content courses. However, the effectiveness of EMI compared with mother tongue instruction in China remains an issue for further investigation (Fang, 2018).

On the other hand, college English was faced with unprecedented pressure from the public (Cheng & Wei, 2021). Scholars mentioned that the continuous pedagogic reform seemed to be time-consuming and inefficient. Therefore, the Ministry of Education has drafted and issued new language education policies, such as *College English Teaching Guidelines (2020)* mentioned above, to encourage students' overall English language competence.

With the development of mobile technologies, English learning has experienced enormous change, especially the learning context and learning form. Informal learning has become even more important for learners to improve their language skills. Many apps have been designed and developed to support English learners' reading, speaking and vocabulary memorising, such as Liulishuo and Shanbay in China (Kan & Tang, 2018). These apps allow learners to learn at anytime and anywhere, which becomes a supplement to formal learning. Learners in formal classes could only get the same learning materials from the instructors regardless of learners' needs or preferences. Moreover, informal learning makes it possible for learners to get in touch with different language partners (in China or abroad). Also, some online celebrities could become models for English language learners.

2.5.1.3 India

In India, higher education in technical-professional disciplines, such as medicine, engineering, pharmacy and architecture, is almost exclusively EMI, while arts, humanities and social sciences largely follow Indian languages as mediums of instruction. Science, commerce and management education seems more evenly distributed between English and Indian languages as mediums (Borooah & Sabharwal, 2017: 10). Predominance of EMI in HE programmes, especially technical-professional, continues a legacy dating back to the establishment of India's first universities in 1857, which initiated HE in EMI. Though India's national education policies (NEP 1968, 1986, 1992, 2020) have consistently advocated Indian languages as the preferred mediums over EMI, the policy guidelines have not been rigorously implemented, leaving the EMI presence in HE to increase unabated, especially in the past two decades after India opened up its economy in the 1990s. Borooah & Sabharwal (2017: 30) also point to a substantial share of private HE institutions (72%) among those offering EMI.

Unfortunately, the annual reports of the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) do not include medium of instruction as a parameter, but they do show that HE institutions have increased by 400 per cent in the last two decades and a bulk of them are in the private sector (Ministry of Education, 2020; Tobenkin, 2022). This leads one to safely assume that the private sector share of EMI has expanded further. In recent years, two differently pulling trends regarding EMI seem to be emerging. On the one hand, some state governments are expanding EMI provision in school education to cater to the aspirations of middle and lower classes, largely dependent on state-sponsored education, for English and EMI, as good private sector education remains unaffordable. On the other hand, following the latest NEP 2020 (MHRD, 2020), the federal government is pushing for introducing Indian languages as mediums of instruction in the highly aspirational EMI-only HE disciplines like medicine and engineering.

An important facet of EMI in India must be borne in mind in any discussions on this matter. According to the AISHE report for 2019-20, private un-aided colleges account for over 65% of all (over 42000) colleges and 45% of the overall enrolment (Ministry of Education, 2020: 24). The private un-aided sector in India is largely unregulated, with serious quality issues of teachers, teaching-learning process, infrastructure and services, resulting in only a tokenistic EMI offering. English is only a nominal presence, while local Indian languages dominate this scene of “cosmetic Anglicisation” (Mohanty et al., 2010: 216). In short, not all EMI in India may be termed as true EMI. Given the large size of the private un-aided unregulated sector, what may be the more defining characteristics of EMI in India needs a thorough consideration.

Though research on EDI specifically focussing on HE is limited, there are many studies on the school sector which have a bearing on HE as well (Bhattacharya, 2013; Faust & Nagar, 2001; Mohanty, et al., 2010; Proctor, 2015). An important language policy report, prepared by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT, 2006:1), states that “English is in India today a symbol of people’s aspirations for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life.” The mention of English as a ‘passport’ to participation in national and international life in this quote reflects the close association of English with power structures, opportunities and social status in the national perception and practice. These in turn colour the issues and concerns about access, inclusion and diversity associated with English and EMI. A report based on two national sample surveys in 2008 and 2014 shows how different social groups find differentiated access to EMI in HE (Borooah & Sabharwal, 2017: 18). As a consistent trend across the two surveys, less than half of the enrolled students from underprivileged castes and religious groups are in EMI, while just about one third of poor or rural HE students are in EMI. Gender distribution is more even, with 50% of the boys and 48% of the girls in EMI. However, the EMI data here does not differentiate between effective and low-quality EMI discussed above. A large number of socially disadvantaged learners go to low-cost, low-quality EMI, receiving little preparation to “participate fully in national and international life”, which advantaged learners easily accomplish “with ... positive attitudinal and environmental support in English” (Mohanty, 2006: 269). Mohanty (2006: 269) notes how EMI perpetuates socio-economic divides in schools, echoing Faust & Nagar’s (2001: 2878) observation that “English-medium education widens social fractures in Indian society by creating and reinforcing a social, cultural,

economic, and discursive divide between the English-educated and the majority". Further, in addition to EDI issues at the entry into HE, there are more issues related to sustaining and progressing in HE. Some recent reports in the national media suggest a high dropout rate and a low progression rate among disadvantaged social groups (for example, The Hindu, 2021, Pon Vasanth, 2021).

While the use of DMT had a limited spread in education, largely restricted to well-equipped and affluent HE institutions, the COVID crisis not only forced the entire sector to rush for all possible solutions, but also led to much greater acceptance and spread of DMT as an important component in education. Internet users reached 624 million in 2021, a jump of 8% over the previous year (DATAREPORTAL, 2021), and smartphones became the primary technological channel for teaching (UNESCO, 2021: 07). The University Grants Commission, which had banned open and distance (including online) education in 2016, reintroduced it with adequate regulations pledging support (UGC, 2020). NEP 2020 has devoted two full sections to technology integration and online and digital education (MHRD, 2020: Sec. 23, 24), looking forward to a massive growth of DMT in education. However, issues of access and quality dominate the discussions around DMT in education. Efforts to shift to e-education in the COVID period emphatically brought to the fore the significant disparities of access along socio-economic, gender and locational lines (Bhattacharya, 2020; Devara, 2020; Reddy et al, 2020). Now in the post COVID times the digital divide is still an important challenge to address. Concerns about the quality of the learning experience, reduction in socialisation and personal interaction, loss of collective spaces, and such other aspects underline the arguments against a sweeping shift to technology-driven education (Bhattacharya, 2020; EPE Engage, 2021). On the other hand, the education world is seeing a boom of DMT services and products, as well as devices and accessories, both from private players and government agencies. Some initiatives like 'Digital India' (<https://www.digitalindia.gov.in/>), SWAYAM (<https://swayam.gov.in/>) and DIKSHA (<https://diksha.gov.in/>) reflect a stronger governmental push for integrating technology in education. Technology-enabled education, especially online learning, is also seen as a key avenue to meet the ambitious target of gross enrollment in HE set by NEP 2020. In addition, there are proposals for allowing up to 40% online courses in on-campus programmes as well.

As the principal language of governance and administration, of inter-regional communication and in all kinds of medium and high-profile careers, English is seen as an important social capital, and therefore an aspirational language which could serve as a means of social mobility and better life. English proficiency is expected in even low-profile jobs (Endow, 2021), serves as a kind of gatekeeper (Mohan, 2014), and brings much better returns to those who possess it (Azam, et al, 2010). It is also seen to significantly influence recruitment and advancement in all major employment sectors (Erling, 2014; and Prince & Singh, 2015). Not surprisingly, attitudes towards learning English are generally positive and there is a sustained demand for English and EMI. It is interesting to note that attitudes towards English are driven by pragmatic-instrumental motivations, and not linked to culture or identity, in contrast to Indian languages, which are seen more as cultural, national and societal assets than as means for employment, status or mobility (Hohenthal, 2003).

