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APPLIED LINGUISTICS

**Inclusive multilingual practices
among expert Indian secondary
teachers of English**

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Personal background and project

- Teacher educator (mainly TESOL), 25 years' experience, majority in Global South (esp. sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia), incl. UNICEF, British Council, MOEs.
- Currently postdoctoral research fellow at University of Warwick.
- PhD as part of 1+3 ESRC¹ funded project at Warwick (grant ES/P000771/1).
- Data collection was completed before Covid 19.
- Thesis title (Anderson, 2021): “Eight expert Indian teachers of English: A participatory, comparative case study of teacher expertise in the Global South” available here: <http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/159940/>

1. ESRC: Economic and Social Research Council (UK)

A little bit about your contexts of work...

1. Which countries do you have experience working in?
2. Primary, secondary, tertiary, or combination?
3. How multilingual is social interaction in your country?
 - a) predominantly monolingual; b) varied; c) predominantly multilingual
3. What about curricular expectations in education? a, b or c?
4. What about in your classroom?

Study context

India (400 named languages; Eberhard et al., 2021), a country with a rich history of multilingualism “marked by fluidity” (Agnihotri, 2014); translanguaging widespread, although under-researched as such (Anderson & Lightfoot, 2021). India’s language-in-education policy is currently undergoing change through recently revised National Education Policy (see Mahapatra & Anderson, 2022).

Why study teacher expertise in Global South?

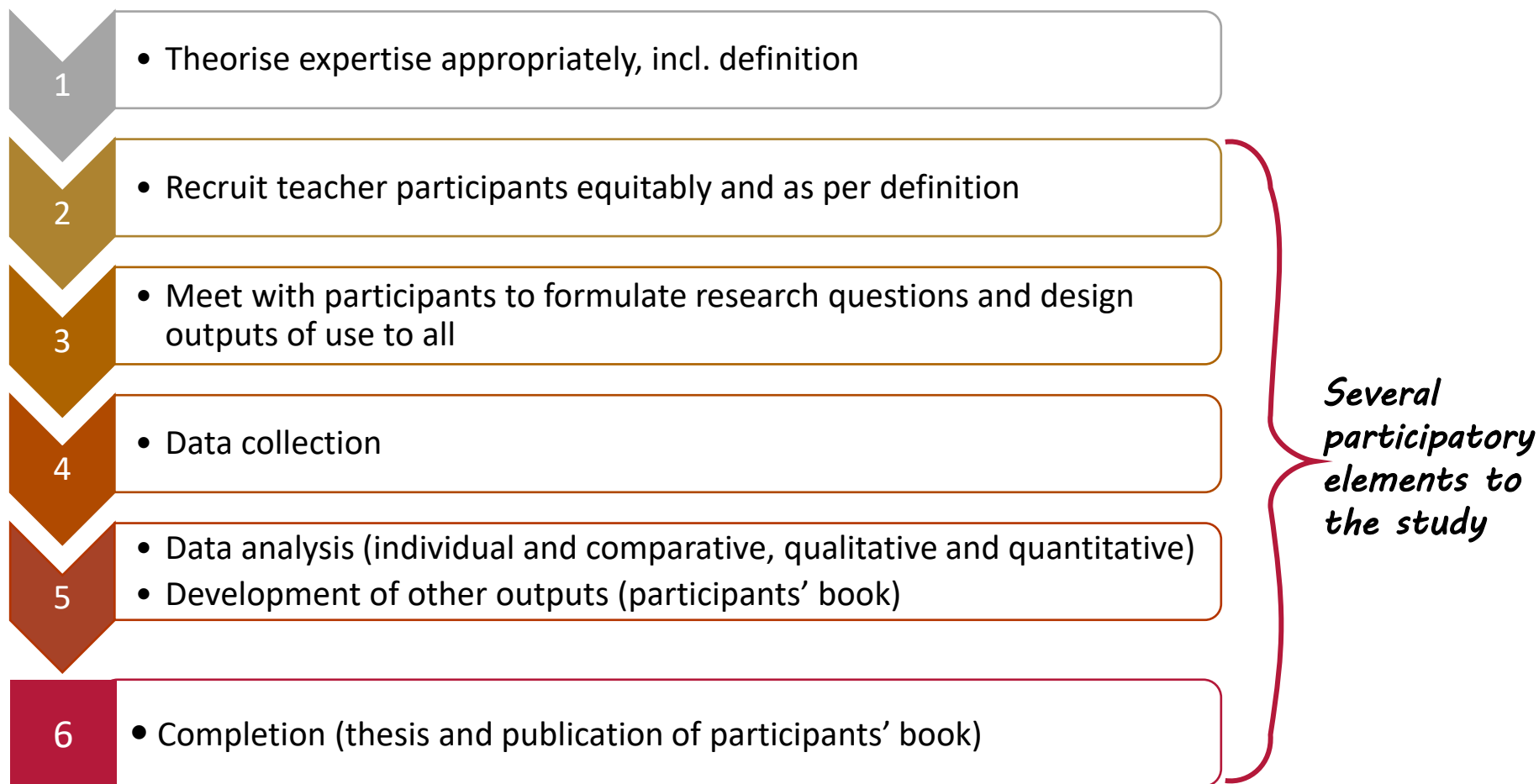
Much research has concentrated on the deficiencies of teaching in low income countries and we therefore have accounts of poor practice and pupil failure. What we do not have are detailed descriptions of teachers' good practice in contexts that are challenging. There is a need for research to seek out examples, to theorise them and to make them available as a resource for teacher education and policymaking.
(Pryor et al., 2012, p. 498)

