

Public Diplomacy, Soft Power, and Chinese Language in a Campus of Kathmandu, Nepal

Kamal Pandit

PhD Scholar, T.U., Political Science

Corresponding Email: panditgkamal@gmail.com

Abstract

Public diplomacy is a central pillar of Chinese foreign affairs, with a strong emphasis on people-to-people and cultural diplomacy. Mandarin Chinese, as one of the most widely spoken languages globally, played a significant role in China's cultural diplomacy efforts. This study examined the role of the Chinese language in fostering China's soft power in Kathmandu, Nepal, based on data, both interview and records, collected from Bishwo Bhasha Campus. Using César Villanueva Rivas's framework, which explored how language promotion translates into soft power across five levels—empathetic, sympathetic, geopolitical, diplomatic, and utilitarian—this study found that Mandarin enhances China's soft power primarily at two levels. First, it increased knowledge and appreciation of Chinese culture, fostering cultural connections (empathetic). Second, it served as a practical tool for economic interactions and opportunities in Kathmandu (utilitarian). These findings highlighted the potential of language learning to act as a bridge for cultural and economic exchange, contributing to China's public diplomacy efforts in Nepal.

Keywords: China, Nepal, public diplomacy, soft power, Chinese language, Kathmandu city

Introduction

Public diplomacy (PD) meant the way a country communicates and engages with foreign publics to influence their perceptions and build positive relationships. Several world governments, regardless of the position of their Nation-States in the international system, have embraced it as an important element within their foreign policy (Hernández, 2018). Public diplomacy is 'poly-lateral', where state actors, non-state actors, and even individuals are counted as actors (Adhikari & Nyaichai, 2022).

Wang (2008) stated that China has sought to supplement its traditional use of hard power with soft power, and thus the Chinese government has paid more and more attention to public diplomacy. The statements on public diplomacy by high-level Chinese leaders in recent years implied that public diplomacy has become an important part of China's foreign policy strategy (Zhao, 2015). However, understanding the importance of creating a positive image abroad is not a new thing in China. For example, in the mid-1930s the Chinese Communist Party invited American journalist Edgar Snow to China to report on the civil war who later wrote a book on Mao Zedong, depicting the Communist leader as a hero (d'Hooghe, 2005).

Poudel (2024) recently marked the words of newly appointed Chinese ambassador, Chen Song, who on arrival in Nepal on January 8, 2023, said that he would work to write "*a new chapter*" in Nepal-China relations. Similarly, scholars have analyzed President Xi Jinping's speeches that signified the value of public diplomacy for China. The launch of initiatives such as the Chinese Dream and the One Belt One Road project increased the significance of public diplomacy for China in gaining support from the global populace (Nyaichai & Adhikari, 2023). During the visit of Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China to Nepal from 12 to 13 October of 2019, leaders of the two countries reached broad understanding on bilateral relationship and regional and international issues of common concern (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). The two sides agreed to promote exchanges and cooperation in education, culture, tourism, traditional medicine, media, think tanks and youth at different levels.

In terms of culture, the promotion of national language is the key aspect in reaching out the foreign audiences. In recent years, public diplomacy, which was once focused on "telling the story of China," has shifted towards presenting the 'real China' to the world and conveying its peaceful global intentions (Hartig, 2016). Nyaichai & Adhikari (2023) have summarized that language, culture and values for China's soft power gave the ground for its public diplomacy in Nepal along with the economic development cooperation. Thus, this paper's main concern was to explain the relevance of Chinese language in the construction of China's soft power, which has been promoted by China (Yongtao, 2015). The study of language was necessary, in order to understand its role in the projection or the success of China culture. After all language reflected the fundamental values of a particular culture.

In consideration of the above, this article will focus on the Chinese language courses at the Bishwo Bhasa Campus or Campus of International Languages (CIL) located at, Exhibition Road, Kathmandu. The research questions were: How can

soft power be generated through Chinese language courses in Kathmandu city? How do the experiences of administrative staffs, professors and students reflect the possibility of creating or observing the soft power of the language?

To answer these research questions, first the relationship between soft power and language has been addressed and a theoretical model has been proposed for analyzing this relationship and second, some methodological aspects to the research, specifically exploring the relevance of the interview and the focus group. The study then focuses on some historical and political aspects of the Chinese language centered around the case study, that is to say the Bishwo Bhasa Campus in Kathmandu and its Chinese language courses. The answers to the research questions will be presented before offering a concluding remark.