There has been hardly any research on informal learning in the HE sectors. A handful of studies focus on informal learning spaces such as canteens and libraries and explore how students use them. However, anecdotal data suggests that there is a significant number of HE students who regularly access and use a range of informal learning avenues both to supplement their formal education and to extend into areas of personal interest or for capacity enhancement. Apps and online courses seem to be two more common Informal learning avenues among HE learners, and the smartphone the preferred device to access them. It is difficult to make any definitive statements in this regard in the absence of research or statistical reports.

2.5.1.4 Indonesia

Indonesia, an archipelago of 17000 islands and a home of 280 million people, is socio-linguistically one of the most diversified countries on the planet. With an estimate of 700-1000 languages and dialects spoken in the most populous Islamic country, it holds ethnic and linguistic diversity together with the motto of 'unity in diversity' (Setyabudi, 2017; Maryanto, 2018), which is also protected by the 1945 Constitution especially article 32. Bahasa Indonesia has been the national language since 1928, and foreign languages are also taught in schools in Indonesia at various levels of education. The chosen foreign languages can also be used as the main language in the teaching process as written in Law no. 24 of 2009 on Flags, Languages, and Symbol of the Country, and National Anthem article 29 paragraph 2.

English education in Indonesia can be traced back to 1900 when it replaced French as a foreign language. As most local languages did not have literate traditions, English was chosen as the local content, rather than local languages, which enabled English language education to be expanded (Stockton, 2018). Since its adoption into the school curriculum, the debate on western culture making the local largely Islamic culture 'impure', and the resultant love-hate relationship with English have started. According to Stockton (2018), despite the fact that English in Indonesia is taught separately from culture, the ideological opposite, namely local nationalism, fearing loss of identity, and pollution of the language and culture by English and the Western values attached to it, has contributed to a love-hate relationship. In today's Indonesia, the English language is inseparable from Indonesian education. Many Indonesian theorists believe in the possibility of a variety of English that is dissociated from the centrist thought and culture. For example, some authors, often from the Islamic countries, have flagged the emergence of what they call 'Islamic English' (Iqbal, 2012), which is not yet an established variety of English. According to Iqbal (2012), the development of English as an Islamic language means it can render key Islamic concepts into English without having to use excessive italicization, transliteration, or explanatory notes. This 'recultured English' expands the definition, mentioning the calligraphic style of writing, halal icons, Islamic fashion, as well as religious holidays, all of which might intersect with English language as well as new vocabulary along with social and cultural concepts associated with Islam and Muslims. Thus, 'Islamic English may be a variety of English figuring significantly in the future of Indonesian ELT and TESOL generally' (Stockton, 2018: 146).

So far as the use of technology in English language teaching is concerned, Indonesia, as a developing country, suffers from several socio-economic problems. Hidayat et al. (2021)

stated that many Indonesian English teachers and learners, especially those living in big cities, are already familiar with using different forms of digital technologies for their English language teaching and learning while those teaching in outlying places are yet to learn the digital skills. There has been a widespread effort to deliver emergency remote education using digital technology in Indonesia. The role of technology is thought to enhance teachers' creativity in EFL classrooms.

UNICEF (2020) has investigated the availability, quality, and use of digital learning platforms; digital skills gap for teachers and students; and internet connectivity of school communities. Following a desk review and expert interviews, the findings were validated by conversations with students, teachers and parents from Papua, East Java, West Sulawesi, Central Palu, East Nusa Tenggara, Maluku and West Java. The report states that Facebook, WhatsApp, and LINE, and conferencing applications Google-meet and Zoom are the most popular choices for communication and sharing teaching assignments. They were found to be easier to use, affordable and do not require high Internet speed. The report found that Indonesian young students have a strong potential for digital learning but lack skills needed for the digital economy workforce.

According to the same report, there is a slight gender imbalance in digital skills of men and women, especially in rural areas where many students struggle to adjust to digital learning, and parents lack capacity to support them. Many teachers do not have the digital skills required for online education and have received limited training although many efforts have been made by the Indonesian Government to support school to facilitate students in online learning.

In higher education worldwide, learner autonomy, the ability to take charge of one's own learning (Daflizar, 2020), is increasingly regarded as an imperative in foreign language learning. In the Indonesian context, very few studies on the issue of out-of-class English language learning have been published. Daflizar (2020) describes the extent to which Indonesian tertiary students engage in autonomous English language learning outside the class. He explored students' perceived constraints in practicing autonomous learning technology and found that there are significant differences in autonomous learning activities between female and male students and between English major Indonesian students and non-English major students.

3 Research Methodology

In this project, we employ a mixed-methods approach adopting a time series longitudinal design. The longitudinal data will be collected in an interval of 13-15 months. We will collect data using multiple methods of quantitative and qualitative research in two phases to address the research questions with sufficient breadth and depth. The quantitative part will be online surveys and the qualitative part will consist of focus group discussions (FGDs), semi-structured interviews and Padlet discussions (PDs).

3.1 Participants

Research participants in the study will be 6000 undergraduate students (n=1500 from four to six universities in each country) enrolled in four disciplines, namely Business/Economics, Humanities, Sciences, and Medicine/Nursing, and their teachers (n=240, 60 from each

country), from East and South Asia, namely China, Indonesia, Bangladesh and India. The universities are being selected on the basis that they are representative of geographical location (urban/semi urban), ranking (mid-tier) and sector (public/private). The programs they run will include our four target discipline areas namely: Business/Economics, Humanities, Sciences, and Medicine/Nursing. In each selected university, a sample population will be selected in coordination with the Department/Faculty heads. We aim to ensure a proportional inclusion of female participants. It is also worth pointing out that the number of female participants in this study might vary according to subjects. For instance, we expect more female participants from Nursing but less from STEM. So, our focus will be on gender representation as a whole.

Additionally, a small number of I/NGO leaders (n=20, 5 from each country), educationists (n=20, 5 from each country), IT companies (n=4-8, 1-2 from each country) and policy makers (n=52, 13 in each country, two faculty heads from each university and one MoE representative) will be invited to take part in the study. These different groups of stakeholders' views will contribute to the shaping up of our prediction regarding the future of English in different societal systems/domains. Each of the groups will be purposely selected.

3.2 Research Tools

We have designed two survey questionnaires and guidelines for student FGDs and teacher interviews (see Appendix A). In order to ensure that our tools address our research questions and contextual issues, we had several iterations of the tools in consultation with our partners. They are currently being piloted in the four target countries with a small number of participants. However, we have not designed prompts for PDs; they will be designed later based on our learnings from the first phase survey and FGDs with students.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

In the first phase, we will administer online questionnaire surveys to undergraduate students (n=1500) in every research country, within the first 4-6 months of the start of their undergraduate study and to university teachers (n=240). We are going to use the JISC platform for the online survey as we found that it works perfectly in all the four research contexts. The student survey includes students' immediate past experiences of using the English language and technology (i.e., data collected retrospectively about their school level experiences) along with their current practices and their attitudes towards the roles of English and technology in their lives and EDI (including gender) issues in higher education. Similarly, the teacher survey will focus on teaching and assessment practices in higher education, and teachers' attitudes towards the roles of English and technology in their lives and EDI issues in higher education.