Methodological challenges

- 1. Theorising and defining expertise appropriately:** How can expertise be defined in ways that avoid imposing exogenous assumptions about good practice?
- 2. Finding participants for such a study:** What means can be used to ensure that such participants have been reliably identified as expert teachers consistent with the definition of expertise adopted?
- 3. Making the study inclusive and non-exploitative:** Given my own background, and the likely power differential between myself and any participant teachers, how can I ensure, firstly that potential participants choose to take part of their own volition, and secondly that their participation was as equitable as possible and beneficial to them also?

Design

Participatory comparative case study design with several stages:



Definition of expertise adopted in the study

Literature review indicated a range of approaches to conceptualizing / defining expertise. Of these, I opted for a 'community referenced' definition, drawing on both Bucci (2003) and Rampton (1990), while also remaining recognizable to more everyday uses of the term:

Teacher expertise is an enacted amalgam of learnt, context-specific competencies (i.e., embodied knowledge, skills and awareness) that is *valued within an educational community* as a source of appropriate practice for others to learn from.



Participants and contexts

- 8 participants recruited, all secondary teachers of English working in state-sponsored education
- Each participant met at least 5 possible indicators of expertise
- 3 states (Maharashtra, Telangana, W. Bengal)
- Local context: 4 rural, 2 semi-urban, 2 urban
- 6 of 8 teach a majority of disadvantaged learners
- Good variety in the “sample”



Data collected over 10 months

Name ¹	Days spent at school	Participant lessons observed	Participant teacher interviews	Interviews of other stakeholders	Other teacher observations
1. Raju (pilot)	13	21	7	7	3
2. Vinay	21	32	10	6	5
3. Shekhar	20	27	10	4	9
4. Gajanan	21	38	10	6	7
5. Dipika	25	34	9	7	4
6. Nurjahan	21	32	7	5	4
7. Manjusha	20	30	7	4	4
8. Kuheli	24	28	7	5	4
Total	165	242	67	44	40

1. Pseudonyms not used (participants chose to be identified after participant validation).

Focus on multilingual practices

- Research question as open as possible:
- **How do expert Indian teachers of English and their learners use language in the classroom?**
- Qualitative data was analysed inductively. Several iterations involving progressive focusing (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
- Quantitative data included assessing overall quantities of resources used from different languages, and linking balance of language choice to specific pedagogic practices.



