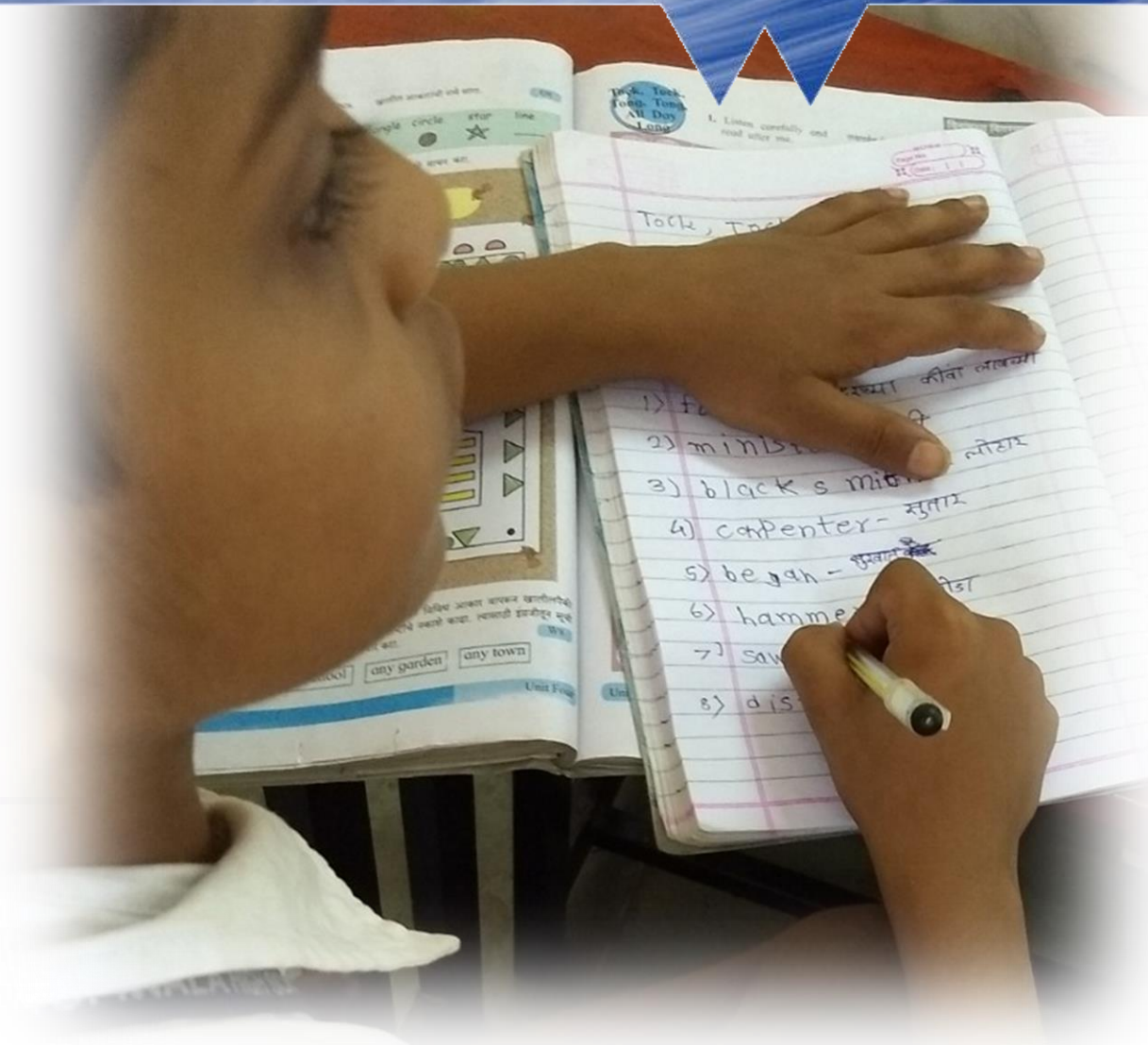# Translanguaging and its potential importance for ELT in India

Jason Anderson, University of Warwick

jason.anderson@warwick.ac.uk

25th September, 2023

For: **University of Hyderabad Foundation Day Lecture**
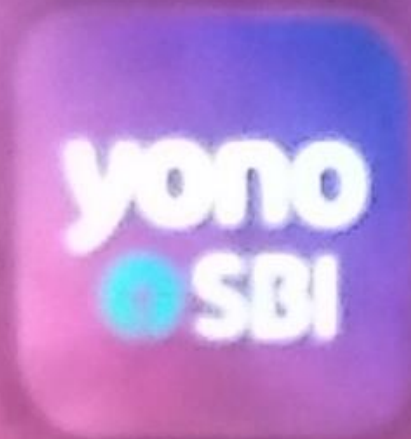
WARWICK
APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Plan for the talk

1. What is translanguaging? Examples, theory, paradigm shift

2. Translanguaging in Indian scholarship, research and classrooms

3. Implications for ELT in India

What is translanguaging?

