Learning English with all our languages
How a translingual perspective can help in Indian classrooms and curricula

Jason Anderson

"English does not stand alone. The aim of English teaching is the creation of multilinguals who can enrich all our languages."

(NCERT, 2006, p. v.)

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The plan (including plenty of time for discussion)

1. Translanguaging – concept and theory
2. Translanguaging in the community
3. Translanguaging in the classroom (the translingual turn)
4. Some recent examples
5. Our research for British Council on teachers' practices in India
6. Suggestions for creative uses of other languages
7. A diglossic division?
8. Some thoughts and questions regarding curricula, language policy and teacher education

Feel free to interrupt, offer comments, critique, or ask questions at any point!

Quick discussion

Find a colleague to talk to, and discuss:

What do you understand by the terms:

- code-switching?
- translanguaging?

What is 'translanguaging'?

From 'Jab We Met' (2007)

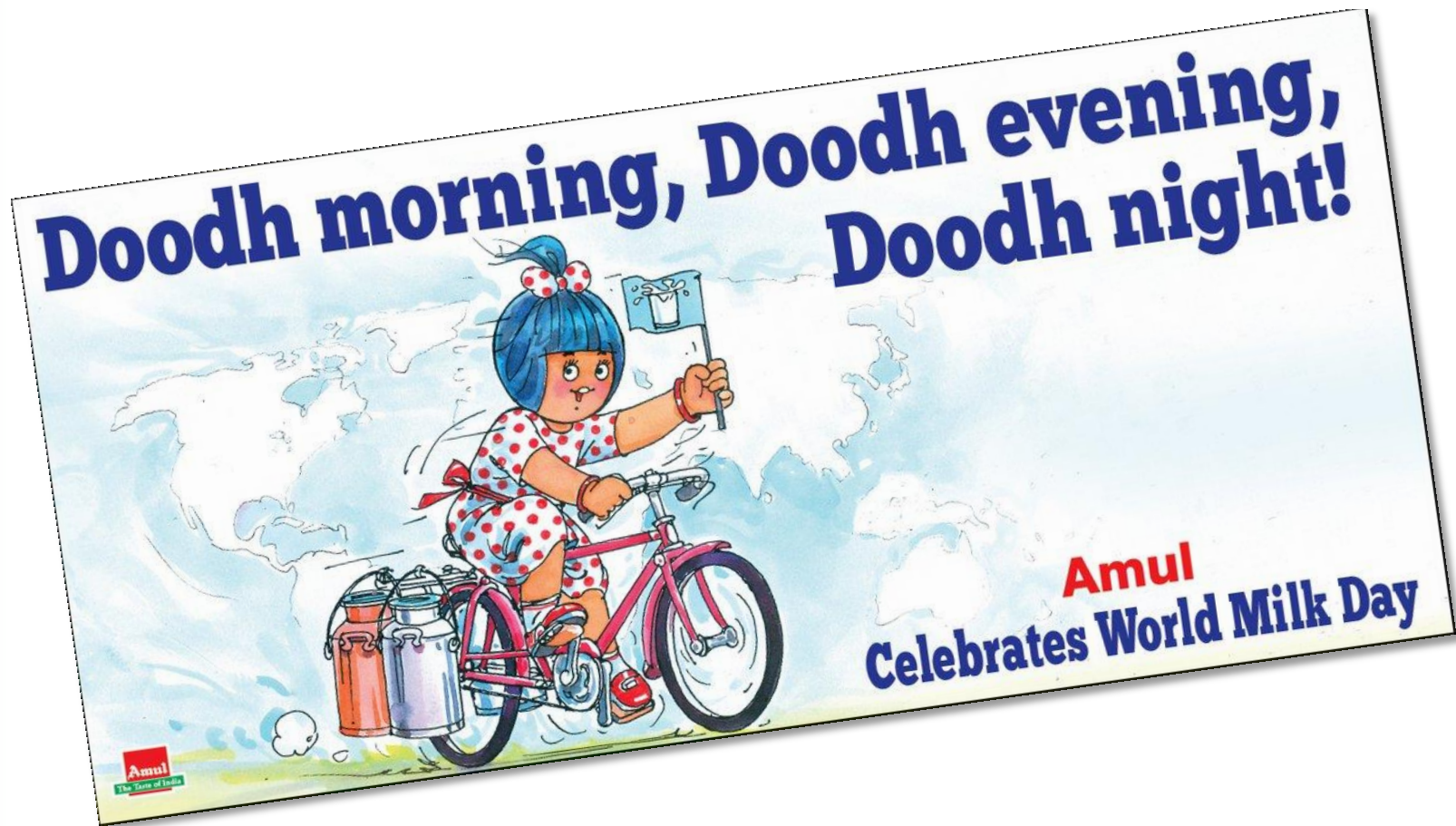**Aditya:** गीत, I think हम लोगों को उतारना चाहिए.