Language as Soft Power

International Practices in Language Promotion

Speaking of soft power, Nye (2004) indicated it as the ability to get what you want through attraction rather coercion and it typically arises from the attractiveness of the country's culture, political ideas, and policies. Regarding English language he stated that "though English may remain the lingua franca, as Latin did after the ebb of Rome's might, at some point, perhaps in a decade or two, the Asian cyber-community and economy may boom larger than the American" (p. 31). Nye (2008) again exemplified the effort of French government to repair the nation's shattered prestige (due to defect in Franco-Prussian war) by promoting language and literature through the Alliance Francaise created in 1883. Although, Watson (1999) indicated that the westward expansion of the Han Chinese led to the spread of Chinese to conquered territories, more recently other factors have begun to shape language policy.

Odinye (2018) argued that China knew that building a linguistic bridge linking has benefits and therefore wanted to gain influence through the promotion of Mandarin Chinese as a global language. The author claimed that the establishment of Confucius Institutes (CI) around the world was a way to market Mandarin Chinese and influence the world positively using soft power strategy. Hartig (2016) stated that in 2004 China's Ministry of Education and the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) started to set up CI around the world to promote Chinese language and culture in foreign countries.

Culture in Public Diplomacy and Soft Power

At the time when the word “propaganda” was used to mean the public diplomacy, Edmund Gullion in 1965, at Tufts University, found the phrase “public diplomacy”, more appealing (Nyaichai & Adhikari, 2023). Since then, the interests of scholars and academicians have been growing in the public diplomacy sphere. Although, the debate about the new public diplomacy after 11 September 2001 become dominated by US public diplomacy, for many countries it was not the beginning (Melissen, 2005). The ambiguity surrounding around the conceptualization of public diplomacy often created confusion among the scholars and academicians.

Reviewing around 160 articles and books on public diplomacy, Ayhan (2019) suggested taxonomy to see the main approaches from where public diplomacy have been studied. The perspectives are either State-Centric, Neo-Statist, Nontraditional, Society-Centric or Accommodative. While the two first perspectives consider non-state actors to be the only actors and the other three consider non-state actors to be subjects of public diplomacy (Hernández, 2018). This discourse was appropriate because although the study recognized the importance of language promotion from an official point of view, the fact that within these institutional settings there are non-government actors/representative remained important. For the study, this was the case of Chinese language teachers working at the Bishwo Bhasa Campus at Kathmandu city.

Another concept that arose was the relationship between culture and public diplomacy. Just as the concept of public diplomacy has western connotation, Kim (2017) argued that cultural diplomacy has the same. The role of culture was integral to the broader framework of international relations influencing how nations interacted. Thus, understanding the connection between cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy required careful consideration of the specific contexts in which they were examined.

Distinctions about public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy has been made by the scholars. Schneider (2006) went on to describe public diplomacy as consisting all that nation does to explain itself to the world, while cultural diplomacy is the use of creative expression and exchanges of ideas, information, and people. Chinese government understands cultural diplomacy as a part of public diplomacy (d’Hooghe, 2007). Cultural diplomacy has been conceptualized “as a subset of a new public diplomacy as well as a subset of international cultural relations” (Kim, 2017, p. 317). Similarly, Rivas (2015) defined cultural diplomacy “as the ability to export culture in a way to win the hearts of foreign people” (p. 139). Taking this into account, it is argued that the cultural institutions and cultural initiatives of a given Nation State are part of the new public diplomacy model and a source for constructing soft power.

China, an example of a State for which culture plays a definitive role in its new public diplomacy. Nepali newspaper termed the Chinese public diplomacy tools as a *new public diplomacy* which included traditional intercultural, educational and language exchanges. Dahal (2022) in particular argued that President Xi's visit to Nepal on 13 October 2013 following his visit to India should be taken as part of his new diplomacy. In this article, the focus was on the language, since it is where the objective of promoting the Chinese (Mandarin) language takes place. The concept was more descriptive than analytical, and hence it has been problematized as a means to understanding how soft power could be built in the case of language. The section below addressed how language expressed itself as soft power.