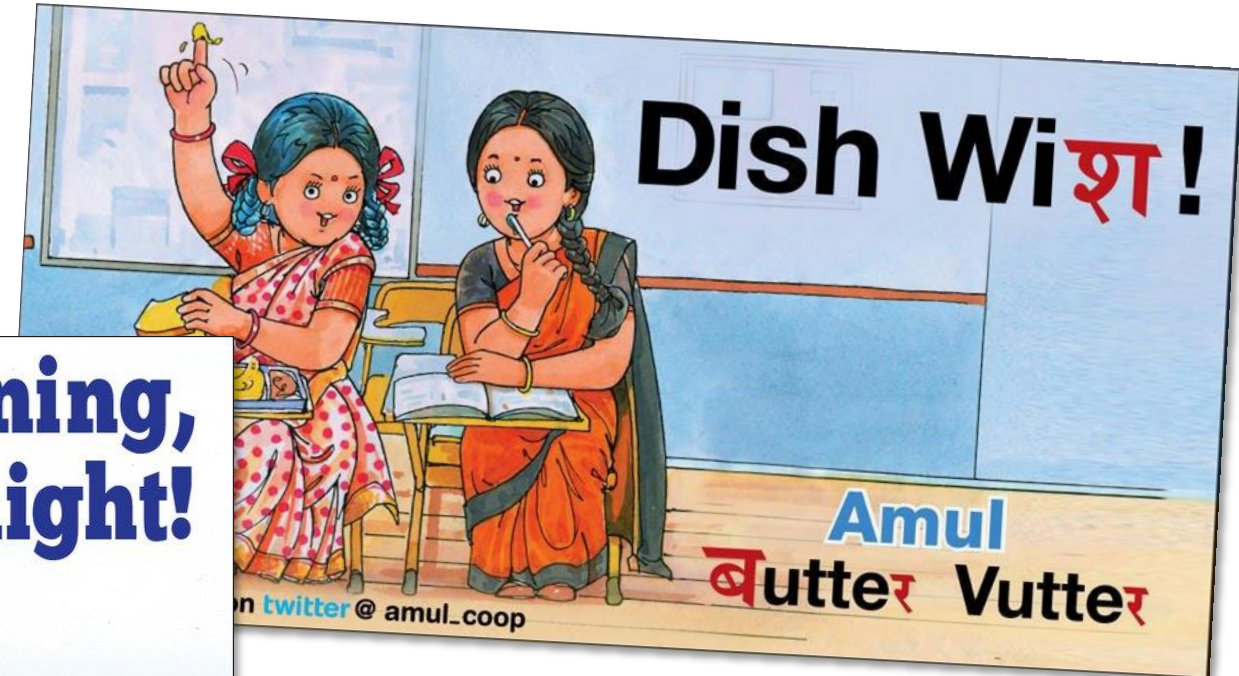Jitne apps utne jhanjhat.
Uninstall the jhanjhats.

yono SBI Lifestyle & banking, dono.

Download & Register now | sbiyono.sbi

What is translanguaging?
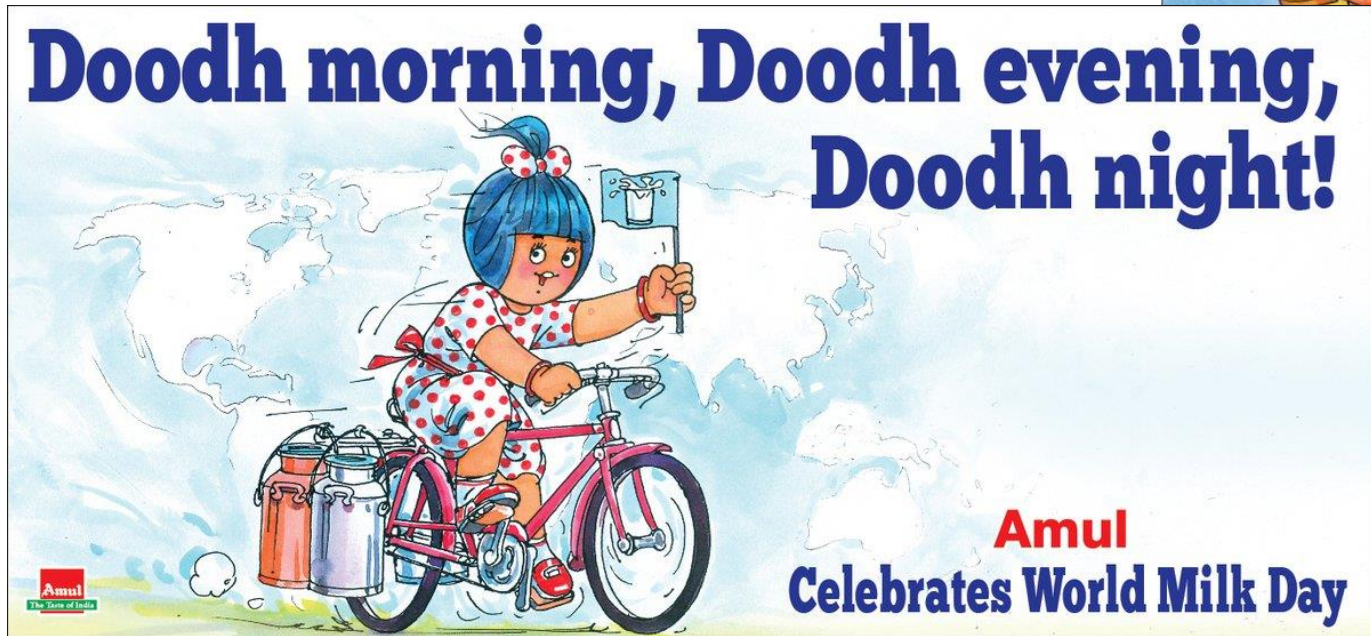
What is translanguaging?