Geet: Try करना चाहिए. बहुत मज़ा आएगा

Aditya: एक second, एक second. मुझे तुमसे कुछ पूछना था. तुमने कभी किसी psychiatrist को consult किया है ?
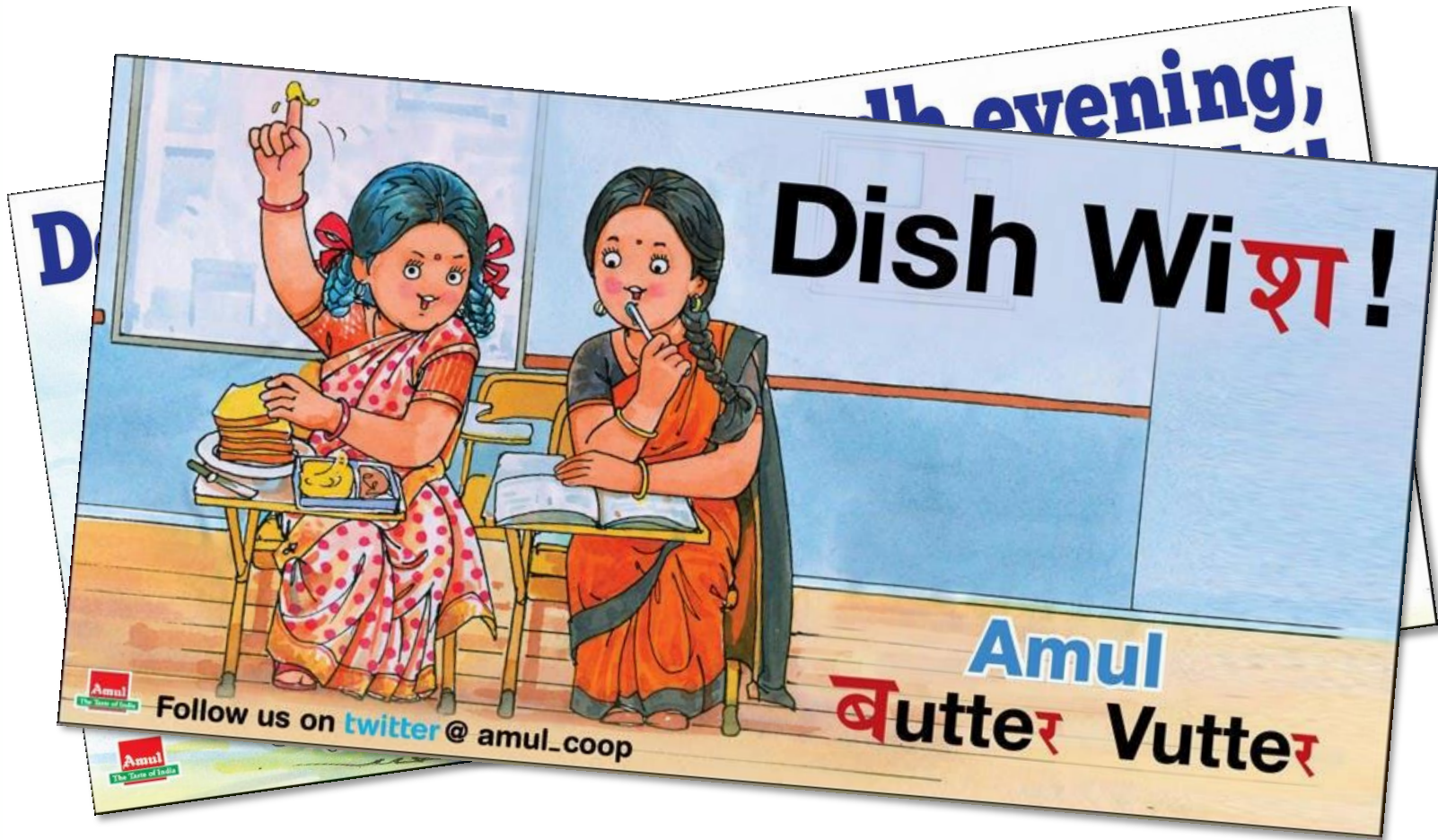
Geet: Oh, shut up!

Aditya: नहीं नहीं, तुम्हें ज़रुरत है गीत.
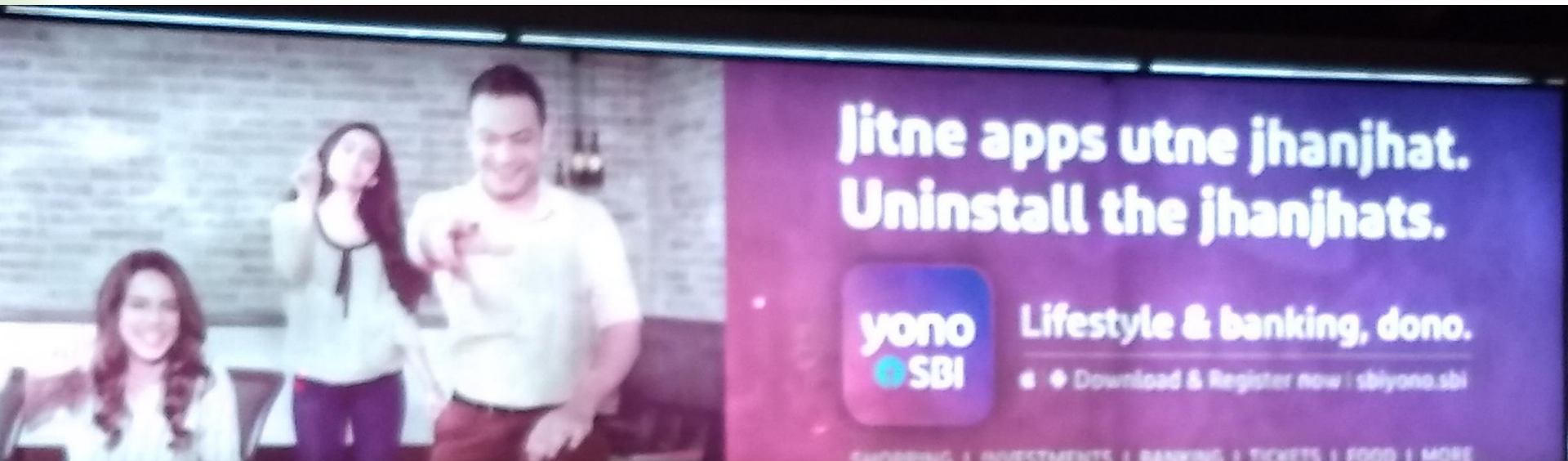
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Frobo: Garissa We are One (Kenya Let's Reunite)

"Mimi nitawapa knowledge
hata kama sikumurder college
Chekini habari kila siku ni war
Mazee tafakari what you just saw
Hatutaki kuwasikia man mkibonga mkibonga
Juu hata last year bado tuligongwa
Kisa cha Westgate bado a great hatred
waliomadwa Mandera, post-election, Kibera
mimi bado ni **Mkenya**
Mkizindi kututenda
nitawakubusha kama **Mkenya**
Tunapigwa na militia, kila siku tunalia…"

'भाषा संकर' (Kachru 1983)
'dynamic bilingualism' (García 2009)
See esp. 'code-meshing' (Canagarajah 2013)

English/Malay What's App chat

What is 'translanguaging'?

