Translanguaging as a Southern theory of practice: Exploring possibilities for education

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Humanities at the Crossroads: The Convergence of Language, Literature and Technology

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WARWICK
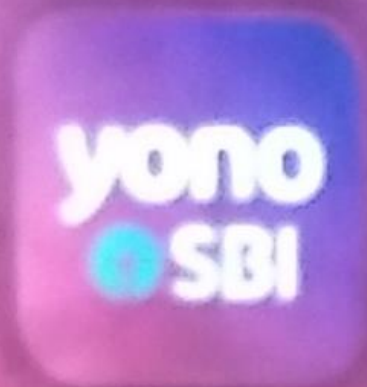APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Plan for the talk

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

2. Northern theorisation of translanguaging

3. A view from the South

4. Southern theory and practice

5. Translanguaging in Indian scholarship, research and classrooms

6. Need for more research and (Southern) theory

7. Possible implications

What is translanguaging?

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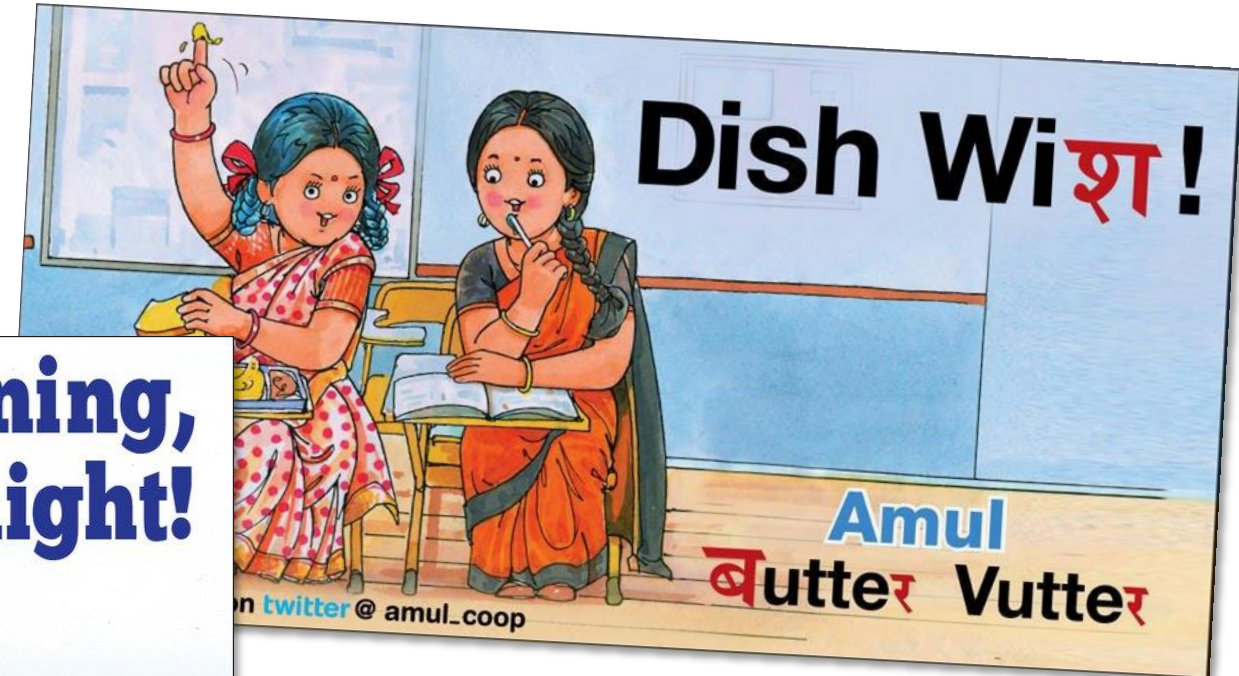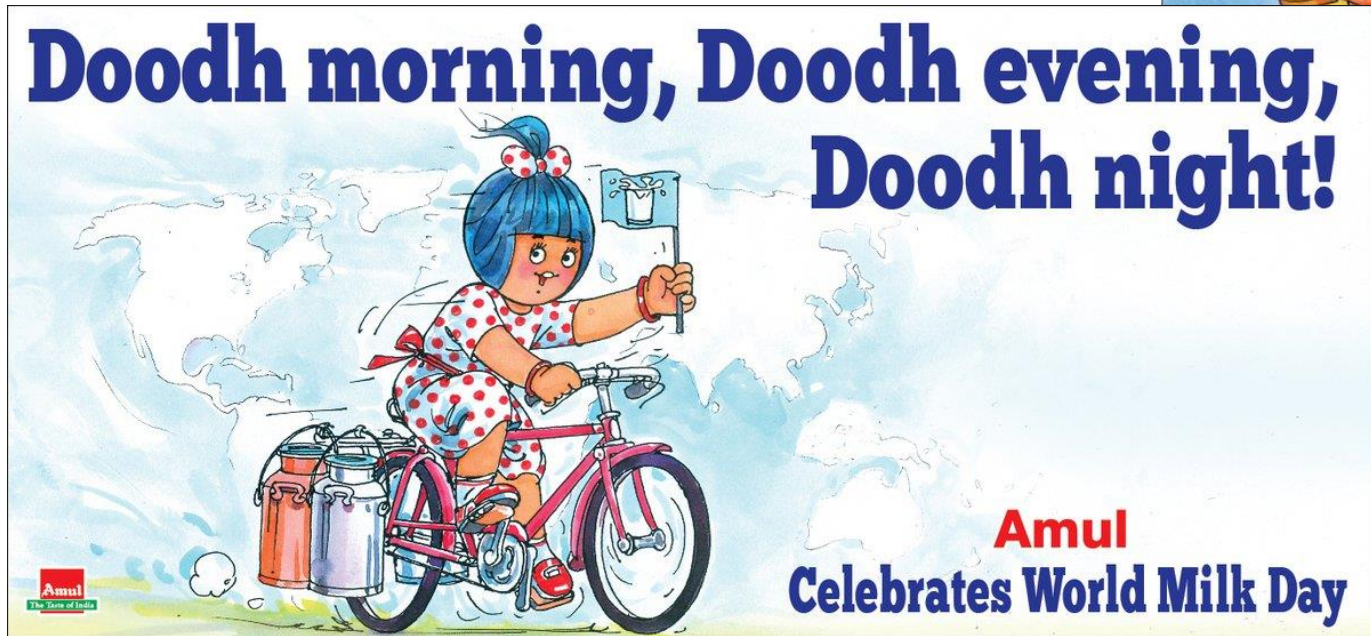
What is translanguaging?