The Levels of Soft Power in Language

Culture played a crucial role as the new public diplomacy demanded communication with the foreign audiences. Language when exported to foreign lands, if attracts international audiences there is a space for soft power. However, when it comes to an analysis of the use of language as soft power, one must consider that language per se may not necessarily be the source of such power. Hill (2014) has suggested that it is risky to argue that a country is attracting or co-opting another country, in soft power terms, by teaching a language. Instead, he proposed that the potential to generate soft power lies in the potential of language study to change certain attitudes towards a different Nation State. Although, Hill did not elaborate on how the study of language can actually generate positive attitudes or a soft power, the relationship between language and soft power was worth noting.

A concrete concept has been proposed by Armour (2011) as *soft power pedagogy*, or a style of instruction that is directly influenced by the use of artefacts, in this case, Japanese 'soft power, to make relationship between soft power and language more analytic. William S. Armour confirmed the attractiveness of 'manga' (comics and graphic novels) as a medium for learning Japanese language and challenged the traditional pedagogy that employed the textbook to provide input. Armour (2015) again widened his concept on soft power pedagogy by locating it in a geopolitical context, the extent to which the products of soft power are mediated, and suggested to look the new communicative environment based on communication technologies, where language learning is the subject.

Ideas of Armour and Hill were relevant and Hernández (2018) mentioned that their concepts that complimented César Villanueva Rivas' proposal of possible ways in which soft power is generated through the study of language. This study also utilized the proposed five different level of soft power to study the case of Chinese language in Kathmandu city. They are: 1. the empathetic (to communicate a world

view and national idiosyncrasies); 2. the sympathetic (referring to an esthetic level of the language, such as syntax or the literary tradition); 3. the geopolitical (the exercise of symbolic persuasion and ideological influence over foreign identities through cultural industries); 4. the diplomatic circuit (influence over decision making by positioning language in multilateral forums); and 5. the utilitarian level (to help in economic transactions, to promote businesses).

The five levels opened the window wider on the perspective of the potentials of the language for creating soft power. Promoting the study of a language overseas, as public diplomacy, is part of government's foreign policy. Perception of the audiences is necessary and is complimentary to the analytical frameworks for reaching the ideal objectives of public diplomacy. As such, this research focused on the perception of students, administrative staffs and Chinese language teachers whose reflections were necessary when exploring public diplomacy of China. Therefore, this article aimed at exploring the levels of soft power based on foreign audiences' perception.

Methods and Materials

From a methodological perspective, conversations with language students, teachers, and administrative staff were essential in assessing the extent to which the Chinese language could serve as a tool of soft power. Thus, this article evaluated soft power at the level of the perception based on participant's narratives. Sharing similar perspective, Rivas (2015) on Spanish language in United States and Hernández (2018) at the Korean Culture Center, Mexico City and P. P. Poudel & Baral (2021) in Nepal, utilized individual interviews and focus group discussion as research techniques. Thus, this study employed interview and group discussion where questionnaires and recording devices served as tools, a qualitative approach.

Interviews were conducted with administrative workers and professors while focus group was conducted with students. The narratives or responses were selected from participants that responded more precisely to the questions associated with the five levels of soft power. The researcher talked to three administrative workers (all Nepalese) and three language teachers two male and one female. Semi-structured interviews were used to give them flexibility to share additional concerns while, the indication made by Miller & Glassner (2011) that certain parts of the narrative are shaped by the interaction within as the interview itself was acknowledged.

In the case of conversations with students, focus group (2 conversations with 5 students in each group) was chosen as the most appropriate format. Incorporating an ethnographic perspective of the focus group, the study aimed at

“grounding interpretation in the particularities of the situation under the study and in participants’ perspective” (Wilkinson, 2011, p. 170). Following this methodological approach, the study answered research questions as discussed in introduction. In the following section, some insight into the importance of the Chinese language has been provided before moving on to the case study.