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!

(adapted from Sailaja, 2011)

What is translanguaging?

What is translanguaging?

War and Peace
(1868) by Lev Tolstoi

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 а 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 ... e (la femme du jeune Болконский). И, ...ся. Ce sera dans votre famille, que je ...de vieille fille.

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

The need for translanguaging theory

"What we need is a more functionally oriented and culturally authentic theory, 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)
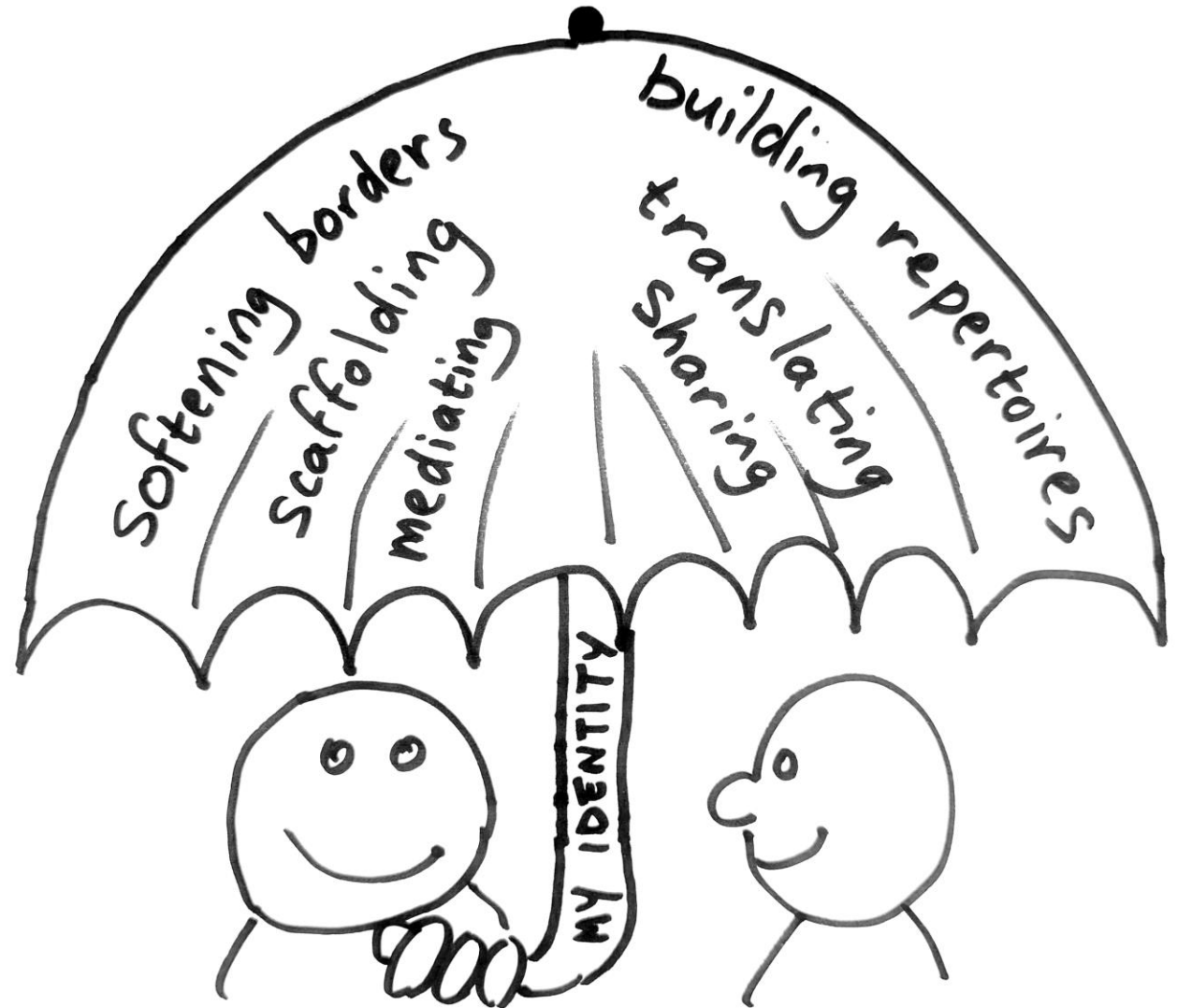
Translanguaging theory

...translanguaging is an approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as **one linguistic repertoire** with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages.