It is also worth pointing out that a small subsample of the survey students (n=60, 15 in each country) and teachers (n=20, 5 in each country), who express interest, will be invited to take

part in an FGD and an individual semi-structured interview, respectively. Additionally, some survey student participants (n=60, 15 in each country) will be invited to take part in a Padlet discussion. The first phase data will be collected between December, 2022 and February 2023.

The second phase begins with the re-administration of the first phase (somewhat modified) survey to the same participants (undergraduate students and teachers) which will allow us to compare how their practices of using English and technology have changed over a period of time (from school level to university level in the case of students), including any changes in their attitudes and expectations of the roles of English and technology in their lives and EDI issues in higher education. Then, all the students who took part in the Padlet discussion during the first phase will be invited to take part in Padlet discussions and FGDs again. Furthermore, the teachers who took part in the first phase interviews will be invited to take part in an individual interview. Additionally, other stakeholders (I/NGO leaders, IT companies, educationists and policy makers) will be invited to take part in an individual interview. The interval between the first phase and the second phase of data collection will be slightly more than one year. It is also worth pointing out that we are planning to collect data (both quantitative and qualitative) in both phases remotely.

3.4 Ethics Approval for the Study

We applied for ethics approval at the OU in September. Our application has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Review Committee at the OU. The ethics approval reference number is: HREC/4522/Kukulska-Hulme. It is worth pointing out that all our partners will adopt the ethics documents (participant information sheet, consent forms and letter to Department/Faculty Heads) that we prepared for the application at the OU. However, none of them will submit a separate application in their organisation. Indeed, most of the organisations do not even have an ethics review board. The OU, as the lead institution, has advised the partners to follow the OU and the British Council's ethics and safeguarding protocols. We will ensure that all our partners abide by the OU's ethical procedures. The Modish project team will make every effort to ensure that all the team members follow research ethics in each step of this project.

3.5 Higher Education Contexts and Research Sites

The project focuses on four most populous countries in east and south Asia (Bangladesh, China, India and Indonesia). What follows next is an introduction to the research sites in the four countries.

3.5.1 Bangladesh

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS, undated), in Bangladesh, there are 46 public universities. Only three universities are located in the hilly areas while the others are in the plain land. 24 universities are located in city corporations, 5 universities in subdistrict headquarter but not municipality (upazila sadar not pouro), 10 universities in rural areas, 4 universities in district headquarters (district sadar

poura), 1 university in sub-district headquarter-cum-municipality (upazila sadar poura), 1 in other municipalities (other poura areas), and 1 in undecided area.

There are 100 private universities across the country. Among them, only two universities offer single sex education exclusively for girls whereas others offer coeducation. Three universities are located in hilly areas and the rest, in plain land. 46 universities are located in the city corporations, 23 in other municipalities (other poura areas), 12 in district headquarters (district sadar poura), 7 in rural areas, 1 in sub-district headquarter-cum-municipality (upazila sadar poura), 3 in subdistrict headquarter but not municipality (upazila sadar not poura), and 1 in unspecified area.

According to BANBEIS (2021: 20), there are 108 private and 50 public universities and 2 international universities in the country. The percentage of female students are 32.20 (out of 15277 students) in the private universities, 26.73 (out of 15426 students) in the public universities and 15.38 (out of 273) in the international universities. Gender parity index in 2021 from primary to tertiary level in Bangladesh is 1.09%, indicating disparity against females (BANBEIS, 2021: 43).

In fact, documents uploaded on BANBEIS website often provide conflicting data (See the link <http://banbeis.portal.gov.bd/site/files/708e9b00-b848-4776-a322-80d7f52a99db>). The data presented above are mostly taken from the Excel sheets on private and public universities; however, according to the report (Bangladesh Education Statistics, 2021, chapter 8), Among 31752 teachers, 8927 teachers (28.11%) are female, and among 1172901 students, 412789 (36.19) are female students.

Rahman and Singh (2019) comment that Bangladesh does not have any systematic and consistent language policy regarding EMI in higher education and thus the universities in the country respond to the phenomenon of globalization. Their study (Rahman & Singh, 2019) unfolds that EMI is prioritised in private universities as internationalisation of higher education is emphasized there, English offers better financial benefits, and it readies students for the academy. EMI laden with such ideologies is likely to create a 'divide' across the nation as there are universities where counter discourses prevail significantly. Karim, Kabilan, Ahmed, Reshmin, & Rahman (2021) argue and attempt to prove how EMI leads to division based on linguistic capital in the Bourdieusian sense and exclusion in academia and within the nation. In fact, they (Karim et al., 2021) found that Bangla medium students are marginalized in EMI based education leading to segregation of linguistically challenged and linguistically privileged students. Private universities are found to uphold neoliberal values whereas public universities seem to uphold values pertaining to nation-building or nation-state (Rahman, et al., 2020).

No explicit policy papers or initiatives have been found related to the status of English and DMT in higher education in Bangladesh. Different universities are found to use technology in language education. However, in the while- and post-COVID situations, the use of technology boomed though such transition, due to the emergency situation, to technology-based language education without any kind of training of prior knowledge invited a lot of pedagogical, physical, and mental challenges, many of which are yet to be resolved (Khan, et al., 2021; Roshid, et al., 2022; Sultana, et al., 2022).

Selecting suitable universities for the Modish project was challenging. Attempts have been made to select an equal number of public and private universities, two each from rural and urban areas covering the disciplines of Business/Economics, Humanities, Sciences, and Medicine/Nursing (See appendix 2). Among them, one private university is from a rural area while the other is from an urban area. A similar pattern has been followed in the case of the public universities. Medical and nursing education are taught in colleges affiliated to universities. The number of seats in those colleges are limited. Hence, there is a possibility that more medical colleges will be included. However, attempts are made to include colleges from urban and rural areas. Attempts are also made to include educational institutes from across the country e.g., from the northern (for example, Mymensingh) and the southern (for example, Khulna) regions and the capital though the reality is that most of the private institutes are located in the capital.

3.5.2 China

Universities are higher education institutions (HEIs) that have the authority to grant degrees and offer instruction in multiple subjects (OED online, 2010). According to the Higher Education Law of the People's Republic of China, Chinese universities include HEIs that offer general degree programs and undergraduate vocational institutes. As of 2021, the Chinese mainland has 1,270 universities, including 849 public universities, 412 private (non-government) universities, and nine Sino-foreign cooperation HEIs (MOE, 2022). There are 18,257,460 undergraduate students enrolled in universities, and around 53.7% are females, and 46.3% are males (MOE, 2021).

In China, English has long been a prioritised foreign language, serving as a lingua franca for international business, politics, and diplomacy (Nordquist, 2020). It is also essential to communicate with the Belt and Road countries (State Language Commission, 2017). In education, English is a compulsory subject on the university entrance exam. Some universities also require students to pass their English examinations to a certain level to obtain their degrees (Haidar & Fang, 2019). Furthermore, the trend of adopting English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in Chinese higher education is noteworthy. However, English is under unprecedented public pressure in China. The number of English teaching hours is reduced in some universities (one possible reason might be the success of English language instruction in basic education), with some students starting to learn some less-

commonly taught languages. It is also proposed that English education in HE should contribute to developing interdisciplinary talents and intercultural communication skills.

The State Council of the People's Republic of China announced *the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of the Digital Economy* in 2021, which suggests the promotion of smart education. Numerous HEIs are constructing smart campuses and using technological teaching equipment, platforms (e.g., Blackboard), and online educational resources (e.g., MOOCs). Besides, digital and mobile technology (DMT) offers significant promise for university students' language learning. Nevertheless, mobile-assisted English learning needs further research in China particularly in the aspects of teaching and learning design, software functions, students' self-regulated learning skills, and instructors' digital literacy (Lai et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2021).