Findings and Discussions

The Chinese Language in Perspective

From a handful of students on government scholarships in the 1960, Beijing’s soft power in Nepal can be explored by tracing the evolution of educational ties between the two countries (Upadhyay, 2023). He further stated that the Confucius Institute at two of Nepal’s leading universities, Kathmandu University and Tribhuvan University, are high level Chinese language and culture institutions, cooperatively established by Hebei University of Economics and Business and Kathmandu University. Bishwo Bhasa Campus, on the other hand, under TU have been running Chinese department in 1961 when the Chinese government sent one professional Chinese teacher (Bishwo Bhasa Campus, 2024). However, addressing the opening ceremony of second Confucius center at TU, Xinhua (2022) reported that the two institutes would become a window for displaying the Chinese culture, a bridge to promote cultural exchanges with no mentions of Bishwo Bhasa Campus.

Watson (1999) kept Chinese Mandarin at the top, with 726 million speakers followed by English and Spanish. Recently, Ethnologue (2024) stated that Chinese, which has the highest number of native speakers among the world’s languages, has relatively few non-native speakers outside China. In a review of research on strategies in learning Chinese, Jiang & Cohen (2012) concluded that future research must pay more attention to current language learning strategy theories and practices.

The Case Study: Bishwo Bhasa Campus

Bishwo Bhasa Campus or CIL is the only campus of its kind under Tribhuvan University, offering a wide range of language programs. These include five Himalayan languages—Nepali, Sanskrit, Newari, Pali, and Tibetan—specifically designed for expatriate students, while Nepali students have the opportunity to study several foreign languages. Additionally, the campus has introduced a specialized three-year Bachelor’s Program in Nepali for foreign students, emphasizing academic excellence in a unique cultural setting.

The CIL at Exhibitions Road, Kathmandu offers Nepali students the opportunity to study a variety of foreign languages, including English, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, German, French, Arabic, Japanese, Italian, and Korean. The Chinese department was established in 1961 and from then onwards the Chinese government sent one professional Chinese teacher here. So far, in Chinese department, we have three Chinese teachers and three Nepali teachers who are teaching Chinese (Bishwo Bhasa Campus, 2024). The Chinese department conducted the language course for six semesters and the graduates were eligible for Confucius scholarship.

Levels of Soft Power and the Chinese Language

This section discussed the perspective on the soft power of Chinese language among the students from 3rd semester to 6th semester at the CIL in Kathmandu city. This is based on interviews with Administrator workers, teachers and students involved in the study of Chinese language. The research looked into the five different levels proposed by César Villanueva in the narratives of administrative workers, Mandarin Chinese teachers and students: 1. The empathetic; 2. the sympathetic; 3. the geopolitical; 4. the diplomatic circuit; 5. and the utilitarian level. Thus, there are group of interpretations on how the Chinese language could attract Nepali students.

The Empathetic Level

It was clear that Chinese language is helping Nepalese students to learn more about Chinese culture rather just the language. The students indicated learning Chinese language has been indicative to the understanding of Chinese language, however, other factors are also visible. As justified by male Student C of the students' group who indicated that:

My case is different, as a tourist guide, I have to learn about my guests' culture to get closer to them. During my job as a guide, I had already met Chinese and served them. So, even without prior knowledge of Chinese language, I am already aware of few Chinese culture. Hence, learning language have not changed my thoughts about Chinese people and their culture (student C, personal communication, July 26, 2023).

In case of student C is it clear that his profession as a tour guide was the key factor to already have perceptions about Chinese culture. Hence, it can be argued that institutional setting such as Bishwo Bhasa Campus is not the only factor that determines what can be learnt about Chinese culture. Students also reported other views. For example, woman A claimed:

My sole purpose of taking Chinese classes is education. I had completed by Master's degree in social science, so to pursue my further academic qualification, I thought of China and joined the Chinese language classes. Just to let you know, there are universities that do not require Chinese language proficiency for PhD courses. Being here [Bishwo Bhasa Campus] helped me know more about China. Learning language will be help communicate in a restaurant in China. Well, the teachers are very helpful while learning materials can be upgraded to audio-visual texts, you know, the use the technology (woman A, personal communication, August 2, 2023).

The above statements reflected the importance of individual experiences in learning Chinese language at the empathetic level. The statement called for attention to how language learning is not just about acquiring grammar and vocabulary but also about the lived, emotional experience of engaging with the culture in an authentic way, such as how to order food in a restaurant or to expresses opinion on the nature of lessons which allowed them to have real interactions with Chinese (teachers). Even though the students demand audio-visual text, the budget of the Campus is not enough for such digital infrastructure, reported administrative worker A (administrative worker A, August 4, 2023). However, students are advised to make use of free mobile applications for Chinese learning such as Pleco, the official further supported.