(Garcia & Li Wei, 2014, p. 2)

- It places us, as multilinguals, and our multilingual realities before the named languages that we make use of

- It does not deny the importance of named languages, but stops assuming that they are the first order reality (see integrationist theory)

- It permeates all aspects of society, especially education

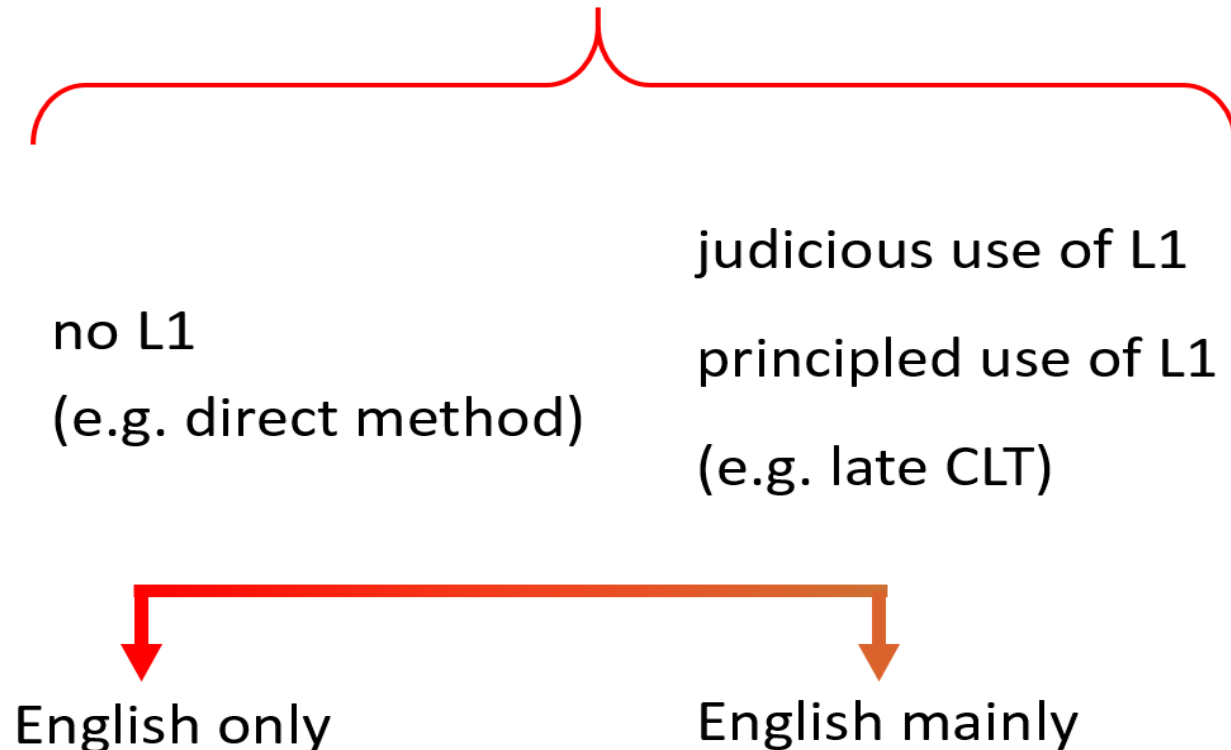# Translanguaging as an 'umbrella term'

- Heugh (2021) and Cenoz & Gorter (2021) observe that, in practice 'translanguaging' has become an umbrella term for a range of language-inclusive practices and ideas

The translanguaging paradigm shift for (Western) ELT

The monolingual paradigm

no L1
(e.g. direct method)

judicious use of L1

principled use of L1

(e.g. late CLT)

English only

English mainly

The translanguaging paradigm shift for (Western) ELT

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
                                                          (verb)

Translanguaging in Indian scholarship, research and classrooms

Indian contexts: Scholarship and policy

- Indian linguists have researched, documented, and theorised complex multilingual practices for many years. See work by Pingali Sailaja (2012) Ajit Mohanty (2006), Geeta Durairajan (2017) and Rama Kant Agnihotri (1995), for a few of many examples.

- Some are reluctant to use the word 'translanguaging'; others have embraced it (Mukhopadhyay, 2020; Mahapatra & Anderson, 2023), as have scholars from other parts of S. Asia (Canagarajah, 2013; Phyak, 2023).

- Policy from NCERT has been forward-thinking. 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."