Five universities are selected for the study (see appendix 2) covering the main disciplines required such as humanities, business, medicine, and engineering. The dimension of the university's nature of being public or private is observed with three public universities, and two private universities. The location criteria are also followed with three from big cities, two from small cities or towns.

3.5.3 India

India has one of the largest HE systems globally with 1,043 universities, 42,343 colleges, and 11,779 stand-alone institutions, according to the latest data released by the Ministry of Education in India (Ministry of Education, 2020). Of the universities, 396 are privately managed, while 420 are located in rural areas. Among the colleges 79% are privately managed, with or without government grants-in-aid. The survey estimates the overall enrollment in the higher education to be 38.5 million, with nearly equal share of male (51%) and female (49%) students. Among the disadvantaged social groups, students from schedules castes and tribes constitute about 20% of the total enrollment, whereas religious minorities stand at 8%. The survey also reports a little over 1.5 million teachers, with a larger share of male teachers (74 female per 100 male teachers). India's gross enrolment ratio as per the survey is 27.1, much below the government target of 32 and far behind other leading sectors such as China (51) and Europe and North America (80).

While educational policies do not formally privilege English over any Indian language and consistently express a preference for Indian languages as desired mediums of instruction, English has been a common, and often mandatory, component across most UG programmes, irrespective of the medium of instruction. The 'three-language-formula', adopted in school education as a pragmatic solution to resolve the conflicts around Hindi being pushed as a national language and nation-wide medium of education, turns into a two-language formula at the undergraduate level. In all numbers and combinations of languages taught in school or tertiary education English has always stayed as a default member. Even the latest curricular guidelines of the UGC for the forthcoming nation-wide shift to 4-year undergraduate programmes include English as a 'common course' in the first three semesters (UGC, n.d.: Point 5.1). Again, there is little policy guidance on EMI, as

policies only discuss how Indian languages would be ideal mediums of instruction; it is indeed interesting and even paradoxical that language policies are largely silent about it. Following NEP 2020 recommendations, some states have begun work on introducing Hindi as an alternative medium in typically EMI disciplines like engineering and medicine, but there is a scepticism about any such initiative due to previous failures and lack of resources (Hindustan Times, 2021). On the other hand, for the first time the use of technology in education finds substantial and clear treatment in the HE policy guidelines of the past few years. Having first banned distance and online education in 2016, the UGC has allowed it now, with additional focus on greater technological enrichment. Various platforms like SWAYAM and schemes to promote technology-assisted education have been launched, and on-campus HE programmes are encouraged to open up to 40% of their academic inputs to online and digital courses (a host of government digital initiative in higher education are listed here - <https://lisportal.com/en/lis-blogss/3720-digital-initiative-of-govt-of-india-in-higher-education>).

Digital technology has been present in higher education to a limited extent until it received a massive boost during the COVID pandemic. The use of DMT is much higher now with substantial increase in both the internet users and handheld devices like smartphones. However, there seems to be a kind of 'division of territories' between mobile phones and other digital technologies in formal education. Formal classroom teaching usually involves other kinds of technology, but rarely mobiles and smartphones, which are typically used by students for supplementary, out-of-classroom and extended learning. There is no systematic data on the extent to which smartphones are accessed by or available to HE students, but it is believed to be substantially high after the pandemic, while anecdotal evidence suggests that there is much greater acceptability in the formal institutional settings of students' use of smartphones for communication, assignments submission, in-class searching for information and so on.

The universities selected for this study (See appendix 2) are not among the highest-ranking institutions and therefore more representative of a broader and larger section of HE in India. They are well established and well known HE institutions and possess legal and formal recognition from the regulatory bodies. They represent a mix of urban and rural settings, private and public management, multidisciplinary programme offerings, different levels of technology integration, different sizes, and different locational contexts. It is believed that these universities together are likely to yield more realistic and representative, and hence better generalisable, information on the questions being explored in this project.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) and IGD Technical University for Women (IGDTUW) may be considered sister institutions, since they are both state universities established by the Government of NCT Delhi and governed by common regulations and norms, with the difference that the former is a humanities and social sciences university, while the latter is an engineering and technology university. Both are from small size, unitary, non-affiliating urban public universities of good standing. RTM Nagpur University (RTMNU) and Gondwana University (GU) are public universities located in rural central India with rural students forming major chunk of the student population. Both are quite large,

affiliating universities, with several hundred colleges affiliated to them, and offering programmes in all disciplines except medicine. Thus, these four universities represent the entire spectrum of public sector HEIs. The SGT University, Gurgaon (SGTU) is a private university offering programmes in all disciplines and catering to a mix of rural and urban students, though the university itself is in a rural location. All universities are well-established and legally recognised, and collectively represent the entire HE sector in India.

3.5.4 Indonesia

Indonesia has two ministries of education: the Ministry of Culture and Education, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. There is a total of 3,251 (3,129 public and 122 private) universities under the Ministry of Culture and Education. Those universities have 306,698 teachers, with the number of male teachers much higher than female teachers, and they enrol 9,514,093 students. Under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, there is a much smaller total of 59 public universities and a much larger number - 868 – of private universities.

In order to recover students' learning loss resulting from the university closures during the Covid-19 pandemic in the last couple of years, Indonesian students are now asked to attend face-to-face classes/interaction regularly and collaborate with other students and teachers. Beside face-to-face interaction, some classes are run online, and some others follow a hybrid mode. There are also some online platforms for university students where they can learn the English language informally, such as Ruangguru, English today, British Council Indonesia and Enggo.

In Indonesia, the English language has an important role especially in education (Ramelan, 1992; Musyaffa, 2021). It is mostly used in educational policies and research. Additionally, it is taught as a compulsory subject not only to students from junior high school to senior high school but also to freshmen at university (Solikhah, 2022). Before entering any university, all students have to take an English language proficiency test which is designed by the respective university. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Indonesia has had a 'love-hate' relationship with English which is reflected in its inconsistent policy regarding its teaching and use. For example, while English is essential for development and socio-economic mobility, the spread of western liberal values is viewed as an encroachment on Indonesian culture, values and ways of life.

A total of six universities (3 public and 3 private) have been selected for the study (See appendix 2). Attempts are made to include universities from across the country. Hence, the selected universities are from four different regions: Java (Central and East), Jakarta, Borneo, and Sulawesi. It should be noted that all of them are located in urban areas. However, efforts will be made to visit rural colleges/campuses affiliated with those universities, particularly Universitas Muhammadiyah, Surakarta. It should also be noted that almost none of the universities run medicine courses in rural areas.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The following procedures will be followed to collect data for the study.

First phase

In the first phase of the study the following procedures will be followed in each target country:

- First, the research team (team members in their respective countries) will select universities and participants for the study– 1500 students and 60 teachers. [Note: universities have already been selected as mentioned above.]
- Second, an online survey with undergraduate students and their teachers will be conducted.
- Third, FGDs with 60 students (n=3 in each country, each FGD with 5 students) and semi-structured interviews with 20 teachers (n= 5 in each country) will be conducted. Those participants will be a sub-sample of the survey participants. A purposive sampling procedure will be used to select the participants to ensure that they are representative of gender, geographical location (urban and rural settings as far as practicable) and disciplines.
- Fourth, a small sub-sample of survey participants (n=60, 15 in each country) will be invited to take part in PDs.