While supplementing the absence audio-visual text in the Campus infrastructure, Teacher A, however claimed that he used examples of popular Chinese cultures in his lectures. He added:

See, most the characters, that we have to teach [according to the semester] are associated with some story, some event in the past or the shape of the artifacts unlike English. Therefore, it becomes obvious that a Chinese language teacher use cultural events in his class. I talk about movies, actors such as Sammo Hung, Jet li and most recently, Donnie Yen. I also give examples of Chinese New Year, zodiac signs, festivals, technology. But most importantly, I talk give examples about how Chinese value hard work, education and respect for elderly (teacher A, personal communication, July 15, 2023).

Another important lesson from empathetic level besides know about culture from learning language was ability to communicate with Chinese relatives. Woman E, married to Chinese man stated:

Learning Chinese language has helped me communicate with my relatives. Whenever, I talked to his relatives, all I would say was hello in Chinese. Now, I can talk with them for as much as I want. Now it will not be a problem to visit China and talk to them in person. Also, with my competence in Chinese language I can easily interact with Chinese if I encounter any (woman E, personal communication, July 26, 2023).

Women A expressed her gratitude for learning Chinese. She justified how soft power has been constructed. Married to a Chinese man, the desire for liking China was already visible. However, now she is able to communicate, the desire to learn more about Chinese culture has increase.

The paper claimed that Chinese language can be transmitted at empathetic level but not through a defined system. There are diversity of situations and circumstances that influences the approaches to learning Chinese language. Therefore, it is based on the background of the individual.

The Sympathetic Level

Teacher B and Teacher C both claimed they do not include Chinese literatures in their lesson plans and they strictly follow the syllabus mentioned for each semester. They also stated that Bishow Bhasa Campus could require students with higher levels to understand literatures. Hence, Chinese literatures are currently not a level of soft power supported by Chinese language at Bishwo Bhasa Campus. Teacher C (Chinese teacher), however, went on to say that:

It's not that the student doesn't know anything about China before joining the Chinese classes. Although, very few and at very few times, the students inquire about Chinese literatures. When asked what they know about China. Everyone has the answer to say. I must say they know more before joining the classes. Also, I do have to be sensitive about the cultural differences as Asians, both the countries share many things and we all know the friendly relations that both the countries have enjoyed for centuries (teacher C, personal communication, July 15, 2023).

In both the group discussions, none of the students mentioned about Chinese literatures as essential element in learning Chinese language although few mentioned about the style of teaching such as audio-visual text in supplementing the books. Hence, it is argued that being neighbor countries who share border, the sympathetic level of attraction is already in existence.

The Geopolitical Level

Geopolitical level is associated with the promotion of Chinese cultural industries. While some teachers use popular Chinese culture in class (Teacher A, for example), others teachers do not use and strictly adhere to class content. male student C of second focus group elaborated that:

Along with textual learning according to the curriculum, one of the teachers have incorporated cultural lessons such as Spring festival of China in his lesson plan. However, from the first semester I haven't heard of hosting Chinese cultural events in Bishwo Bhasa Campus. I hear about such events in Confucius center at Kathmandu University or events organized by the Chinese Embassy. This is a very good thing but rare in our campus. One more thing is the possibility made due to digital platforms where cultural industries can be promoted (student C, personal communication, July 26, 2023).

The Diplomatic Circuit Level

The diplomatic circuit level of soft power creation for the Chinese language in Nepal through Bishwo Bhasa Campus in Kathmandu is referred to the strategic use language to strengthen China-Nepal relations. Although short term visit of language student to China represented an example of diplomatic level attraction, it is argued that Chinese language at CIL have weakest level in diplomatic attraction compared to other Chinese language centers such as Confucius Center in Kathmandu University.

The Utilitarian Level

Among with the empathetic level, utilitarian level represented a source of soft power of China through language. Administrative workers B and C mentioned about the opportunities of Chinese language due to growing Chinese industries in Nepal are hiring Nepalese. "Almost all the students have perspective of economic values after learning Chinese language, be it in a Chinese hotel, hydropower, telecom or BYD showrooms", administrative worker C further added. The utilitarian level was also clear from the student G who indicated that she was paid more after learning Chinese language.