Most students ignored me. Many sniggered. I wondered why. Well, now I know. My accent. Back in 2004, my English was Bihari. I don't want to talk now like I did back then. It's embarrassing. It wasn't English. It was 90 per cent Bihari Hindi mixed with 10 per cent really bad English. For instance, this is what I had actually said: 'Cumty room...bat!aieyega zara? Hamara interview hai na wahan... Mera khel ka kota hai. Kis taraf hai?'

Half Girlfriend (2014) by Chetan Bhagat

What is 'translanguaging'?

У нее брат, вот что недавно женился на Lise Мейнен, адъютант Кутузова. Он будет нынче у меня.

— Ecoutez, chere Annette, — сказал князь, взяв вдруг свою собеседницу за руку и пригибая ее почему-то книзу. — Arrangez-moi cette affaire et je suis votre вернейший раб a tout jamais pan, comme mon староста m'ecrit des донесенья: покой-ер-п! Она хорошей фамилии и богата. Всё, что мне нужно.

И он с теми свободными и фамильярными, грациозными движениями, которые его отличали, взял за руку фрейлину, поцеловал ее и, поцеловав, помахал фрейлинскою рукой, развалившись на креслах и глядя в сторону.

— Attendez, — сказала Анна Павловна, соображая. — Я нынче же поговорю Lise (la femme du jeune Болконский). И, может быть, это уладится. Ce sera dans votre famille, que je ferai mon apprentissage de vieille fille.
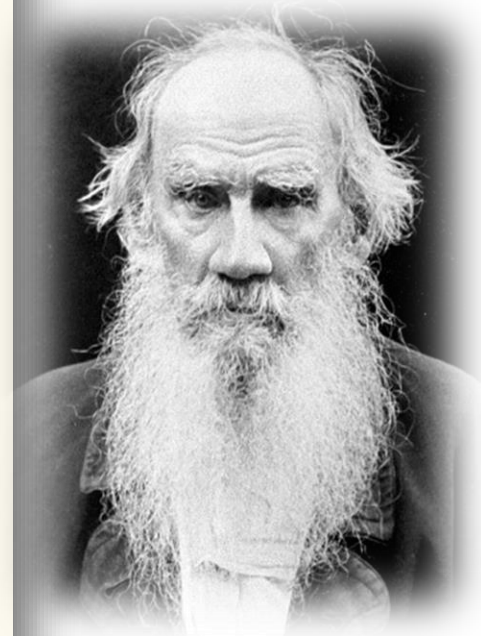
War and Peace (1868) by Lev Tolstoi

Why not 'codeswitching'?

Also see Makoni & Pennycook (2005) for discussion of sociopolitical issues and the invention of 'languages' in India.

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Why not 'codeswitching'?

"What we need is a more functionally oriented and culturally authentic theory [of language], one that is true to the ecology of multilingualism and views the multilingual's linguistic repertoire as a unified, complex, coherent, interconnected, interdependent, organic ecosystem, not unlike a tropical rain forest." (Sridhar 1994 p.803)

Reflection: Language use in society, the classroom and the curriculum

Translanguaging in Indian society

1. How common is the mixing of English with other Indian languages in communities you are familiar with?

2. How often do you find yourself blending languages when you are communicating? Why do you do it?

Translanguaging in ELT contexts

3. Does this mixing also happen in English classrooms and learning environments that you are familiar with?

4. What about in ELT materials? Do coursebooks mix? Exams? Curricula? What about supplementary study materials?

Quick question: Can teachers use other languages in India?

Yes!

Indian National Council of Educational Research and Training: National Focus Group on Teaching of English Position Paper (2006, p.12):

- "[The mother tongue] can be given its due place by being used for discussion and understanding along with an engagement with English."

- It suggests 6 ways of using other languages (including "parallel texts"), and notes: "Linguistic purism, whether of English or the Indian languages, must yield to a tolerance of code-switching and code-mixing if necessary."

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But note that individual institutions and boards in India may differ – so always check with line manager and policy documents!

Discussion: Translanguaging in the classroom

In your opinion, does translanguaging theory provide a more useful perspective for understanding and developing classroom practices in India (for example), when compared with simply talking about 'L1 use' or 'using the mother tongue' (as a 'resource')?
i.e. Does it meet Sridhar's criteria?