Second phase

The second phase begins with the re-administration of the first phase (somewhat modified) survey to the same participants (undergraduate students and teachers) which will allow us to compare how their practices of using English and technology have changed over a period of time (from school level to university level in the case of students), including any changes in their attitudes and expectations of the roles of English and technology in their lives and EDI issues in higher education. Then, all the students who took part in the FGDs and PDs during the first phase will be invited to take part in PDs and FGDs again. Furthermore, the teachers who took part in the first phase interviews will be invited to take part in an individual interview. Additionally, other stakeholders (I/NGO leaders, IT companies, educationists and policy makers) will be invited to take part in an individual interview. The interval between the first phase and the second phase of data collection will be slightly more than one year.

We have realised that there are three major challenges for us. The first challenge concerns response rate to our survey. We are aiming to collect data from 6000 students (a minimum 1000 in each country) and 240 (n=60 teachers in each country). But, there is a risk of not achieving sufficient numbers of participants, as well as a risk of not having the same numbers in the second round of data collection when we go back to the same participants (students and teachers). For example, in the meantime some students may have discontinued their studies. In order to minimise these risks, we will administer the survey through the same groups of teachers and seek help from the same faculty/program heads. We will send reminders to participants in both phases. In case of a significant shortfall in numbers of participants, we will reach out to additional groups and students within the same universities and disciplines. This possibility will be discussed with the faculty/program heads, to set appropriate expectations.

Second, we are planning to collect data (both qualitative and quantitative) online, but it is likely that some students in the target countries do not have smartphones or digital devices. Additionally, participants recruitment for interviews and FGDs/PDs will be based on survey responses. This means that the survey participants are requested to provide us their email addresses if they wish to take part in follow-up interviews and FGD/PDs. However, partners have told us that some students may not have email addresses. Therefore, in order to mitigate these risks, we will work closely with teachers. If students have issues with digital devices or the internet, they will be asked to fill out a paper survey and inform their teachers about their willingness to take part in FGDs or PDs.

The third challenge concerns the researchers' identity as an academic/researcher and building trust among participants. To mitigate this, we will seek to minimise the social and knowledge gaps between the researchers and participants. We are aware that most participants do not feel comfortable sharing their stories unless they have a friendly (informal) relationship with researchers. Therefore, the team members will maintain a good rapport with them before collecting data.

3.7 The Pilot Study

The project partners have been asked to pilot the research tools (survey questionnaires, and FGD/interview guidelines) developed for this study. The pilot studies have the practical aims to: check the accuracy of the research tools for the participants and the volume of data that could be generated through the tools; ensure that the methods of data collection are appropriate to address the research questions; discover any difficulties that could arise in the process of data generation and/or analysis. Following the outcome of the pilot study, required changes will be made to the research tools before conducting the main study.

Partners have already started their pilot studies. The student survey questionnaires are being piloted with 40 students (n=10 in each country), and teacher questionnaires with 8 teachers (n=2 in each country). FGD guidelines will be piloted with 20 students (5 in each country) and interview prompts with 8 teachers (n=2 in each country) by mid-December.

4 Project Dissemination/Blog Website

One of the aims of the project is to create awareness among the concerned populations of EDI issues in higher education in relation to their opportunities to learn the English language and use technology for learning and career development. It is crucial to look at why and how students' opportunities to learn English and their experiences with technology use for learning is affected by the existing societal structure and hierarchies. To achieve this, the project team has set up a blog website (<https://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/Modish-English>). We will use the platform to share project related information and research findings.

5 Synthesising Summary/ Reflection

The Modish project first progress report provides an overview of all the activities/tasks that have already been accomplished and also presents the project activities that are planned for the next six months. It is worth pointing out that the extensive search of literature both globally and within our research countries has helped us in understanding current EDI issues in relation to TALE practices in higher education, and both local and global efforts made to promote inclusion in education. The review of context specific literature provided an understanding of the situation within the research contexts: what are global EDI issues in higher education, how the gender role is seen in inclusive practices, whether students have equal access to technology for learning, how EDI and gender issues have been researched to date and the organisations involved. Most importantly, it helped us situate our research project within the context of the target countries. A number of activities including review of relevant literature and design of research instruments have already been completed; the next phase of the study will start in December.

6 Way Forward to Next Phase

The Modish project started on 1st of June 2022 and has made good progress so far. We have already completed some key activities: conducted an extensive review of relevant literature; obtained ethics approval from HREC at the OU; set up a blog website; designed tools for the study and nearly completed our pilot studies in the target countries. In the next six months, the following eight major activities have been planned.

6.1 Pilot Studies in Each Country

As mentioned above, each in-country partner has started pilot studies in their respective countries. The survey questionnaires have already been piloted. They are going to pilot FGD guidelines with 20 students (5 in each country) and interview prompts with 8 teachers (n=2 in each country) by mid-December.

6.2 Researchers' Orientation Workshops on Ethics and Safeguarding

As the Open University is the host institution of the project, all the Modish partners and team members, including local level research associates, have to adhere to the OU's safeguarding policies. We strongly believe that all the Modish team members need to have a shared understanding of possible ethical issues relevant to the study. Therefore, we will organise a workshop on ethical and safeguarding issues. The workshop will mainly focus on the British ethics and safeguarding framework. Additionally, the partners will be provided with the relevant information and documents from the OU.

However, it should be noted that the UK framework for safeguarding does not apply in our target countries as their modus operandi is distinct and it differs from one context to another. Therefore, in order to discuss possible contextual issues, we will organise one-to-one sessions with in-country teams. We will also provide them some written guidelines to assist the teams in getting ready for the fieldwork.

6.3 Co-creation Workshops

We are planning to organise co-creation workshops in January, 2023. Co-creation is an innovative method employed on projects in which involvement of key stakeholders from the outset is vital for research uptake. The workshops will help us to have a better understanding of the research issues (such as current trends of teaching, learning and assessment in higher education, EDI in higher education, and roles of technology in promoting or reducing EDI) in local contexts. Through the workshops, we can also adapt our research design, tools, and outputs, while also ensuring that stakeholders have an opportunity to contribute their ideas and experiences to the project. Indeed, the workshop can support effective two-way knowledge exchange between the research team and the stakeholders (such as practitioners, academics and policy makers), leading to impact on both practice and research. Hence, it can also lay the groundwork for us to have impacts from this project.

Each in-country team will organise a co-creation workshop. A total of 12 to 15 key stakeholders from different levels, such as representatives from NGOs, IT companies, internet service providers, universities, teachers, local or regional level government bodies, and policy makers) will be invited to the workshops. Additionally, a minimum of two OU team members and one representative from each of the local partner organisations named in the original project proposal (e.g., AINET in India, UNICEF and Centre of Language and Cultural Studies in Indonesia) will participate in the workshops.

6.4 Data Management Plan: Storing and Sharing Data

The project team will develop and share a data management plan with in-country partners and researchers before they start collecting data in January, 2023. The plan will have a major focus on data anonymising and storing schemes. However, we recognise that in some cases required storage tools/facilities may not be available. If such a situation arises, the research teams will be advised to find a safe passage of the data to the national researcher in each target country.

6.5 Data Collection for the First Phase

We are planning to start collecting our first phase data in January, 2023. Research sites and universities (four to six in each target country) have been selected for the study. Given that the conditions in the field are not the same in different countries, it will be hard to implement a uniform schedule for data collection. For instance, it may be winter vacation time in some countries while in others it's the annual examination period. Similarly, some may be observing a festival season while others may be experiencing internal conflict in their country and political turmoil. As classes in these situations do not run, we need to give our research partners a timeframe and work with them during the data collection while monitoring the situation closely. Nevertheless, we are planning to complete the first phase data collection by 30 April, 2023.