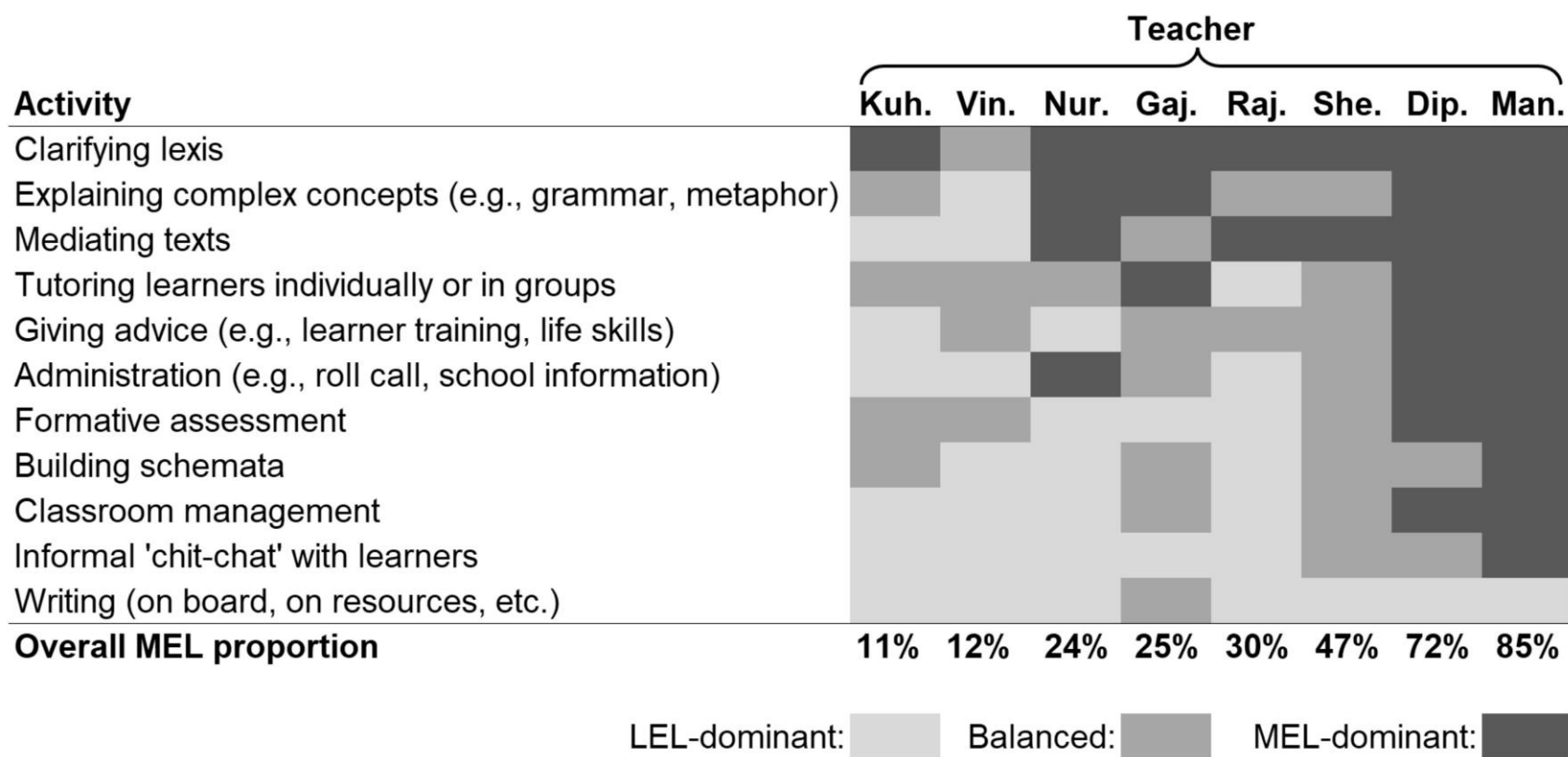
Key findings – summary

- All participant teachers (PTs) made use of their learners' more enabled language (MELs), but to varying degrees.¹
- All PTs were inclusive of their learners' MELs, prioritising participation over 'maximal' English use.
- Translanguaging was common for all PTs during oral interaction.
- Translanguaging was likewise common among their learners.
- Yet the need to meet monolingual norms (e.g., in formal assessment) meant that formal writing tended to be more monolingual.

1. MEL (Durairajan, 2018) refers to the most widely used language in the school community. In India, this is usually, but not always, the medium of instruction of the school section; often, but not always, an early-acquired language for most learners.

Quantitative data

	Kuh.	Vin.	Nur.	Gaj.	Raj.	She.	Dip.	Man.	Mean
Average % of MEL	11%	12%	24%	25%	30%	47%	72%	85%	38%
Average % of LEL (English)	89%	88%	76%	75%	70%	53%	28%	15%	62%



Note. Language use percentages were calculated as a proportion of total words uttered by the teacher in transcribed lessons (Shin et al., 2020).

Qualitative data: evidence of inclusive practices

Teacher taking the register / roll call in English 'creating an English environment':

Extract 1 : Raju/Obs.19 (Gr.7) /04:40 (English/Telugu)

T: Eighteen?