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The paradigm shift

The monolingual paradigm   The translingual paradigm

no L1
(e.g. direct method)

judicious use of L1

principled use of L1

(e.g. late CLT)

effective use of all
languaging resources

English only   English mainly   English appropriately

Example of the use of resources from other languages to support the learning of English
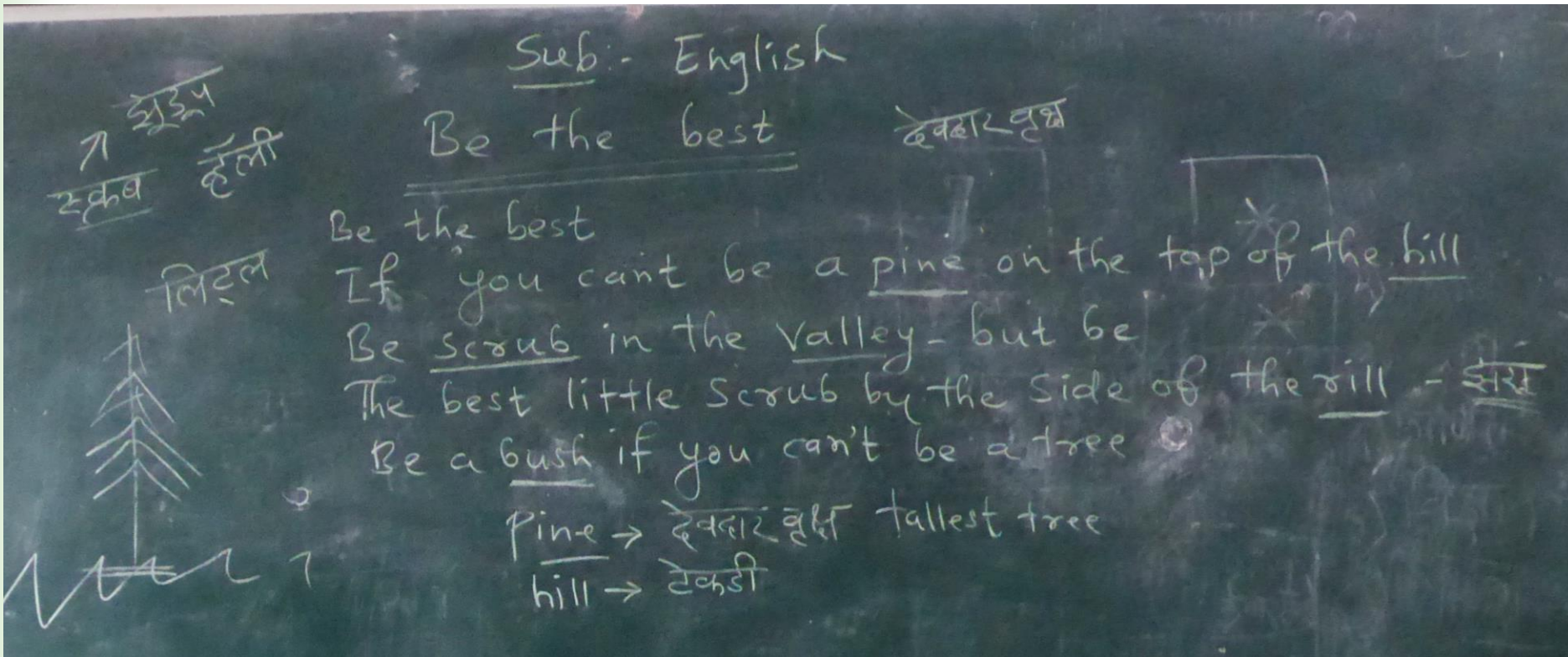
Example of the use of resources from other languages to support the learning of English
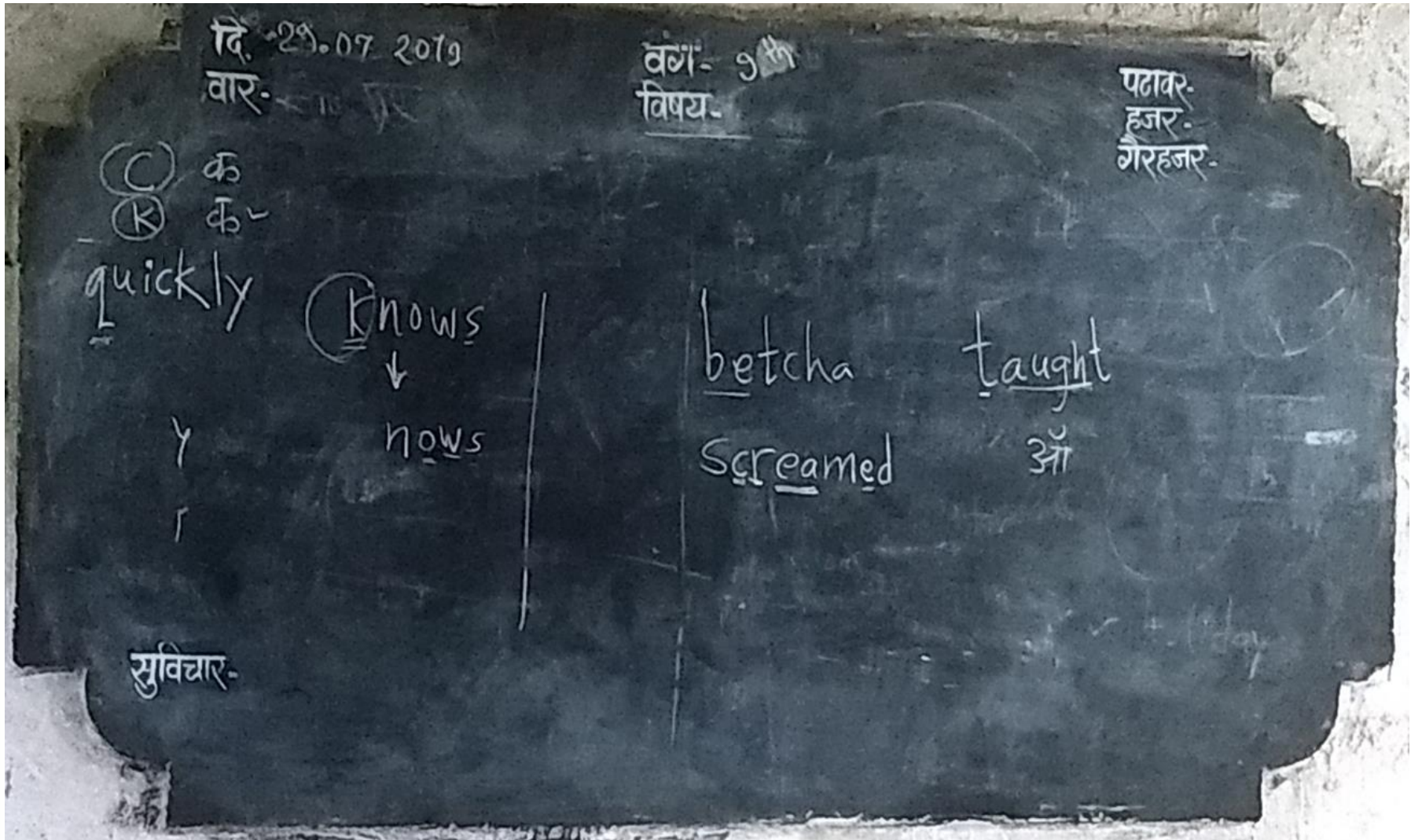
Example of the use of resources from other languages to support the learning of English