6.6 Data Transcription and Analysis

We will commence data transcription and analysis as soon as we finish the first phase data collection. In order to analyse qualitative data, interviews and FGDs will be transcribed, and all the transcriptions, along with Padlet discussion texts, will be transferred to Dedoose, a qualitative data coding software. The data will be analysed through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory with a major focus on the population and system dimensions.

To analyse quantitative data, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) shall be used to compare causal models over time. In addition to SEM, ANOVA (Two-way and Three-way) tests will be run and a p-value of <0.05 will be used to measure the level of significance. Trend coefficients of the English language learnings, English language assessment, use of English etc., will also be calculated to measure the consecutive changes in the dependent variables over time. Additionally, power analysis ($P = .80$) will be made to observe the effect sizes, which is an indication of the degree to which the phenomenon under study is manifested.

6.7 Community of Practice

We have a keen interest in attending and contributing to Community of Practice (CoP) events organised by the Future of English Research Group from the BC. So, we participated in the first CoP event on 11 November 2022. We are aware that the group is organising another event in March 2023. We will ensure that at least one of the team members will attend the event and give a presentation to share our learnings/findings from our project. We believe that such events provide us a platform where we can learn from each other and help each other. Therefore, we will actively take part in CoP activities as we want to draw on the community.

6.8 Project Dissemination

We will continue disseminating this project related information and its findings. As mentioned above, we have already set up a blog website for the project. We have a plan to publish four brief posts in December 2023. Then, we will publish one post every three months from January 2023 to the end of the project. Additionally, we have a plan to give a presentation in a research event organised by The Open University in Feb-Mar 2023. We will also develop a publication plan very soon. We want to ensure that we publish a good number of papers based on this project.

References

- Azam, M., Chin, & Prakash, N. (2010). The returns to English-language skills in India. *IZA Discussion Papers* 4802. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/668277>
- Bashir, A., Uddin, M. E., Basu, B. L. & Khan, R. (2021). Transitioning to online education in English Departments in Bangladesh: Learner perspectives. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11(1), 11-20. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v11i1.34614>
- Bhattacharya, S. (2020). What is so wrong with online teaching? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 55(23). <https://www.epw.in/journal/2020/23/commentary/what-so-wrong-online-teaching.html>
- Bhattacharya, U. (2013). Mediating inequalities: Exploring English-medium instruction in a suburban Indian village school. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 14(1), 164-184.
- Bolton, P. (2010). Higher education and social class: Issues of Exclusion and Inclusion. *Social and General Statistics*. <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/22802/1/SN00620.pdf>
- Borooah, V. K. & Sabharwal, N. S. (2017). *English as a medium of instruction in Indian education: Inequality of access to educational opportunities*. CPRHE Research Papers 7. NUEPA.
- British Council (2014). South ASIA and higher education: Revolution and realities in the new economic order. [file:///C:/Users/rashish/Downloads/South Asia and Higher Education%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/rashish/Downloads/South%20Asia%20and%20Higher%20Education%20(1).pdf)
- Cao, C. (2022). “互联网+”背景下少数民族地区高校英语教师发展面临的危机及对. *Modern English*, (13), 119-122.
- Chan, E. L. & Coney, L. (2020). Moving TESOL forward: Increasing educators' critical consciousness through a racial lens, *TESOL Journal*, 11 (4)
- Cheng, L., & Xu, J. (2022). Chinese English as a foreign language learners' individual differences and their willingness to communicate. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.883664
- Chowdhury, R., & Sarkar, M. (2018). Education in Bangladesh: Changing contexts and emerging realities. In: Chowdhury, R., Sarkar, M., Mojumder, F., Roshid, M. (eds), *Engaging in Educational Research. Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects*, 44. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0708-9_1
- Conteh, J. (2018). Translanguaging, *ELT Journal*, 72 (4), 445–447.
- Cuthbert, D., Lee M. N. N., Deng W. & Neubauer, D. E. (2019). Framing gender issues in Asia-Pacific higher education. In D. E. Neubauer & S. Kaur (Eds.), *Women in Higher Education in Asia-Pacific*. Springer
- Daflizar, D. (2020). Autonomous English language learning beyond the classroom: Indonesian tertiary students' practices and constraints. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 19(10), 194-213. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.10.11>
- Dahmardeh, M. & Kim, S. D. (2019). Gender representation in Iranian English language coursebooks: Is sexism still alive? *English Today*, 36 (1), 12-22.
- DATAREPORTAL (2021). *Digital 2021: India* <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-india?rq=India>

- Devara, R. (2020). Broadband internet: A luxury or a right? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 55(48) <https://www.epw.in/journal/2020/48/commentary/broadband-internet-access.html>
- EPW Engage (2021). Why 'online': Is not the way forward in education: A reading list <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/why-online-not-way-forward-education-reading>
- Erling, E.J. (2014). The role of English in skills development in South Asia: Policies, interventions and existing evidence. British Council.
- Endow, T. (2021). Language and learning: English as a medium of instruction in low-cost private schools. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 56(13). <https://www.epw.in/journal/2021/13/special-articles/learning-and-language.html>
- Faez, F. (2011). Reconceptualizing the native/non-native speaker dichotomy. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 10 (4), 231-249.
- Faust, D., & Nagar, R. (2001). Politics of development in postcolonial India: English-medium education and social fracturing. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36(30), 2878–2883.
- Gao, Y. (2009). Sociocultural contexts and English in China: Retaining and reforming the cultural habitus. In J. Lo Bianco, J. Orton, & Y. Gao (Eds.), *China and English: Globalisation and the dilemmas of identity* (pp. 56-78). Multilingual Matters.
- Haidar, S., & Fang, F. (2019). English language in education and globalization: A comparative analysis of the role of English in Pakistan and China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 39 (2), 165-176.
- He, L. (2020). New requirements for college English teaching in the new era—Revision of College English Teaching Guidelines: Rationale and highlights [新时代大学英语教学的新要求——《大学英语教学指南》修订依据与要点] *Foreign Language World*, (4): 13-18.
- Hidayat, D., Lee, J. Y. Mason, J. & Khaerudin, T. (2022). Digital technology supporting English learning among Indonesian university students. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning* 17(23). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-022-00198-8>
- Hindustan Times (15 Sep, 2021. Medical courses to be also taught in Hindi medium in MP. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/bhopal-news/medical-courses-to-be-also-taught-in-hindi-medium-in-mp-101631676234671.html>
- Hohenthal, A. (2003). English in India: Loyalties and attitudes. *Language in India*, 3. <http://www.languageinindia.com/may2003/annika.html>
- Huang, W. & Fang, F. (2022). EMI teachers' perceptions and practices regarding culture teaching in Chinese higher education. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*. DOI: 10.1080/07908318.2022.2115056
- Iqbal, M. (2012). English as an Islamic language. Islamic information portal. <http://islam.ru/en/content/story/english-islamiclanguage>
- Islam, M. A, Barna, S. D., Raihan, H., Khan, M. N. A. & Hossain, M.T. (2020). Depression and anxiety among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh: A web-based cross-sectional survey. *PLoS ONE*, 15(8), doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0238162
- Islam, M. S., Sujan, M. S. H., Tasnim, R., Sikder, M. T., Potenza, M.N. & van Os, J. (2020). Psychological responses during the COVID-19 outbreak among university students in Bangladesh. *PLoS ONE* 15 (12), e0245083. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0245083