S1: Absent.

T: *Entra, Shashi Vardhan*
regular, *vachhe vaadu*
vastalledu?

S2: Go to village.

T: Ah, he went to village?

For, for what?

S2: His grandmother.

T: His grandmother?

S3: Marriage. Marriage!

T: His grandmother's marriage?
(students laugh)

S2: No, no!

S3: Marriage.

T: Whose marriage?

S2: *Chuttalu.*

S4: *Sodari.*

S1: *Emantaaru?*

T: Ah, his sister's marriage.

T: Eighteen?

S1: Absent.

T: *What, Shashi Vardhan, the*
one who comes regularly is not
coming?

S2: Go to village.

T: Ah, he went to village?

For, for what?

S2: His grandmother.

T: His grandmother?

S3: Marriage. Marriage!

T: His grandmother's marriage?
(students laugh)

S2: No, no!

S3: Marriage.

T: Whose marriage?

S2: *Relatives.*

S4: *Sister.*

S1: *How do we say that?*

T: Ah, his sister's marriage.

teacher
using 'MEL-
mainly' for
issue of
pastoral
concern

students
responding
in English
until...

student asks
metalinguistic
question in
MEL

Qualitative data: evidence of inclusive practices

Relaxing 'target language use' requirements to prioritise participation:

Extract 7 : Gajanan/Obs.12/09:40 (English/Marathi)

T: *Haa Sandhya, come.*
(inviting S1 to front of class)

S1: *Sir, Marathi?*

T: *OK, Marathi, you can try in Marathi first of all. But briefly, Haa, thodkyat, thodkyat.*

T: *Yes Sandhya, come.*
(inviting S1 to front of class)

S1: *Sir, Marathi?*

T: *OK, Marathi, you can try in Marathi first of all. But briefly. Yes. Briefly, briefly.*

Qualitative data: evidence of inclusive practices

Teacher and learners enjoying language play joke. Note scaffolding affordances offered by translanguaging here:



Extract 3 : Nurjahan/Obs.19 (Gr.8) /35:00 (English/Marathi)

T: Spring *mhanaje jhara*.
Spring, *cha ek artha jhara?* OK
here, what does it mean?
(pauses, no response) It
springs, it comes out. *Jhara,*
jhaara nahi, apan tya bhaji
talayala vaparato to jhaara
nahi! (students and teacher
all laugh)

T: Spring *means* (fresh water)
spring. Spring, *what does a*
spring do? OK here, what does
it mean? (pauses, no response)
It springs, it comes out.
Spring [झरा], not spatula [झारा],
which you use to fry bhaji!
(students and teacher all
laugh)

Teachers' inclusive practices: multilingual differentiation

- Aish – more English proficient; Gautam – less so.
- Teacher differentiates in language choice:

Extract 6 : Nurjahan/Obs.21 (Gr.9) /21:50 (English/Marathi)

T: Aish done? OK. Show me.
Yes. (then to his neighbour)
Gautam, tithe nahi shodhaych.
Shevathe tin paragraph
mhanelela. Sevatacyapa paragraph
madhye uttar aahe ani ata tu
laksha nahi dila apan bolatana.
Aish, help him please. Don't
give your answers. Try, show
him where to find. *Kuthe*
shodhaych te dakhav tyala.

T: Aish done? OK. Show me.
Yes. (then to his neighbour)
Gautam, it's not to be found
there. I said the last three
paragraphs. The answer is in
the last paragraph, you were
not paying attention while we
were talking. Aish, help him
please. Don't give your
answers. Try, show him where to
find. Show him where to find.

All PTs consciously aware of need for L1-inclusivity

Vinay

“So language is the barrier for them. To overcome that, I encourage them to use Telugu ... Simply sitting in the classroom won't help anything. At least if they think, they start involving in the process, whether in English or Telugu, so no problem at all.”

Kuheli

“I was trying to make sure that everyone contributes something to the discussion ... but I was not really forcing them to use the target language from the very beginning of the discussion, I was observing what they were doing in the group. And when I saw that, yes, groups were talking about points that really matter I would go close to that group and asked them, ‘OK, now, yes, your thinking is right, and think how you will say that to me in English’.”

Learner interaction: Complex translanguaging

Extract 9 : Vinay/Obs.20 (Gr.7) /26:30 (English/Telugu)

S1: (reading question) "Why did the country mouse go back to his house in the country?"