Example of the use of resources from other languages to support the learning of English

A good teacher

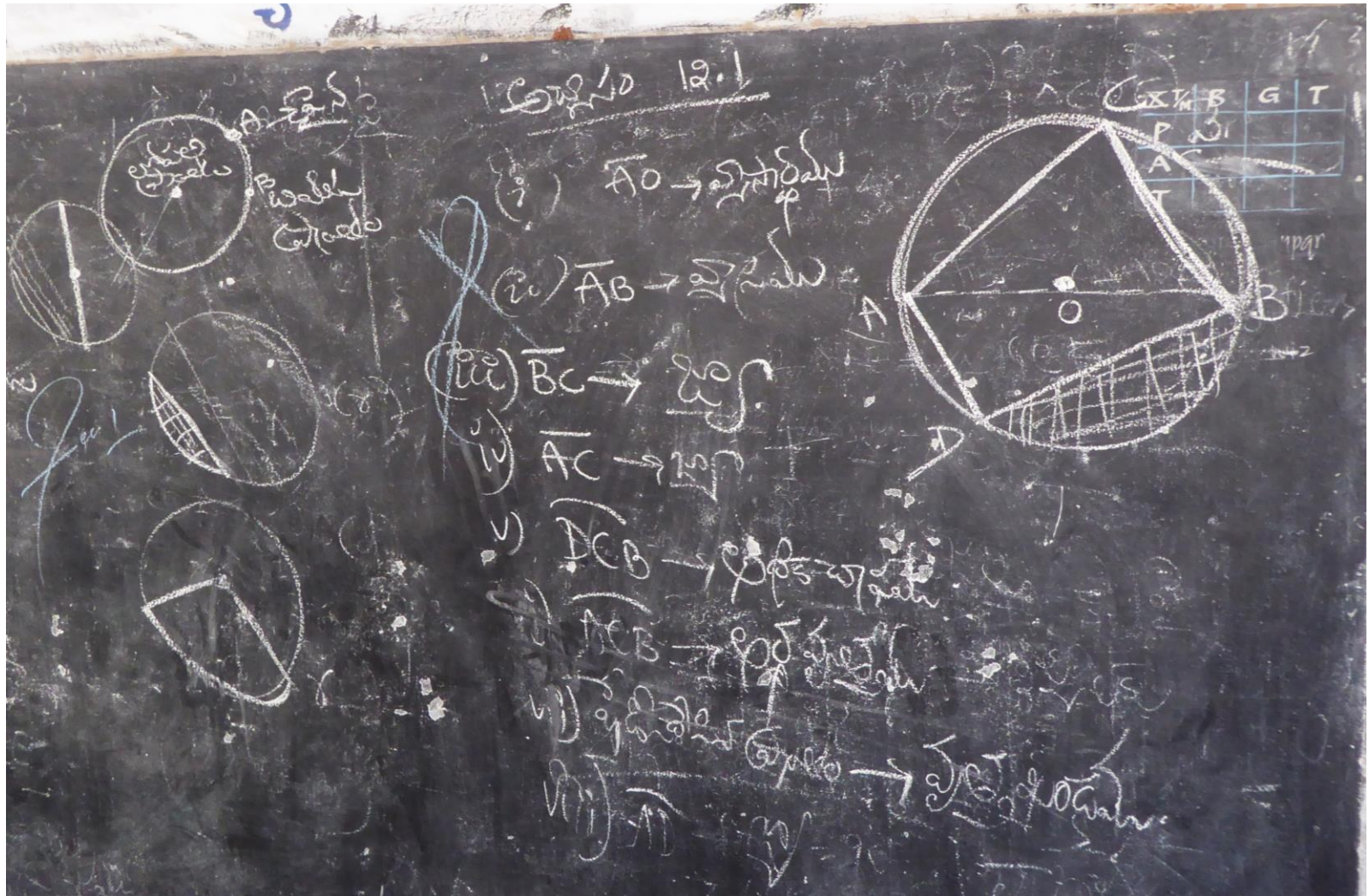| A good teacher is...	A good teacher does...
1) careful	1) Asks many quetIoh
2) Intellehgeht	2) best teaching
3) smart	3) सर्वाशी प्रेमाने बोलता आणि चांगले वागता
4) Clever	4) आणि चांगले शिक्षक मुला मुलीन मध्ये भेदवात करत नाही.
5)	
6)	