Similarly, a male student, involved in the import of Chinese goods also indicated how learning Chinese have enhanced their relationship. "Our conversation first stated with calculators, now I can talk to him over phone and even make a deal", he added (student D, personal communication, July 26, 2023). Interesting

to hear was the narrations of male student E, who worked as a waiter in a Chinese restaurant in his initial struggles. He pointed out that:

It is obvious that working as waiter in a Chinese restaurant, you get to interact with them a lot. But it was a shame for me that time as I didn't know their language. I realized the importance of language. Although I knew basic sentences, I wanted to know more about it. Now, I have a good communicating skill in Chinese and I own two Chinese restaurants in Boudha and know a lot about their different cultures (student E, personal communication, July 26, 2023).

For individuals in Kathmandu, learning Chinese opens doors to better economic and professional opportunities by breaking down barriers to Chinese culture and markets. Therefore, it would be beneficial for future research to examine how proficiency in Chinese contributes to social mobility, particularly in areas like career growth, business prospects, and educational opportunities related to China.

The narratives of administrative workers, students and teachers showed common perception that Chinese language is bringing China closer to Nepali students. The generalization on Chinese language, that is builds soft power at the five different levels is quite difficult from the stories of the participants. Hence, class environment, teacher's profile, the institutional setting and above all the individual background of the students influenced the soft power creation of Chinese language. In summary, Chinese language teaching in Kathmandu cannot be effective solely by the interest of Chinese authorities.

Conclusion

Benedict Anderson's 2006 revised version of *Imagined Communities* (first published in 1983) introduced the concept of the imagined community to describe how individuals in a society feel connected to a collective identity, even without direct interaction. This study suggested that Nepalese learners of the Chinese language in Kathmandu contribute to an imagined community of Mandarin speakers, shaped by their personal experiences and social contexts. Through language learning, these students not only acquired linguistic skills but also participated in re-imagining a community that connected them to Chinese culture and society, even without physically being in China. This process demonstrated how language education can foster a sense of belonging and cultural exchange, contributing to a broader framework of soft power and public diplomacy.

In the context of Kathmandu, Chinese language courses served as a powerful tool for generating soft power, particularly at the empathetic and utilitarian levels. Students' personal imaginations of China were shaped not only by their own experiences but also by the growing Chinese market presence in Kathmandu. Through language education, learners were able to develop a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and its economic significance. The recognition of the Chinese language's utility in economic transactions highlighted its practical role in strengthening China's influence in the city.

However, the soft power potential of these courses was limited at the geopolitical and diplomatic levels, as Chinese is not widely used in international diplomatic forums. The sympathetic level of soft power, which related to emotional connections, also appeared underdeveloped, largely due to the lack of a strong cultural strategy to promote Chinese literature and other cultural tools in the curriculum at Bishwo Bhasa Campus. These experiences suggested that, while Chinese language courses in Kathmandu have clear potential to enhance soft power through cultural and economic engagement, they may need a stronger focus on cultural promotion and the inclusion of Chinese literature to fully leverage their impact at all levels of soft power.

This study highlighted the potential of the Chinese language to enhance China's soft power among specific groups in Kathmandu, such as administrative workers, teachers, and students. Through language learning, participants showed increased cultural appreciation and recognized its economic utility. While these findings were specific to the context of this research, they suggested that language promotion can contribute to China's public diplomacy efforts when tailored to the needs and interests of foreign audiences.