- Jahan, A., Khan, R., Roshid, M. M., Haider, M. Z., Sultana, S., & Kabir, M. M. N. (2022). From crisis to opportunities in higher education in Bangladesh. *The Dhaka University Journal of Linguistics*, 14(27–28), 143–166.
- Kachru, B. B. (1992). *The other tongue: English across cultures (2nd ed)*. University of Illinois Press.
- Kan, Q., & Tang, J. (2018). Researching mobile-assisted English language learning among adult distance Learners in China: *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*, 8(3), 1-28. doi:10.4018/ijcallt
- Karim, A., Kabilan, M. K., Ahmed, Z., Reshmin, L. & Rahman, M. M. (2021). The medium of instruction in Bangladeshi higher education institutions: Bangla, English, or both. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, DOI: 10.1080/15348458.2020.1871353
- Khan, M. H., Kabir, M. Md. N. & Haider, Md. Z. (2021). Conclusion: Lessons from the past and the future directives for English language education in Bangladesh. In Sultana et al. (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Education in Bangladesh*. Routledge.
- Khan, R., Bashir, A., Basu, B. L., & Uddin, M. E. (2020). Emergency online instruction at higher education in Bangladesh during COVID-19: Challenges and suggestions. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 17 (4), 1497-1506. doi: 10.18823/ asiatefl.2020.17.4.26.1497
- Khan, R., Basu, B. L., Bashir, A. & Uddin, M. E. (2021). Online instruction during COVID-19 at public universities in Bangladesh: Teacher and student voices. *Teaching English as a Second Language Electronic Journal*, 25(1), 1-27. <https://teslej.org/pdf/ej97/a19.pdf>
- Khan, R., Jahan, A., Sultana, S., Kabir, M. M. N., Haider, M. Z., & Roshid, M. M. (2021). Accessing online instruction amidst COVID-19 in Bangladesh: Barriers and coping strategies. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly*, 22, 33-48.
- Kirkpatrick A. (2014) English as a medium of instruction in east and southeast Asian universities. In Murray N. & Scarino A. (eds) *Dynamic Ecologies (pp. 15 – 29)*. Multilingual Education, 9. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7972-3_2
- Lai, Y., Saab, N., & Admiraal, W. (2022). University students' use of mobile technology in self-directed language learning: using the integrative model of behaviour prediction. *Computers & Education*, 179, 104413.
- Li, J. (2020). Needs analysis and teaching reform suggestions on minority college students' English learning: A case study of Uyghur 'Basic-class'. *Journal of Research on Education for Ethnic Minorities*, 31(2), 129-134. doi:DULI0.15946/1.cnki.1001-7178.2020.02 01
- Lin, A. M. Y. (2016). *Language across the curriculum & CLIL in English as an additional language context: Theory and Practice*. Springer.
- Ling, T., & Nasri, N. M. (2019). A systematic review: Issues on equity in education. *Creative Education*, 10 (1), 3163-3174. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2019.1012240>
- Liu, Y. & Fang, F. (2022). Translanguaging theory and practice: How stakeholders perceive translanguaging as a practical theory of language. *RELC Journal*, 53: 2, 391–399.
- Low, E. and Hashim, A. (2012). *English in Southeast Asia: Features, Policies and Language in Use*. John Benjamin Publishing Company.
- Manh, L. D. (2012). English medium instruction in Asian universities: The case of Vietnam. *Language Education in Asia*, 3(2), 263-267
- Marr, T. & English, F. (2019). *Rethinking TESOL in diverse global settings: The language and the teacher in a time of change*. Bloomsbury.

- Maryanto (2018). *Language policy in Indonesian education: Regional and local languages as oral language of instruction*.
 file://ad.monash.edu/home/User091/rashish/Desktop/RESEARCH%20PROJECTS/MODISH%20Future%20of%20English%20Project/Indonesia_MotherTongue_Policy19jan08.pdf
- Meighan, P. J. (2020). A case for decolonizing English language instruction. *ELT Journal*, 74 (1), 83–85
- Metz, M. (2019) Accommodating linguistic prejudice? Examining English teachers' language ideologies. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 18 (1),
- Ministry of Education, Government of India (2020). *All India survey on higher education, 2019-20*. Ministry of Education.
https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/aishe_eng.pdf
- Ministry of Education, PRC. (2021). *A review of achievements in the development of Chinese language*.
http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/reports/202210/t20221022_671530.html
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. MHRD.
- Mohan, P. (2014). The road to English: Slow migration of the economically weak child to elite India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 49(7).
<https://www.epw.in/journal/2014/7/commentary/roadenglish.html>
- Mohanty, A. K. (2006). Multilingualism of the unequals and predicaments of education in India: Mother tongue or other tongue? In O. Garcia, T. Skutnabb-Kangas & M. Torres-Guzman (Eds.), *Imagining multilingual schools* (pp. 262–279). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Mohanty, A. K., Panda, M. & Pal, R. (2010). Language policy in education and classroom practices in India. In K. Menken & O. Garcia (Eds.), *Negotiating language policies in schools: Educators as policymakers* (pp. 211-231): Routledge.
- Morley, L. (2013). *Women and higher education leadership: Absences and aspirations*. The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.
- National Council for Educational Research and Training (2006). *National focus group on the teaching of English: Position paper on the teaching of English* (Position Paper No. 1.4). http://www.ncert.nic.in/sites/publication/schoolcurriculum/Position_Papers/english.pdf
- Navani, M. T. (2019). Gender and higher education in India: Negotiating equity with access. In D. E. Neubauer & S. Kaur (Eds.) (2019). *Women in higher education in Asia-Pacific*. Springer.
- Neubauer, D.E. & Kaur, S. (2019). *Gender and Changing Face of Higher Education in Asia Pacific*. Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan
- Nordquist, R. (2020). *English as a lingua franca*. <https://www.thoughtco.com/english-as-a-lingua-franca-elf-1690578>
- Nur, S., Short, M. & Ashman, G. (2021). From the infrastructure to the big picture: A critical reading of English language education policy and planning in Bangladesh. In Sultana et al. (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Education in Bangladesh*. Routledge.
- O'Regan, J. P. (2021). *Global English and political economy*. Routledge.