Example of the use of resources from other languages to support the learning of English
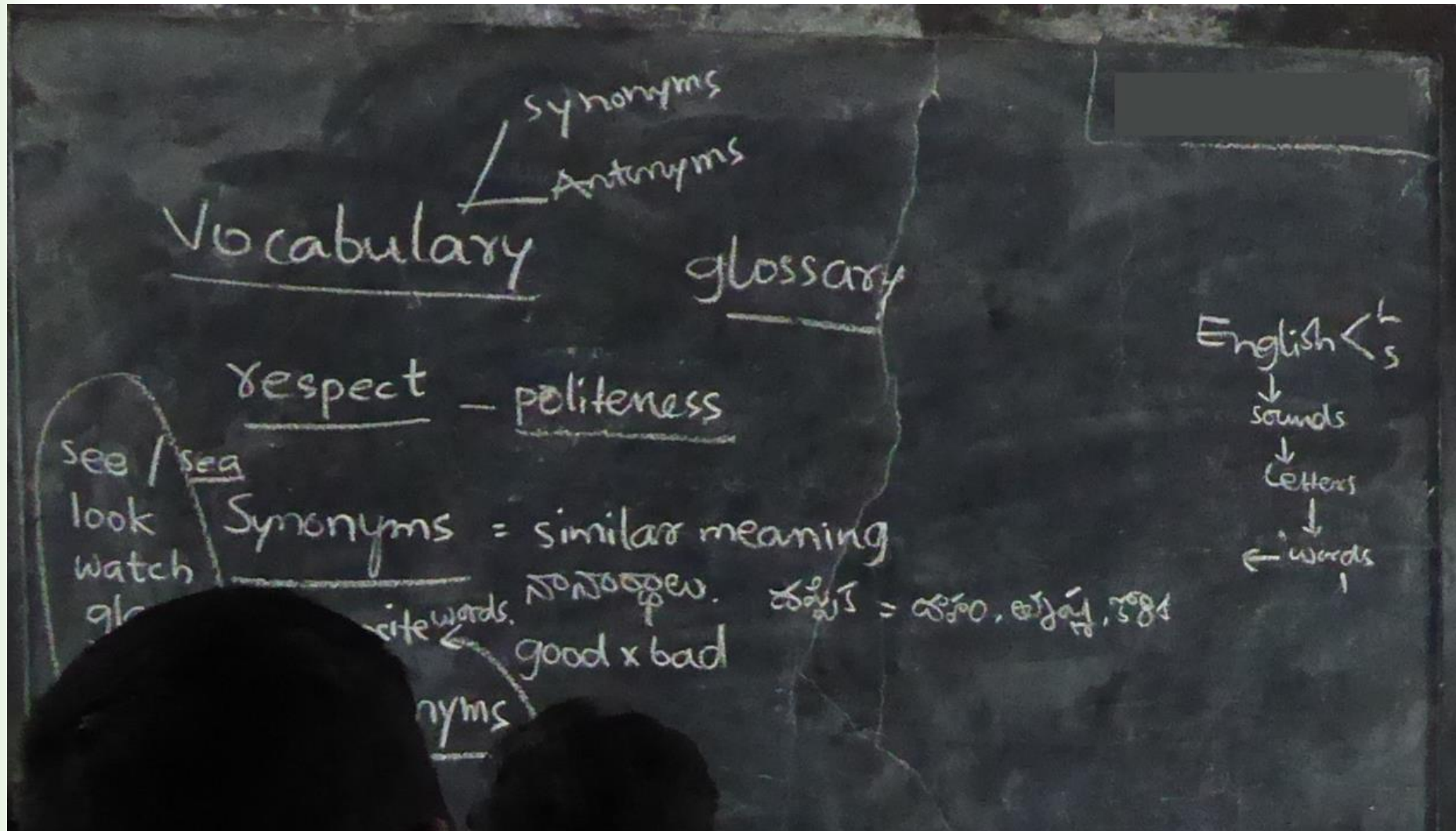
Example of the use of resources from other languages to support the learning of English

Discussion – using 'other languaging resources' (OLRs) in English language teaching and learning

A) Experienced teachers, lecturers, teacher educators:

How do you use/involve other OLRs in your work? Why?

B) Trainee teachers:

What are your plans for using OLRs in your future practice? Why?

C) Writers, curriculum developers

To what extent do OLRs enter into your considerations and decision making when developing resources?

D) 'English only' practitioners:

If <u>you</u> don't use OLRs in your external practice, how do you think your learners use them, and why?

And do you ever think about OLRs when planning, preparing, assessing, etc?

Recent research on L1 use in Indian contexts

Rahman (2013): 65% of 25 teachers reported using Assamese 'frequently'. Why? To explain concepts (65%); to save time (15%); to engage ss. (10%); and because ss. demand it (10%). 95% of ss. said they needed help of Assamese in English classes.

Chimarala (2017): 95% of 112 teachers use other languages. 71% allow students to use them. Why? To explain concepts and difficult words (69%); to reprimand or bond with ss. (11%); to check comprehension (11%).

Durairajan (2017): summarises esp. PhD studies (1981-2017):

'These varied growths, mostly 'small gains' … may not be statistically significant but – in terms of pedagogic implications and student growth and feeling of confidence – nearly exponential.' (p.313)

British Council survey (see Anderson, 2017; Anderson & Lightfoot, 2018): Key findings

Are you allowed to use other languages in English lessons?
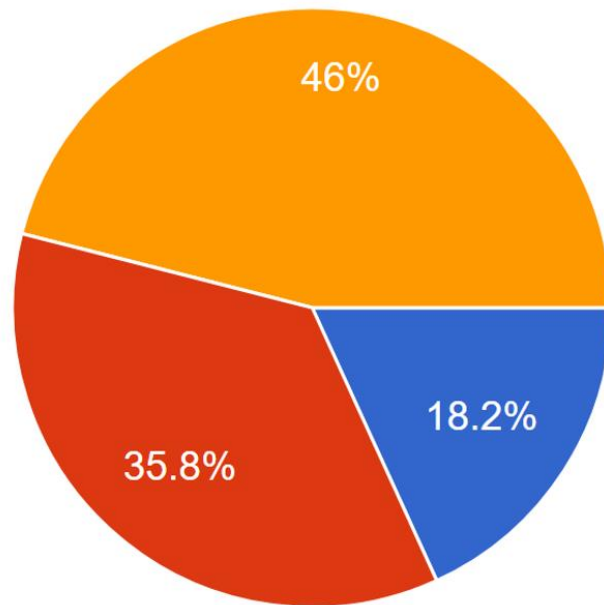
- No. I am told to teach using only English.
- There is no policy, but using other languages is discouraged.
- Yes. I'm allowed / free to use other languages in English lessons.