Research in Indian classrooms

- Not much! ☹

- Survey by Anderson and Lightfoot (Anderson, 2017; Anderson & Lightfoot, 2021)

- Lina Mukhopadhyay's research in Hyderabad (e.g., 2020)

- My research on expert Indian teachers of English (Anderson, 2022, 2023)

Findings of Anderson & Lightfoot (2021)

1. Framework tasks

I use OLs for classroom management during English lessons. **1.07**

I use OLs to discipline my learners during English lessons. **0.69**

2. Using L1 as scaffolding resource

I use OLs to explain things. **1.11**

I allow my students to speak OLs during English lessons. **1.02**

I actively encourage the use of OLs during my lessons. **0.53**

I allow my students to make notes in OLs during English lessons. **0.44**

I think about OLs when preparing and teaching my lessons. **1.06**

3. Crosslanguaging

I translate for my students during English lessons. **1.06**

I get my students to do translation activities. **0.83**

I allow my students to translate using bilingual dictionaries, etc. **1.01**

I get my students to compare the way languages express things. **1.25**

I compare sounds from OLs to English to help with pronunciation. **1.20**

4. Meshing

I allow my students to mix English with OLs for speaking activities. **0.75**

I allow my students to mix English with OLs for writing activities. **0.21**

I use texts and audio that include OLs during English lessons. **0.49**

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

- Teachers reported limited use of a wide range of translingual strategies.
- Most are allowed or free to use other languages.
- A sense of guilt ('guilty translanguaging') pervades teacher perceptions of use of learners' full repertoires.

Mukhopadhyay's research (2020)

- Hyderabad, primary teacher.
- Revealed complex, integrated use of several languages; scaffolding, prioritising understanding, accommodating, mediating

T:	What work did you do at home ? Ghar pe kyakaamkiya?Cheppu..Intloemi chesavu, tell me. [tell me…in-home what you do-past](note 4)
S1:	Nenu Amma ki vessels *clean cheydam* lo *help chesanu*. [I to-mother vessels clean to do in help do-past]
T:	Do you do it every day? Yes? When you do every day then say -" help chestava" [help do] ante "I help Amma". If you did only yesterday then say "help chesanu" (ante helped) [help do-past = helped]
S2:	Nenu *ground la* ball aadenu. I played ball. [I in ground ball play-past.] (la=in; Telangana colloquial use instead of 'lo' that is standard variety]
S3:	Nenu *cook chestha*. *Cook karne* ko *help kiya*. [T: I cook do] [H: Cook do-inf for help do-past]
S4:	Main` *swimming ku gaya… Tairneku* [Dakkhini: I swimming to go-past]

My research on expert Indian teachers (Anderson, 2022)

- 8 participants across India

- 2 in Telangana

- All believed in being inclusive of learners' full repertoire; encouraging other languages; scaffolding to more English-proficient languaging.

- A big variety of how much English in theirs and their learners' language.

```
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.          (relatives)
S4: Sodari.            (sister)
S1: Emantaaru?         (How do we say that?)
T: Ah, his sister's marriage.
```
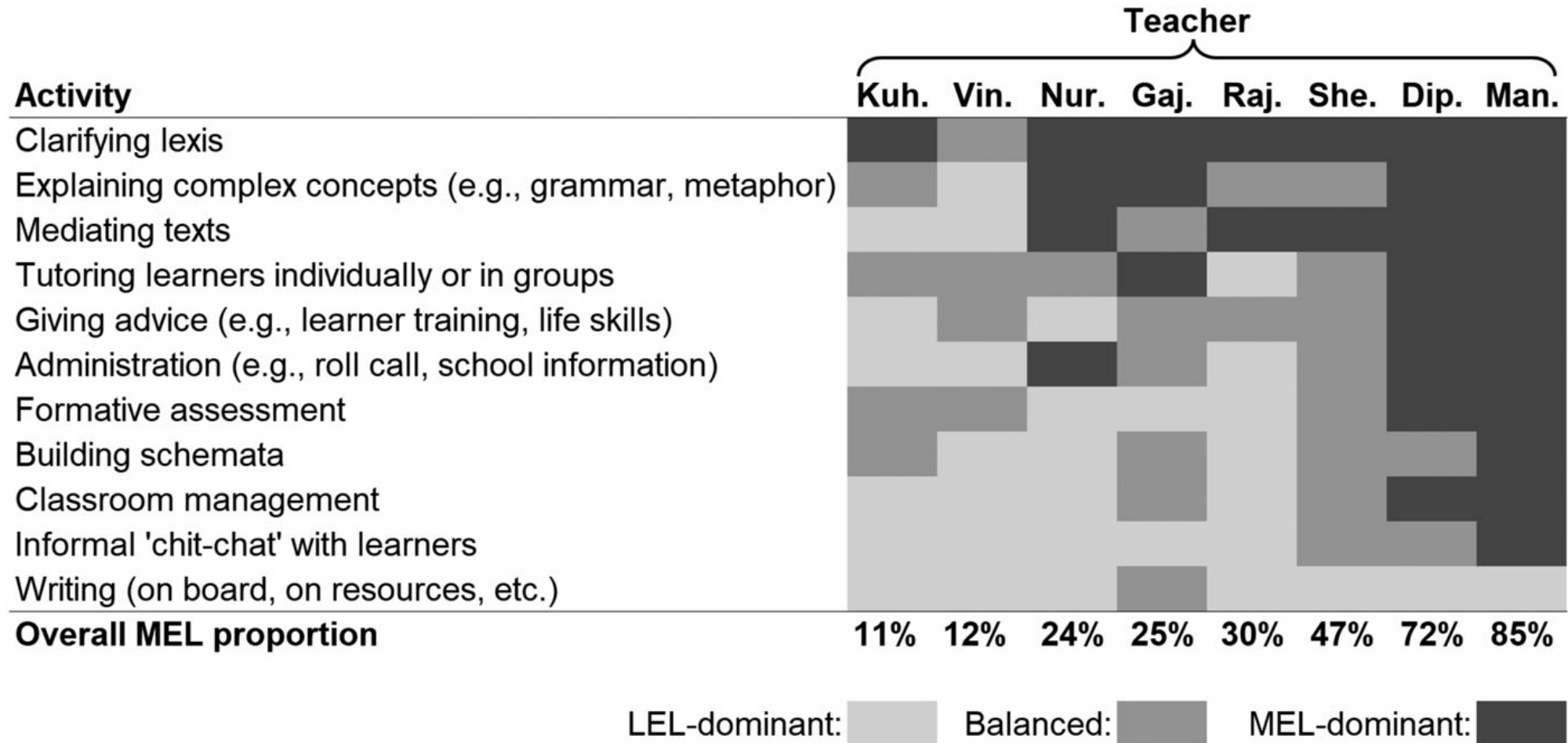
My research on expert Indian teachers (Anderson, 2022)