S2: *Akkada place nachaka back poyindi.*

S1: *Geedane.*

S2: *Enduku enaku poyindi?*

Food gitla nachaka pothey back poyindi.

S1: *Food kade gide ade. There was bread, gidi kadu idi kadu.*

S1: (reading question) "Why did the country mouse go back to his house in the country?"

S2: *It doesn't like that place so it went back.*

S1: *Here only.*

S2: *Why did it go back? Food is also not good, that's why it went back.*

S1: *Not food, not this one. There was bread, not that one.*

- Note: meaningful integration of English resources in MEL-dominant languaging



Learners able to monolanguage when required

Extract 10 : Kuheli/Obs.25 (Gr.8) /24:30 (English/Bangla)

S1: No, you don't write that.
S2: What? Me? So at last
S2: last month
S1: we decided
S2: so last month. Oh come on!
we have
S1: decided
S2: started
S1: to go, decided to
S2: last month we went
S1: No, we start start, we
started to
S2: to go for sea voyage in
Indian Ocean. (writing) You
write something else.

Adventurous sea voyages

Once, I and my two friends had planned to go to a sea voyage. ~~As~~ Our many friends had a experience, I so we also wanted to get that experience. ~~We had decided the old~~ So last month we went to the Bay of Bengal to make the sea voyage that we had planned. At first we ~~decided~~ wished to ride in ship but there were no ship at the port so, we had to ride in a boat. Our starting time was so good but after sometimes, there started a heavy storm. Sudden the waves ~~were~~ started getting stronger. We were worried and scared. We were crying and calling somebody to save us. But there ~~so~~ were no one to save us. The boat was

Some implications

Wider study:

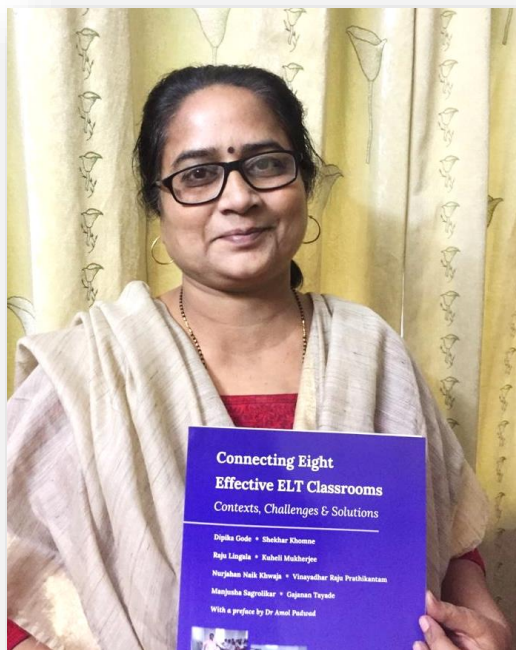
- Teacher expertise studies are possible and useful in low-income contexts;
- These can be made (reasonably) equitable and non-exploitative;
- Findings are potentially able to inform decisions regarding appropriate pedagogy / good practice / educational policy within the context in question;

Focus on multilingual practices:

- Expert teachers are multilingual practitioners;
- ‘English only’ practices likely to be counter-productive;
- Learner inclusion in lessons should be prioritised over ‘maximal’ ‘target language’ use.

Many thanks!

The participants' book is now published: **Connecting eight effective ELT classrooms** (Gode et al., 2021).



1. Exploration and change in the classroom

Nurjahan Naik Khwaja

1. My context and challenges

Teaching is considered as one of the noblest professions on the globe and I feel privileged to be a teacher. I teach in a coastal part of Maharashtra. My school is a government-aided school running classes from standard 1 to 12. Being a highly-reputed school, we have students from almost all sectors of society. Being located in a semi-urban area, our students range from 1,200-1,300 in number and come from fishing communities, farming backgrounds, salaried families, local business families and even from migrating labourers. I teach classes 5, 8, 9 and 10. My students are mostly in the lower streams. Besides being a teacher at secondary level, I work as a teacher trainer also.

I have been working in my present school for the past nine years. The biggest challenge I face is dealing with the average and below average learners for consecutive years with limited resources and little support from the parents. The classes I teach are mostly mixed ability classes where the number of average and

- 1 -

https://theainet.net/connecting_eight_effective_ELT_classrooms.pdf



Develop. Together.

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