Frequency of different OL uses

1. Managing learning and behaviour

I use OLs for classroom management during English lessons.

I use OLs to discipline my learners during English lessons.

2. Using OLs for scaffolding learning

I use OLs to explain things.

I allow my students to speak OLs during English lessons.

I actively encourage the use of OLs during my lessons.

I allow my students to make notes in OLs during English lessons.

I think about OLs when preparing and teaching my lessons.

3. Crosslanguaging

I translate for my students during English lessons.

I get my students to do translation activities.

I allow my students to translate using bilingual dictionaries, etc.

I get my students to compare the way languages express things.

I compare sounds from OLs to English to help with pronunciation.

4. Meshing

I allow my students to mix English with OLs for speaking activities.

I allow my students to mix English with OLs for writing activities.

I use texts and audio that include OLs during English lessons.

0 (never)   **1 (occasionally)**   **2 (regularly)**

Which ones were most commonly reported?

Indian NCERT: National Focus Group on Teaching of English Position Paper (2006)

Suggestions (pp. 12-13) include:

- At the lower primary stage, or at least in Classes I–III, English can occur in tandem with the first language(s) for learning activities designed to create awareness of the world around the child.

- Introducing parallel texts in more than one language. Such parallel texts may not be precise translations of one another but may convey the same or similar meaning, or involve similar language activity such as rhymes, sound games, etc. that sensitise the child to language-sound structures.

- Use of bilingual learning dictionaries. (Today this can include use of Google translate – now available for 12 Indian languages).

- Providing inputs in a foreign language with production in a familiar language.

Practical ideas for translanguaging
1. Culture share (from Prof. Julu Sen)

- Works well with students from diverse cultures (e.g. multicultural cities, teacher training groups).

- Ss bring items of cultural importance to class.

- Students talk about and explain the importance of these items in any languages (L1, L2, English).

- Then they prepare either a text, or give a brief presentation on the item in English.

Practical ideas for translanguaging
2. Five sentences (from Dr. Heera Rajwani)

- An appropriate topic is chosen (e.g. social media, addictions, IT).

- Working in pairs, students write five sentences on the topic in a shared language, but not English, then they read them out to other students.

- The next day the task is repeated, but this time in English. The teacher supports as necessary.

- Then on the third day, students try to remember their 5 sentences without opening their books, using as much English as possible.

5 Translanguaging ideas from Jason

1. **Be OL-inclusive:** E.g. Let your learners know that whenever they don't know a word in English, they can say it in a shared language. Let them finish, then ask: "Can anyone say that in English?"

2. **Use OLs to check understanding:** E.g. After explaining the meaning of a word (you can explain it in English or L1), elicit the L1 equivalent: "How do we say this in Marathi?"

3. **Encourage OL 'buzz groups':** E.g. After a grammar presentation, give students a few minutes to discuss with peers in OLs (in some classes, you can put them into OL groups). Tell them to explain what they understood and to think of 1-3 questions to ask you if needed.

4. **Give regular, short translation tasks:** E.g. for homework, they translate a text from English to OL. Next lesson, get them to take out their translations and with their partner reconstruct the sentence / text in English (they can speak or write). No homework marking!