Activity	Kuh.	Vin.	Nur.	Gaj.	Raj.	She.	Dip.	Man.
Clarifying lexis								
Explaining complex concepts (e.g., grammar, metaphor)								
Mediating texts								
Tutoring learners individually or in groups								
Giving advice (e.g., learner training, life skills)								
Administration (e.g., roll call, school information)								
Formative assessment								
Building schemata								
Classroom management								
Informal 'chit-chat' with learners								
Writing (on board, on resources, etc.)								
Overall MEL proportion	11%	12%	24%	25%	30%	47%	72%	85%

LEL-dominant: Balanced: MEL-dominant:

LEL – less enabled language (English); MEL – more enabled language (varied)

How do learners translanguage to learn?

- E.g., West Bengal: two students composing a text together (Anderson, 2022):

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

S1: *Na, tui ar likhisni ota.*	S1: *No, you don't write that.*
S2: *Ki? Ami?* So at last	S2: *What? Me?* So at last
S2: last month	S2: last month
S1: we decided	S1: we decided
S2: so last month. *Dur baba!* we have	S2: so last month. *Oh come on!* we have
S1: decided	S1: decided
S2: started	S2: started
S1: to go, decided to	S1: to go, decided to
S2: last month we went	S2: last month we went
S1: *Na,* we start *korlam,* we started to	S1: *No,* we start *start,* we started to
S2: to go for sea voyage in Indian Ocean.	S2: to go for sea voyage in Indian Ocean.
(writing) *Tui onyo kichu lekh.*	(writing) *You write something else.*

How do learners translanguage to learn?

Telangana
(Anderson,
2021, p. 129)

How do learners translanguage to learn?

Maharashtra (unpublished data)

Implications for ELT in India

Implications for ELT in India

1. Implications for us as teachers of a named language
2. Implications for policy
3. Implications for curricula (including ELT, EMI, etc.)
4. Implications for assessment
5. …?

Translanguaging: Implications for teachers of English in India

Translanguaging: Implications for teachers of ~~of~~ *with* English in India

- We **stop isolating** the 'L2' from the 'L1', and begin thinking about valuing, embracing and adding to our learners' repertoires (including L1, L2, L3, etc.)

- We move from 'English only' to '**English appropriately**'

- We **embrace our multilingual practices** – meshing, mixing, subverting, translating, interpreting, mediating – as part of **who we are**

- We also become **experts at 'monolanguaging' and 'monolecting'** (e.g., 'legal register' or 'academic English'); as part of our multilingual repertoire (contextually-appropriate languaging)

- We **recognise our expertise** in our learners' prior language, knowledge, culture and customs

- We become '**translingual teachers**' (see Anderson, 2018):

    [A translingual teacher] 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, p. 34)

Practical ideas for translanguaging
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
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.

Practical ideas for translanguaging (bilingual resources)

- E.g., Mr 'Banglish'

- Good at primary level

- Bilingual poster

- Each card is stuck on with sticky tape

- English on one side

- L1 on back

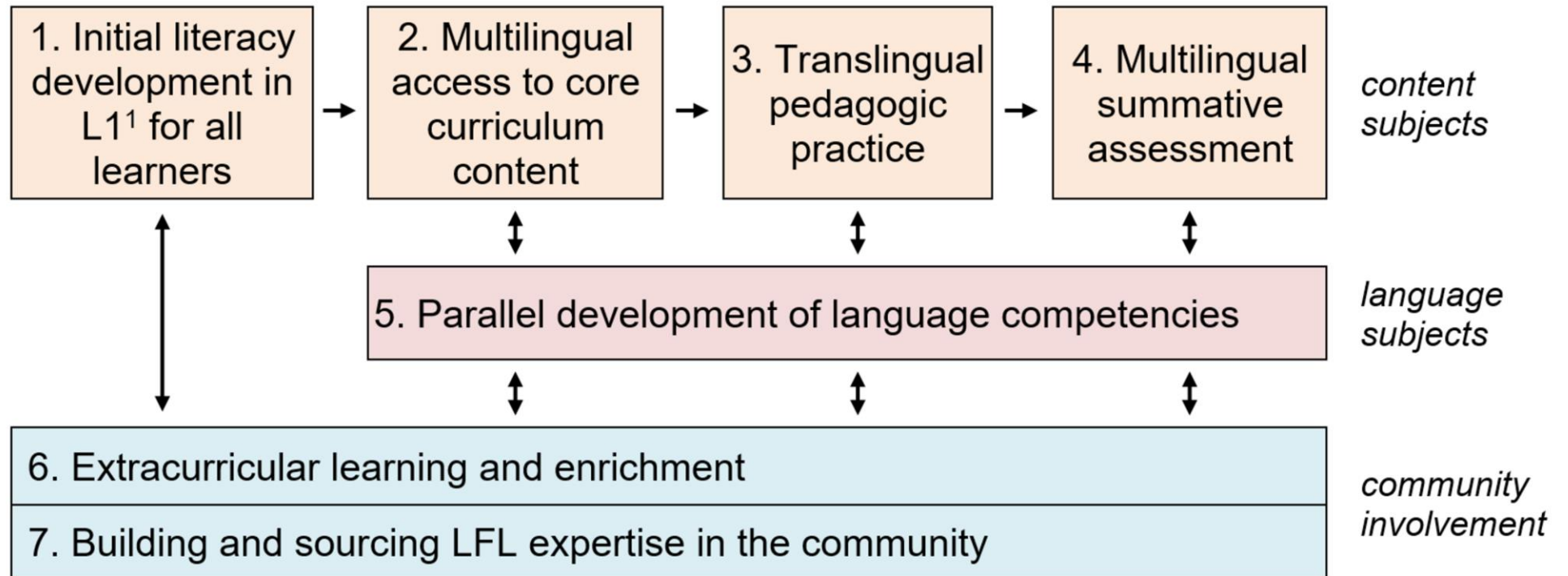- Helps to develop an understanding of equivalence between languages

Implications for Indian curricula: The languages for learning framework

Principles

1. Language inclusivity
2. Language equity
3. First language support
4. Cognitive independence

Rejects the idea of 'medium of instruction'

Elements

content subjects

| 1. Initial literacy development in L1[1] for all learners | → | 2. Multilingual access to core curriculum content | → | 3. Translingual pedagogic practice | → | 4. Multilingual summative assessment |

5. Parallel development of language competencies — *language subjects*

6. Extracurricular learning and enrichment

7. Building and sourcing LFL expertise in the community

community involvement

- Mahapatra, S. K., & Anderson, J. (2023). Languages for learning: A framework for implementing India's language-in-education policy. *Current Issues in Language Planning, 24*(1), 102-122 . https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2022.2037292
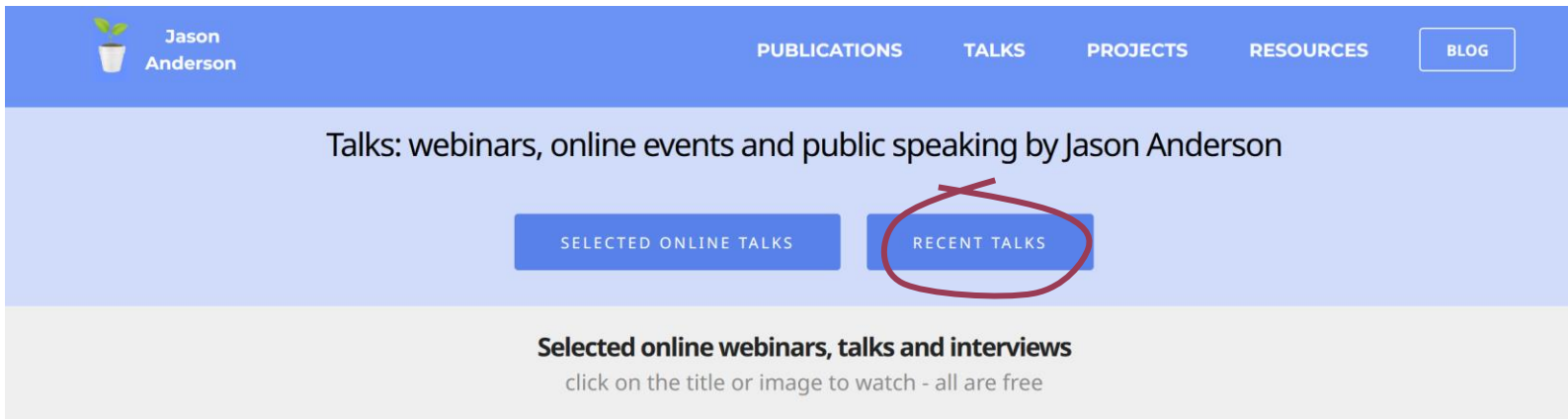
Call for more research and scholarship

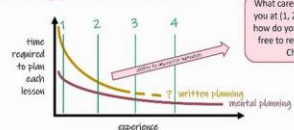We need more research in Indian classrooms:

- Scholarship that theorises translanguaging in Indian languages and contexts: How would you translate 'translanguaging', or explain it to a learner or teacher?

- Research that documents, interprets and gives voice to translanguaging in India: learners' and teachers' opinions and wisdom

- Research that evaluates its 'impact' (widely defined)

- Research to convince some authorities to move away from 'English-only' / EMI-is-best policies (see Simpson, 2019)

Slides are here

- http://www.jasonanderson.org.uk/talks.htm (scroll down to Recent Talks)

References

Agnihotri, R. K. (1995). Multilingualism as a classroom resource. In K. Heugh, A. Sieruhn and P. Pluddemann (Eds.), Multilingual Education for South Africa (pp. 3-7). Heinemann.

Anderson, J. (2017). Translanguaging in English language classrooms in India: Why, when and how? Paper presented at the 12 International and 48 Annual ELTAI Conference, Ernakulam, 30 June 2017. www.youtube.com/watch?v=w93mMJzGgnA

Anderson, J. (2018). "Reimagining English Language Learners from a Translingual Perspective." ELT Journal 72 (1): 26–37. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccx029

Anderson, J. (2021). Eight expert Indian teachers of English: A participatory comparative case study of teacher expertise in the Global South. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Warwick]. Warwick WRAP. http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/159940/

Anderson, J. (2022). The translanguaging practices of expert Indian teachers of English and their learners. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2045300

Anderson, J. (2023). Teacher expertise in the global South: Theory, research and evidence. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009284837

Anderson, J. & Lightfoot, A. (2021). Translingual practices in English classrooms in India: Current perceptions and future possibilities. International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 24(8), 1210-1231. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2018.1548558

Bhagat, C. (2014). Half girlfriend. New Delhi: Rupa.

Canagarajah, A. S. (2013). Translingual Practice. New York, NY: Routledge.

Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D. (2021). Pedagogical Translanguaging. Cambridge University Press.

Durairajan, G. (2017). Using the first language as a resource in English classrooms: What research from India tells us. In H. Coleman (Ed.). Multilingualisms and Development (Selected proceedings of the 11th language and development conference, New Delhi, India, 2015). British Council.

García, O., & Li Wei. (2014). Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education. Palgrave Macmillan.

Heugh, K. (2021). Southern Multilingualisms, Translanguaging and Transknowledging in Inclusive and Sustainable Education. In P. Harding-Esch and H. Coleman (Eds.), Language and the Sustainable Development Goals. British Council.

Mahapatra, S. K., & Anderson, J. (2023). Languages for learning: A framework for implementing India's language-in-education policy. Current Issues in Language Planning, 24(1), 102-122 . https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2022.2037292

Makoni, S., & Pennycook, A. (2005). Disinventing and (re)constituting languages. Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 2, 137–156.

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. E. Torres-Guzman (Eds.) Imagining multilingual schools: Languages in education and glocalization (pp. 262-283). Multilingual Matters.

Mukhopadhyay, L. (2020). Translanguaging in Primary Level ESL Classroom in India: An Exploratory Study. International Journal of English Language Teaching, 7(2), 1–15.

NCERT. (2006). Position Paper of the National Focus Groups on Teaching of English. NCERT: New Delhi.

Phyak, P. (2023). Translanguaging as a space of simultaneity: Theorizing translanguaging pedagogies in English medium schools from a spatial perspective. *The Modern Language Journal*, *107*(1), 289-307. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12830

Sailaja, P. (2011). Hinglish: Code-switching in Indian English. ELT Journal, 65(4), 473-480. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccr047

Simpson, J. (2019). English language and medium of instruction in basic education in low- and middle-income countries: A British Council perspective. British Council.

Sridhar, S. N. (1994). A reality check for SLA theories. TESOL Quarterly, 28/4: 800-805.

Толстой, Л. (1868). Войнá и миръ. Москва: Т-Рис.

✉ jason.anderson@warwick.ac.uk   🐦 @jasonelt   🌐 www.jasonanderson.org.uk   🌐 www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/people/anderson/