References

- Adhikari, K. N., & Nyaichai, L. (2022). *Effective use of public diplomacy in the content of Nepal*. [PRI Publication No. 053]. Kathmandu: Policy Research Institute. <https://kms.pri.gov.np/dams/pages/view.php?ref=16016&k=6f8109c553>
- Armour, W. S. (2011). Learning Japanese by reading “manga”: The rise of “soft power pedagogy.” *RELC Journal*, 42(2), 125–140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688211405181>
- Armour, W. S. (2015). The Geopolitics of Japanese Soft Power and the Japanese Language and Studies Classroom: Soft Power Pedagogy, Globalization, and the New Technologies. In *Language and Identities in a Transitional Japan: from Internationalization to Globalization*. New York (pp. 37–56).
- Ayhan, K. J. (2019). The boundaries of public diplomacy and nonstate actors: A taxonomy of perspectives. In *International Studies Perspectives* (Vol. 20, Issue 1, pp. 63–83). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/eky010>
- Bishwo Bhasa Campus. (2024). *Department of Chinese*. Bishwo Bhasa Campus. <https://www.bishwobhasa.edu.np/departments/>
- Dahal, G. (2022). Chinese President’s Visit to Nepal and Consolidation of Relations of Two Countries. *Journal of Political Science*, 64–74. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jps.v22i1.43040>
- d’Hooghe, I. (2005). Public Diplomacy in the People’s Republic of China. In J. Mellisen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (pp. 88–105). Palgrave Macmillan.
- d’Hooghe, I. (2007). *The rise of China’s public diplomacy*. Netherlands Institute of International Relations “Clingendael.”
- Ethnologue. (2024). *How many languages are there in the world?* Ethnologue. <https://www.ethnologue.com/insights/how-many-languages/>
- Hartig, F. (2016). *Chinese Public Diplomacy: The rise of the Confucius Institute*. Routledge.
- Hernández, E. L. T. (2018). Public diplomacy, soft power and language: The case of the Korean language in Mexico City. *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia*, 17(1), 27–49. <https://doi.org/10.17477/jcea.2018.17.1.027>
- Hill, D. T. (2014). Language as “soft power” in bilateral relations: the case of Indonesian language in Australia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 36(3), 364–378. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2014.940033>

- Kim, H. (2017). Bridging the Theoretical Gap between Public Diplomacy and Cultural Diplomacy. *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, 15(2), 293–326. <https://doi.org/10.14731/kjis.2017.08.15.2.293>
- Melissen, J. (2005). The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice. In J. Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Miller, J., & Glassner, B. (2011). The “inside” and the “outside”: finding realities in interviews. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 125–139). SAGE Publications.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2019). *Nepal-China Relations*. <https://mofa.gov.np/nepal-china-relations/>
- Nyaichai, L., & Adhikari, K. N. (2023). *Chinese Public Diplomacy in Nepal*. [PRI Publication No. 060]. Kathmandu: Policy Research Institute.
- Nye, J. S. (2004). *SOFT POWER: The Means to Success in World Politics*. Public Affairs.
- Nye, J. S. (2008). Public diplomacy and soft power. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 94–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699>
- Odiye, S. I. (2018). Mandarin Chinese as a means to China’s Soft Power. *JOLAN*, 21(2), 118–127.
- Poudel, P. (2024). Chinese Ambassador Chen Song takes ‘X’ diplomacy to a new level. *The Kathmandu Post*. <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2024/08/01/chinese-ambassador-chen-song-takes-x-diplomacy-to-a-new-level>
- Poudel, P. P., & Baral, M. P. (2021). Examining foreign language teaching and learning in Nepal: An ecological perspective. *Journal of World Languages*, 7(1), 104–123. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2021-0006>
- Schneider, C. P. (2006). Cultural Diplomacy: Hard to Define, but You’d Know It If You Saw It. *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 13(1), 191–203.
- Upadhyay, A. (2023). Nepali Students in China: A Source of Soft Power for Beijing? In C. Xavier & J. T. Jacob (Eds.), *How China Engages South Asia: Themes, Partners and Tools* (pp. 15–26). Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP).
- Wang, Y. (2008). Public diplomacy and the rise of Chinese soft power. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 257–273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207312757>

- Watson, K. (1999). Language, power, development and geopolitical changes: Conflicting pressures facing plurilingual societies. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 29(1), 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305792990290102>
- Wilkinson, S. (2004). Focus Group Research. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 177–199). SAGE Publications.
- Xinhua. (2022). *2nd Confucius Institute inaugurated in Nepal*. Xinhua. <https://english.news.cn/20220816/5218e495d7d143009c0f4c29cb93ba8a/c.html>
- Yongtao, L. (2015). People-to-People Exchanges in Chinese Diplomacy: Evolutions, Strategies, and Social Practice. *Stosunki Międzynarodowe - International Relations*, 4(51), 238–253. <https://doi.org/10.7366/020909614201511>
- Zhao, K. (2015). The motivation behind China's public diplomacy. *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 8(2), 167–196. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pov005>