- Pfngsthorn, J. (2022). Inclusive communicative language teaching: Hidden contradictions and overt practical issues. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL*, 11 (2), 177-196
- Piller, I., Takahashi, K. & Watanabe, Y. (2010). The dark side of TESOL: The hidden costs of the consumption of English. *Cross-Cultural Studies*, 20, 183-201
- Pon Vasanth, B. A. (21 Feb, 2021). Higher studies and the marginalised: Poor representation of SCs, STs in Ph.D programmes at IIT Madras. *The Hindu*.
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/phd-entry-in-iits-tougher-for-students-from-marginalised-communities/article33824475.ece>
- Prince, E-S & Singh, S. M. (2015). *English skills for employability: Setting common standards*. British Council. https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/esfe_report.pdf
- Proctor, L. M. (2015). English and globalization in India: The fractal nature of discourse. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 24(3), 294–314.
- Ravi, S., Gupta, N, & Nagaraj, P. (2019). *Reviving higher education in India*. Brookings Institution India Centre.
- Rahman, M. M. & Singh, M. K. M. (2019). Language ideology of English medium instruction in higher education. *English Today*, 1-7. doi:10.1017/S0266078419000294
- Rahman, M. M., Singh, M. K. M. & Karim, A. (2020). Distinctive medium of instruction ideologies in public and private universities in Bangladesh. *Asian Englishes*, 22:2, 125-142, DOI: 10.1080/13488678.2019.1666493
- Reddy A., B., Jose, S. & Vaidehi, R. (2020). Of access and inclusivity: Digital divide in online education. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 55 (36).
<https://www.epw.in/journal/2020/36/commentary/access-and-inclusivity.html>
- Rose, H., McKinley, J. & Galloway, N. (2021). Global Englishes and language teaching: A review of pedagogical research. *Language Teaching*, 54: 2, 157-189.
- Roshid, M. M., Sultana, S., Kabir, M. M. N., Jahan, A., Khan, R., & Haider, M. Z. (2022). Equity, fairness, and social justice in teaching and learning in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. DOI: 10.1080/02188791.2022.2122024
- Ru, H. (2020). Obstacles and solutions of learning English for preparatory undergraduates taught in both Chinese and Yi language from liangshan. *Education Modernization*, 7 (16), 187-189. doi:10.16541/j.cnki.2095-8420.2020.16.07
- Sah, P. K. (2022). English medium instruction in South Asian’s multilingual schools: Unpacking the dynamics of ideological orientations, policy/practices, and democratic questions, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 25:2, 742-755, DOI: 10.1080/13670050.2020.1718591
- Sah, P. K. & Li, G. (2018). English medium instruction (EMI) as linguistic capital: Promises and realities. *International Multilingual Research Journal* 12 (2), 109–123. doi:10.1080/19313152.2017.1401448.
- Seargeant, P. (2023). *The future of language*. Bloomsbury.
- Setyabudi, T. (2017). Language Policy in Indonesia. The Third International Conference on Science, Technology and Humanity. *ISETH*.
<file://ad.monash.edu/home/User091/rashish/Desktop/RESEARCH%20PROJECTS/MO DISH%20Future%20of%20English%20Project/Titis%20Setyabudi.pdf>
- Shin, H. & Lee, B. (2019). English divide and ELT in Korea: Towards critical ELT policy and practices, in Gao, X. (eds), *Second handbook of English language teaching*. Springer.
- Spolsky, B. & Sung, K. (2015). *Secondary school English education in Asia*. Routledge

- Stockton, R. J. (2018). Re-cultured language in Indonesian English Language Teaching. *Indonesian Journal of English Language teaching*, 13(2), 131-153.
- Sultana, S., Roshid, M., Haider, M. Z., Khan, R., Kabir, M. M. N., & Jahan, A. (2022). University students' and teachers' wellbeing during COVID-19 in Bangladesh: A qualitative enquiry. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(6), 1635-1655. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5265>
- Tang, H. H. (2019). World-class universities and female leadership in the academic profession: Case studies of east Asian higher education. In D. E. Neubauer & S. Kaur (Eds.), *Women in higher education in Asia-Pacific*. Springer.
- Tobenkin, D. (2022). *India's higher education landscape*. <https://www.nafsa.org/ie-magazine/2022/4/12/indias-higher-education-landscape>
- UNESCO (2021). *No teacher, no class: state of the education report for India*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379115>
- UNICEF (2020). Strengthening digital learning across Indonesia: Study brief. UNICEF
- University Grants Commission (2020). *Open and distance learning programmes and online programmes regulations*. New Delhi: UGC. <https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/221580.pdf>
- Weninger, C. & Kiss, T. (2013). Culture in English as a foreign language (EFL) textbook: A semiotic approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47 (4), 694-716.
- Wu, X., & Tarc, P. (2021). Challenges and possibilities in English language learning of rural lower-class Chinese college students: The effect of capital, habitus, and fields. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-16. doi:10.1080/01434632.2021.1931249
- Xiao, Z., & Liu, Y. (2021). Gender differences in college students English autonomous learning ability based on a survey of non- English majors in a university. *Journal of North China University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition)*, 21(4), 115-130. doi:10.3969/j.issn.2095-2708.2021.04.115
- Yang, H. (2022). EFL learners' motivation for studying English. *Language Learning Motivation and L2 Pragmatic Competence*, 81-100. doi:10.1007/978-981-19-5280-7_4
- Yang, J. (2021). 浅述高校少数民族预科生英语学习障碍及应对策略. *English Square*, (153), 105-107. doi:10.16723/i.cnki.yygc.2021.09.035
- Yu, Z. (2019). Gender differences in cognitive loads, attitudes, and academic achievements in Mobile English learning. *International Journal of Distance Education Technologies*, 17 (4), 21-35. doi:10.4018/ijdet.2019100102
- Zhao, H. (2022). A study on the correlation between psychological anxiety, self-efficacy and foreign language learning achievement. *International Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology*, 25(Supplement_1). doi:10.1093/ijnp/pyac032.087
- Zhao, Y., Lorente, A., MCS Gómez, & Zhao, L. (2021). The impact of gender and years of teaching experience on college teachers' digital competence: an empirical study on teachers in gansu agricultural university. *Sustainability*, 13(8), 4163.
- Zhao, Y., Pinto Llorente, A. M., Sánchez Gómez, M. C., & Zhao, L. (2021). The impact of gender and years of teaching experience on college teachers' digital competence: An empirical study on teachers in Gansu Agricultural University. *Sustainability*, 13 (8), 4163. doi:10.3390/su13084163

Yu, X. & Liu, C. (2022). Teaching English as a lingua franca in China: Hindrances and prospects. *English Today*, 38 (3), 185-193.

Appendix 1: Research Questions

Modish Research Questions

Our focus, literature review and contextual information leads us to our research questions:

1. How do stakeholders (students, teachers and policy makers) perceive the EDI, including gender equality issues, in TALE in higher education?

- a) To what extent are the EDI, including gender equality issues perceived to be important in higher education?
- b) In what ways are they perceived to be related to proficiency in English?
- c) What factors/ reasons are perceived to be responsible for the existing in/equitable state of TALE in higher education?
- d) What policy interventions and practices do stakeholders find effective in making TALE in higher education more inclusive?

2. How do stakeholders (students, teachers and policy makers) perceive the role of DMT in TALE in higher education?

- a) In what ways is DMT perceived to contribute to effective TALE in higher education?
- b) To what extent is DMT perceived to bring opportunities of informal and incidental learning of English to different groups (by gender, location, sector, etc) of students and teachers?
- c) To what extent has DMT been used to enable access to English language learning for those currently excluded?

3. (In the light of the issues covered in research questions 1 and 2), How do stakeholders (students, teachers, IT companies, I/NGOs, educationists and policy makers) perceive the role/value of English in the next ten years in their communities in general and higher education in particular:

- in providing better career and life opportunities,
- in relation to other languages used at university and in their communities,
- in creating an equitable and inclusive society?

4. How does students' experience of using English and DMT change from high school to higher education?

- a. To what extent do students' attitudes towards the roles, values of English and DMT change? Are there any gender differences in terms of the changes in attitudes towards the roles, values of English and DMT?

In what respects do their English and DMT practices change? Are there any gender differences in terms of the changes in their English and DMT practices?

Appendix 2: Selected Universities for the Study

The following universities have been selected for the study:

Bangladesh

- Chittagong University of Engineering & Technology (CUET). Town
- Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), Sylhet
- Khulna University, City
- Jahangirnagar University
- Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College

China

- Beijing Foreign Studies University
- Beijing University of Post and Telecommunications
- Capital Medical University
- Wuxi Taihu University
- Guangdong Baiyun University

India

- Ambedkar University Dehli, urban
- SGT Univresity, Gurgaon, semi-urban
- RTM Nagpur University, Nagpur, urban and rural
- IGD Technological University for Women, Delhi, urban
- Gondwana University, Gadchiroli

Indonesia

- Universitas Sebelas Maret, Solo
- Universitas Islam, Malang
- Universitas Muhamadiyah Makassar (Inismuh Makassar)
- Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda (Borneo)
- Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS)
- Uin Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta