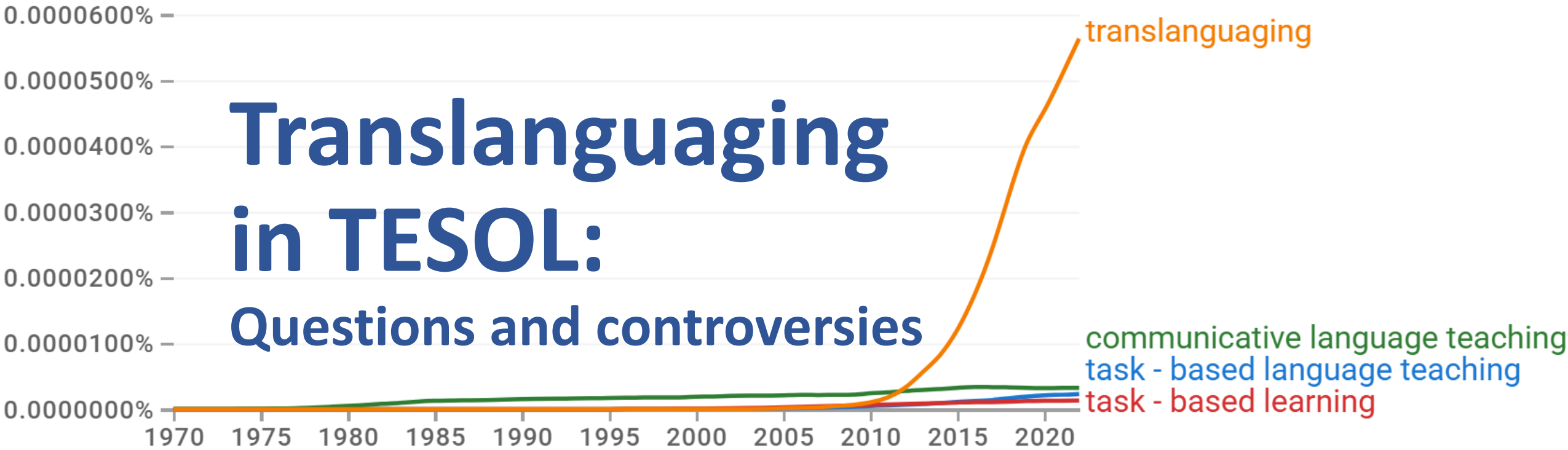

Translanguaging in TESOL:

Questions and controversies

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Questions and controversies *(on my mind)*

1. How do we navigate between the need to embrace and incorporate our learners' multilingual repertoires in our classes, and the need to focus primarily on developing a limited part of these repertoires (the English part)? Is there a trade-off here? (Meyer, 2020)
2. Are we back in the old discussion of how much L1 to use in the L2 classroom?
3. Are translanguaging pedagogy and communicative language teaching oppositional as theories underpinning language learning?
4. Are we moving away from current understandings of 'English' communicative competence as the primary outcome of ELT? If so, what are we moving towards?

Contexts and communities for this talk

- **Global awareness:** Remaining aware of all teachers who teach English as an additional language in some way (esp. EFL, ESL, ESOL, CLIL), esp. the most numerous (primary and secondary EFL and postcolonial ESL around the world)
- **Low resource norms:** Recognising that most of these practitioners work in challenging situations
- **TESOL discourse bias:** While this talk does address academic discourse and theory, it prioritises the challenges and concerns of the above teachers, not those working in the anglosphere

Brief background to translanguaging theory

- Rapid emergence of translanguaging as a key construct, initially in bilingual education (e.g., García, 2009)
- It has become both a means and an end in the struggle to achieve more appropriate, equitable, socially just and decolonised multilingual education
- Example definition (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 2):
  - "…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."
- Stronger and weaker forms have emerged (García & Lin, 2017)

But what does it mean for us in 'named' language teaching?

What probably hasn’t changed?

- While many aspects of our understanding of what language is and what types of learning constitute valued learning in additional language teaching are under debate (Anderson, 2022, 2024a; Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Leung & Valdes, 2019), the following probably still hold true for those of us who teach named languages:
    1. learners need plentiful exposure to the language (or languaging practices) we expect them to learn (i.e. ‘input’)
    2. learners need opportunities to use/practise the language we expect them to learn (i.e. ‘output’ / ‘interaction’)
    3. learners need some kind of explicit instruction to support and guide learning relative to these input and output opportunities that
- i.e., certain fundamentals of SLA theory underpinning CLT probably remain true.

Emerging pedagogic questions

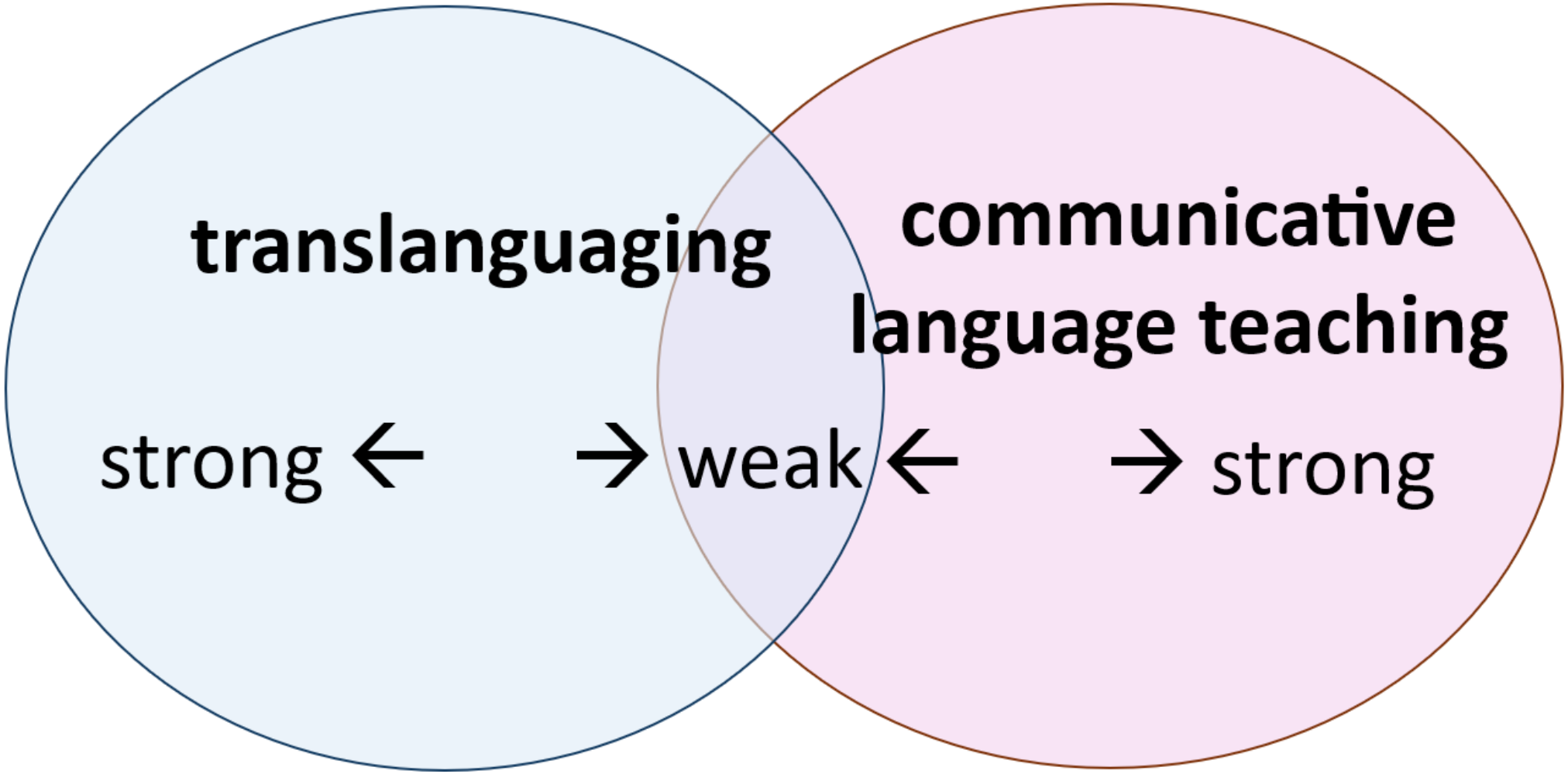
Learners still need input, output and interaction in the “target language” (TL), but:

1. What happens *around* the input and output opportunities?
2. How exactly do we *do* the explicit instruction, from a languaging perspective?
3. To what extent might the input, output and interaction opportunities themselves *become* translingual?
4. What else do they need to *be* confident, capable, empowered language ~~learners~~ users?

These are perhaps the emerging areas of discussion about translanguaging in TESOL/ELT (see Hall, 2020; Jeon et al., 2025; Kim & Weng, 2022).

- How does CLT, as ELT ‘orthodoxy’, deal with them?

Translanguaging and CLT: What's the relationship?



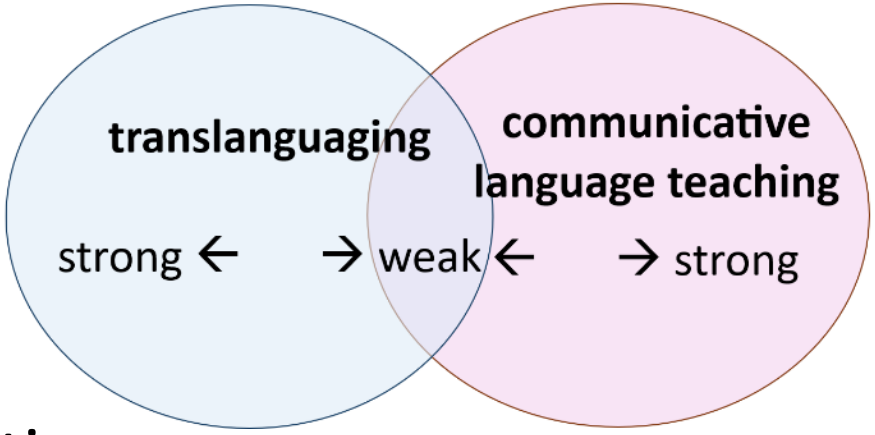
The strong CLT perspective (i.e. TBLT)

- Task-based language teaching (TBLT) emerged as a process-oriented monolingual pedagogy
- For the acquisition of the 'target language' (TL), it assumes learners have to use it interactively and meaningfully through communication focused tasks.
- So far, academics have struggled to marry TBLT with translanguaging.
- East and Wang (2024) are not too optimistic: "…the monolingual principle makes sense" (p. 7) during tasks. They acknowledge that translanguaging during tasks is more authentic and can facilitate achievement of task outcomes, but don't address the 'how much' question
- Seals et al. (2020): 'L1' may be used for task planning rehearsal (arguably also in post-task activities)
- Corrective feedback could also be translingual to reduce cognitive load and increase rapid comprehension (research needed?)

The weak CLT perspective (i.e. PPP/TSLT/CAP(E), etc.)

- More opportunities for 'teaching', which can be translingual
- Argument for use of L1 in explicit grammar instruction well established; also possible for phonology instruction
- Opportunities for translation more evident (e.g., when teaching lexis, comparing languages, etc.)
- Weak CLT still tends to assume that classroom communication should remain in English/TL as a primary opportunity for exposure and use, but this can also be more translingual depending on context, competencies and needs (Rabbidge, 2019)
- Opportunities for learner informal translanguaging (e.g., brief spaces during (controlled) practice activities; Anderson, 2021)

Recap: CLT and translanguaging



- Limited affordances
- Stronger CLT – fewer translanguaging opportunities
- Weaker CLT – more translanguaging opportunities
- Time spent translanguaging is inevitably seen as time taken away from (maximising) 'TL use'
- Translanguaging happens largely "around" the most important lesson activities, but not necessarily in them
- Can it ever really get beyond the 'judicious use' arguments of past L1-use debates? (see Hall & Cook, 2012; Macaro, 2005; Shin et al., 2020; Swain & Lapkin, 2000)
- How to move beyond this impasse (if desired)?

Emerging frameworks for translanguaging (in TESOL)

General frameworks

- García et al. (2016): stance, design, shifts;
- Cenoz & Gorter (2021): pedagogical and spontaneous TL continuum;
- Duarte & Günther-van Der Meij (2018)

TESOL

- Jeon et al. (2025), based on systematic literature review (meta-ethnography) see Figures)
- Kim & Weng (2022) EFL/ESL distinction.

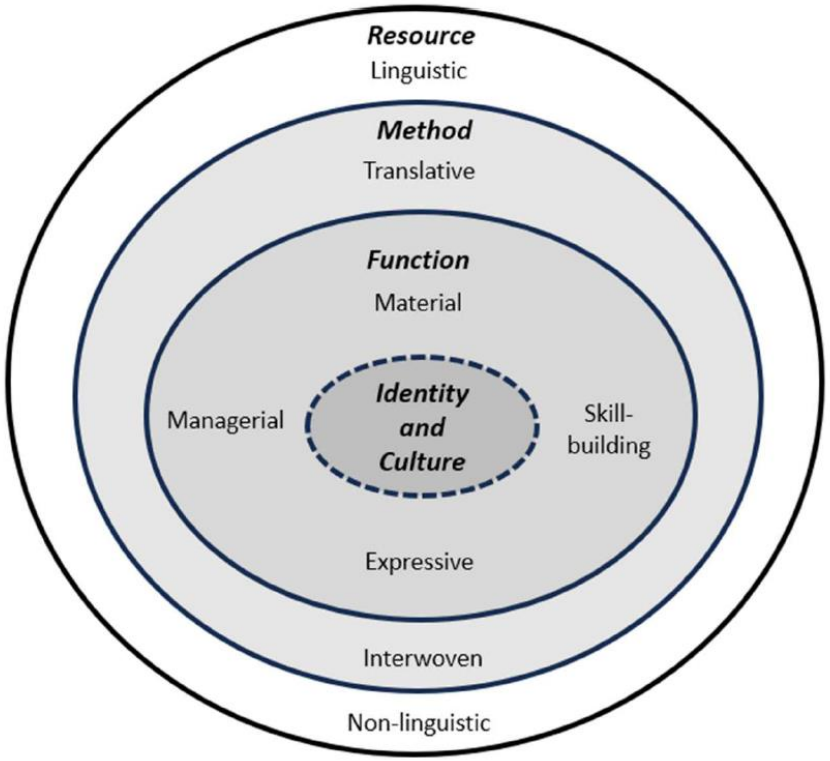


Table 4. Thematical scheme.

Layer	Component	Definition
Resource	Linguistic	Teachers use named languages for translanguaging.
	Nonlinguistic	Teachers use gestures, signs, or other semiotic resources than named languages for translanguaging.
Method	Translative	The same meaning is produced through different resources.
	Interwoven	New meaning is added through different resources.
Function	Material	Teachers use translanguaging with materials to guide interaction topics, manage conversational turns, or provide language practice.
	Managerial	Teachers use translanguaging to organize the learning environment.
	Skill-building	Teachers use translanguaging to enable students to produce correct forms and acquire language sub-skills (e.g. listening, speaking, phonology, grammar, etc.).
	Expressive	Teachers use translanguaging to enable students to express themselves freely and clearly and to promote their language fluency.
Identity and Culture		When translanguaging, teachers share the same cultural awareness with students or promote students' own identities.

Two possibilities…

1. Re-evaluating how we understand “competence”
2. Moving beyond competence(-only) models of additional language education (ALE)

1. Reevaluating and redefining (communicative) competence

- Communicative competence is typically is seen as a monolingual construct with four elements (e.g., Canale & Swain, 1980)
- Possibility of adding additional competences (e.g., Anderson's translingual competence; 2018)
- Possibility of viewing competence differently (e.g., Canagarajah's performative competence; 2013)
- This creates opportunities for more authentic translingual practices as both the norms and the goals of language teaching (e.g., mediation activities, translation activities, comparative analysis activities, etc.)
- How does this impact learning? Still not clear, but see Yuzlu & Dikilitas (2022).

2. Moving beyond competence (only)

- SLA research (and CLT as its methodology of choice) has tended to assume that the only meaningful goal of language education is to develop learner (communicative) competence
- While competence models can be amended (e.g., as discussed above), these still only recognise a comparatively small proportion of much of what is frequently identified and assessed as valuable in much additional language education (ALE) today
- As Kramsch (2002) documents, modern foreign language curricula typically have a much wider range of goals than TL proficiency development. These have continued to expand (e.g., social and emotional intelligence, higher-order thinking skills, etc.) - See China's shift to a core competencies curriculum (and away from TBLT) (Wang & Luo, 2019).

A post-competence perspective

- Based on the norms and realities for the vast majority of English language teachers and their learners around the world today, Anderson (2024a) argues that the current competence orientation (language as innate faculty) needs to be balanced with a literacy orientation (language as social construct):
  - **Competence orientation** (language as innate faculty): models that view language education as the enabling of the faculties of natural language learning. Language is a system to which learners need to be exposed, given opportunities to communicate in, and to learn through trial and error.
  - **Literacy orientation** (language as social construct): models that view language education as the development of the means of cultural interaction. Language is a system which learners need to be introduced to, and taught the rules, discourses and evaluation criteria of, both in formal education and wider society. (p. 274)

Anderson's (2024a) competence-literacy continuum (p. 275)

- Different systems, programs, classes will necessarily locate at different points on this continuum depending on educational goals/outcomes, which themselves result from value systems and priorities in a given context.
- Importantly, different locations will reflect different ideologies, opportunities and expectations with regard to mono- and multilingual practices (including translanguaging).

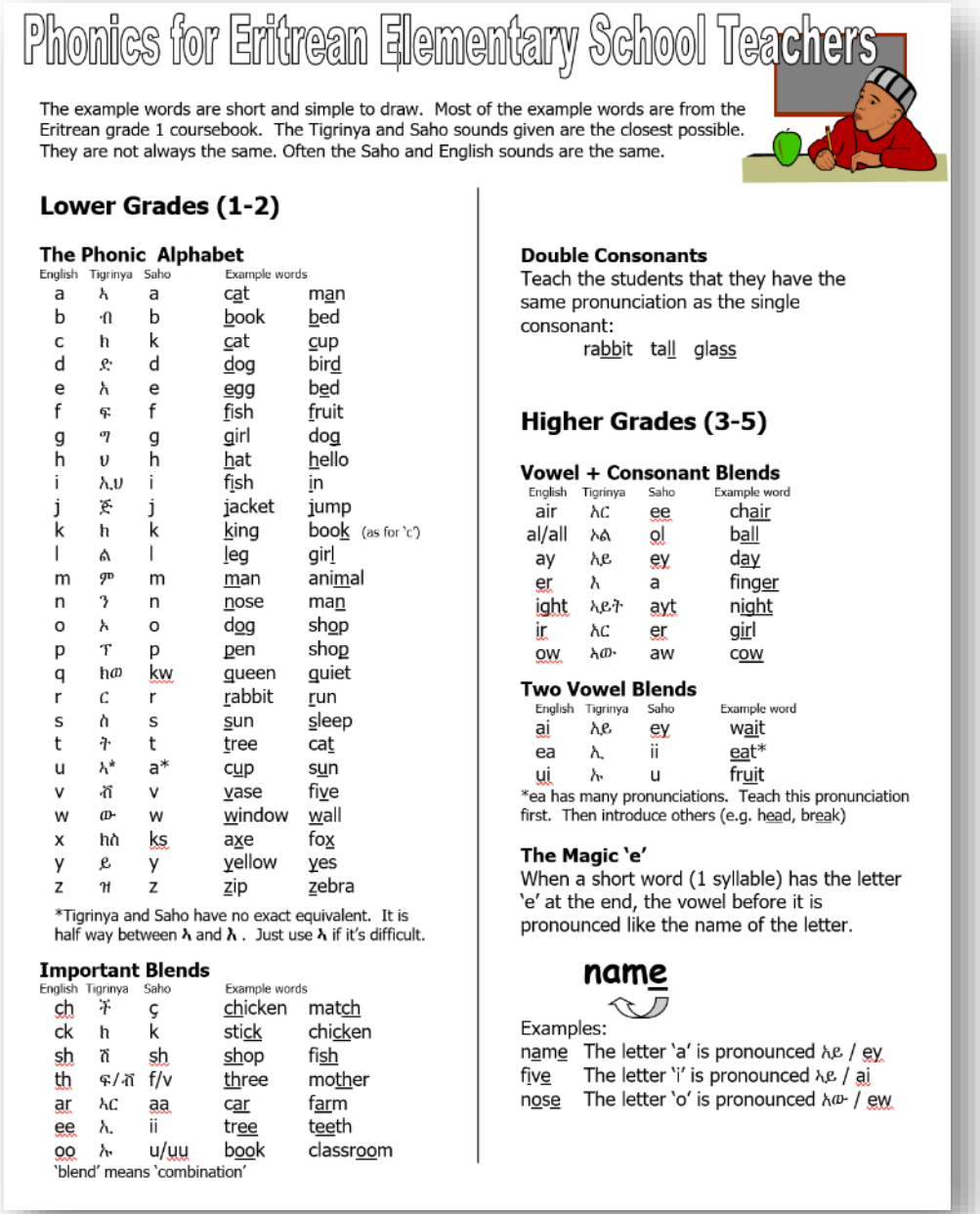
	competence orientation	←	pluralist orientation	→	literacy orientation
	strong	weak		weak	strong
view of learning	as implicit acquisition		including both implicit and explicit learning		as explicit understanding
view of syllabus	individual, internally-defined		external syllabus adapted to individual needs		communal, externally-defined
teacher role	to create conditions for acquisition		to support both acquisition and development		to guide and scaffold development
learner role	to progress towards autonomy		to gain independence through mastery		to master texts, registers, genres, etc.
prioritised learning practices	learner-independent activities		both teacher-led and learner-independent		teacher-led instruction, modelling
prioritised learning processes	exposure, meaningful interaction		multiple		study of texts, practice, replication
emphasised modalities	speaking and listening		balanced		reading and writing
repertoire focus	target language prioritised		adaptive		more-enabled language(s) prioritised
primary assessment focus	process (acts)		both product and process		product (texts)
primary assessment goal	proficiency		both literacy and proficiency		literacy

TESOL as both literacy and competence development (the pluralist perspective)

- Disrupts the locus of ALE from ‘natural’ language ‘acquisition’ that disadvantages many EFL contexts worldwide
- Capable of incorporating multiple, diverse goals beyond simply proficiency development (although this is not necessarily devalued)
- Wherever appropriate, identified competencies and literacies of value can be/become translingual (e.g., Mukhopadhyay et al., 2022)
- Opportunities for translanguaging increase significantly (e.g., for supporting the development of basic literacies, critical literacies, translation literacies, higher-order thinking skills, social-emotional learning, learner identity development, education-specific skills and meta-strategies, etc.)(Anderson, 2024b, 2024c)
- Translanguaging is no longer in opposition to key goals of ALE

Example activities and projects for developing competences and literacies translingually

1. Translingual news comparison (learners compare the same news story as presented in English and the community language)
2. Research and present projects (learners research something online in English [e.g., song, person, cultural phenomenon] and mediate to peers through a translingual presentation)
3. Grammar or phonology comparison posters (learners develop posters on specific areas of English language that compare and contrast it with the community language) (e.g., Anderson, 2007)
4. Exploring translation literacy through poetry, songs and drama (e.g., difference between literal and figurative translation)



Phonics for Eritrean Elementary School Teachers

The example words are short and simple to draw. Most of the example words are from the Eritrean grade 1 coursebook. The Tigrinya and Saho sounds given are the closest possible. They are not always the same. Often the Saho and English sounds are the same.

Lower Grades (1-2)

The Phonic Alphabet

English	Tigrinya	Saho	Example words	
a	አ	a	cat	man
b	ብ	b	book	bed
c	ክ	k	cat	cup
d	ድ	d	dog	bird
e	ኧ	e	egg	bed
f	ፍ	f	fish	fruit
g	ግ	g	girl	dog
h	ሀ	h	hat	hello
i	ኢ/ህ	i	fish	in
j	ጅ	j	jacket	jump
k	ክ	k	king	book (as for 'c')
l	ል	l	leg	girl
m	ም	m	man	animal
n	ን	n	nose	man
o	ኦ	o	dog	shop
p	ፕ	p	pen	shop
q	ክወ	kw	queen	quiet
r	ር	r	rabbit	run
s	ስ	s	sun	sleep
t	ት	t	tree	cat
u	ኡ*	a*	cup	sun
v	ቭ	v	vase	five
w	ው	w	window	wall
x	ክስ	ks	axe	fox
y	ይ	y	yellow	yes
z	ዝ	z	zip	zebra

*Tigrinya and Saho have no exact equivalent. It is half way between ኧ and አ . Just use ኧ if it's difficult.

Important Blends

English	Tigrinya	Saho	Example words	
ch	ች	ç	chicken	match
ck	ክ	k	stick	chicken
sh	ሽ	sh	shop	fish
th	ፍ/ዝ	f/v	three	mother
ar	ኣር	aa	car	farm
ee	ኢ	ii	tree	teeth
oo	ኡ	u/uu	book	classroom

'blend' means 'combination'

Double Consonants

Teach the students that they have the same pronunciation as the single consonant:

rabbit tall glass

Higher Grades (3-5)

Vowel + Consonant Blends

English	Tigrinya	Saho	Example word
air	ኣር	ee	chair
al/all	ኣል	ol	ball
ay	ኣይ	ey	day
er	ኧ	a	finger
ight	ኣይት	ayt	night
ir	ኣር	er	girl
ow	ኣው	aw	cow

Two Vowel Blends

English	Tigrinya	Saho	Example word
ai	ኣይ	ey	wait
ea	ኢ	ii	eat*
ui	ኡ	u	fruit

*ea has many pronunciations. Teach this pronunciation first. Then introduce others (e.g. head, break)

The Magic 'e'

When a short word (1 syllable) has the letter 'e' at the end, the vowel before it is pronounced like the name of the letter.

name

Examples:

name The letter 'a' is pronounced ኣይ / ey
five The letter 'i' is pronounced ኣይ / ai
nose The letter 'o' is pronounced ኣው / ew

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