5. **Keep a vocabulary box in the class:** Write new words on slips of paper, with English on one side and OLs on the other. If there are many languages in the class, the students can write several translations on the back. Use the vocab. box for games and tests.
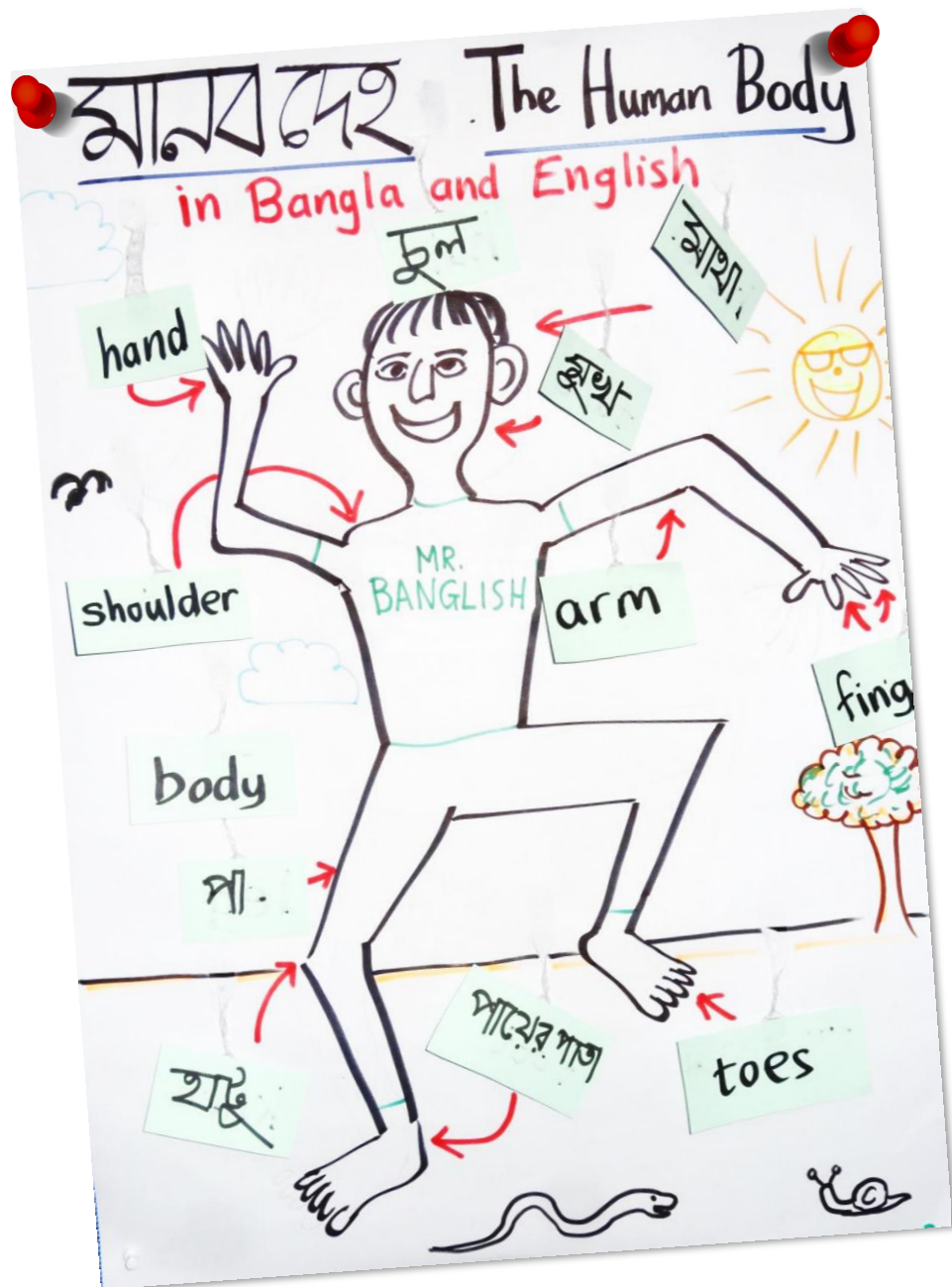
Remember to be critical when trying out someone else's ideas in your own classroom!

Mr. Banglish

- Good at primary level

- Bilingual poster

- Each card is stuck on with sticky tape

- English on one side

- L1 on back

- Helps to develop an understanding of equivalence between languages

A diglossic division in Indian ELT: My recent observations

- Spoken translanguaging is widespread in English language classrooms in Telangana and Maharashtra. Hindi, Telugu, Marathi, etc. are used as co-media of instruction (CMI) alongside English, although practices vary greatly depending on teacher, school policy (incl., but not only 'MOI'), community context, social expectations, etc.

- In some classrooms, there is almost no spoken use of English. It's taught as a written language only, probably because of necessity of exam preparation – what is sometimes called 'English as subject'.

- These CMI rarely find their way into official textbooks, exams (except translation tasks), or written student work.

- CMI are nonetheless common in commercial resources for learners.

Commercial, translingual 'workbook' for Maharashtra State Board

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Passage–1 (Textbook Page 31)

This is a story of a mason, … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … and refused to carry on.

शब्दार्थ : **mason** (मेसन्)—a person skilled in cutting, dressing and laying stone in building, one who builds with stone, bricks, cement, etc.; राजमिस्त्री, राजगीर, निर्माणकार्य करने वाला। **strove** (स्ट्रोव्)—made great efforts to achieve or obtain something, tried; (स्ट्राईव का भूतकाल रूप), कड़ी मेहनत करना। **dedication** (डेडिकेइशन्)—devotion, committed to a task or purpose; निष्ठा, समर्पण। **zeal** (झील्)—passion, enthusiasm; उत्साह, जोश। **diligence** (डिलिजन्स्)—meticulousness, constant careful efforts; लगन, परिश्रम। **persistence** (पर्सिंस्टन्स्)—perseverance, determination; सतत प्रयास। **recompensed** (रेकम्पेन्स्ड)—remunerated, money paid for work done; (सेवा, काम, आदि का) मेहनताना, भुगतान। **handsomely** (हँसमली)—generously, open-handedly; उदारतापूर्वक, खुले हाथों से। **disheartened** (डिस्हार्टेन्ड)—saddened, distressed; निराश हो गया। **to no avail** (टु नो अव्हेइल्)—of no use, in vain, futile; कोई लाभ न होना, (यहाँ अर्थ) व्यर्थ।

A2. Complex Factual Activity :

Answer in your words :

*(1) The owners of the new houses built by the mason would be extremely pleased. WHY?
(राजमिस्त्री द्वारा निर्मित नए घरों के मालिक अत्यधिक प्रसन्न थे। क्यों?)

Ans. the

Curricula, language in education policy and teacher education: Some topics and food for thought

- **Medium of instruction**: This term originates in monolingual communities. Why do we have to have just one? Why not 'languages of learning'? (Anderson, 2019)

- **Multilingual textbooks**: What would a translingual or multilingual textbook look like? How could it celebrate the languages of the learners while using them to support the learning of English? See work in New York (e.g. Celic & Seltzer, 2013).

- **Translingual emergence:** At primary level especially, can curricula encourage the emergence of English *from within* OLRs (as it evolves naturally in the languaging practices of many urban Indians), rather than teaching it as a separate 'L2' or 'L3'?

- **The translingual teacher:** Can we base a model of effective Indian language pedagogy on a teacher who… ?
  - "is able to understand, interpret, scaffold, and challenge their learners' choice of linguistic resources appropriately. Importantly, s/he is also able to model effective translingual and monolingual practices across the translingual continuum. " (Anderson, 2018)

Learning English with all our languages

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