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 (la femme du jeune Болконский). И, ...ся. Ce sera dans votre famille, que je ...le 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 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
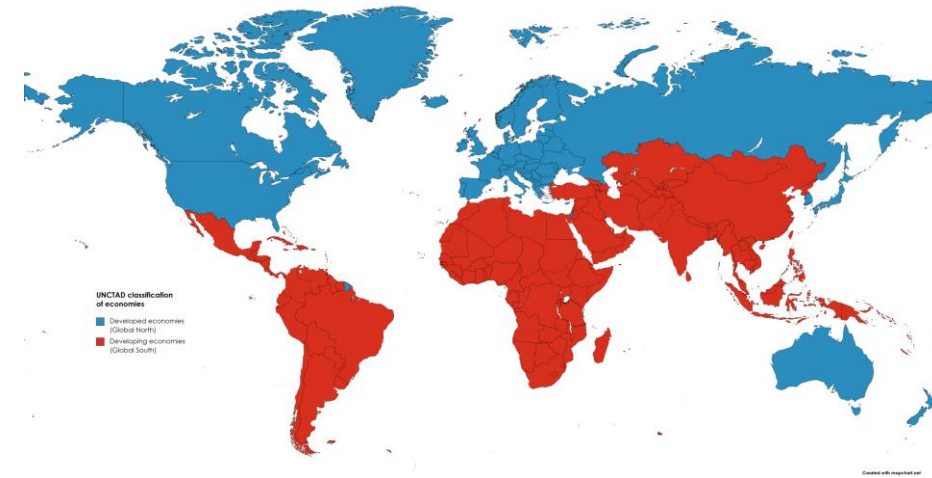
A view from the South

Global South and Global North

- Three ways to understand the distinction:

- geographic North and South (incl. Australasia).

- distinction between higher income vs. lower income states (e.g., Anderson, 2023)

- distinction between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' of modernity; "the Global South refers to the people, places, and ideas that have been left out of the grand narrative of modernity." (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020, p. 1)

Northern theory... Southern practice?

- Term 'translanguaging' comes from Baker's (2001) translation of William's (1994) Welsh term: 'trawsieithu' (minority lang.)

- Adopted by García (2009), then others (e.g., Li, 2011; Cenoz & Gorter, 2021), to advocate for marginalised and minority communities in (often) monolingual educational contexts in the global North (USA, UK, W. Europe)

- Interest has spread (esp. to E. Asia and S. Africa), less so S. Asia.

- But little theorisation or ownership from Global South, despite it being part of Southern practice (in Africa, Asia, Latin America) for millennia (Anderson, 2023, 2024; Heugh, 2021).

LOCATION	
China	47
South Africa	34
Australia	33
Texas	32
Canada	27
Spain	22
Sweden	22
Hong Kong	21
United States	20
California	16
United Kingdom	14
New York (New York)	11
Mexico	10
Luxembourg	9
Puerto Rico	9
Turkey	9
Africa	8
Germany	8
Italy	8
South Korea	8
Taiwan	8
Bangladesh	7
Colombia	7
Japan	7
Nepal	7

What is Southern theory?

- "...the understanding of the world by far exceeds the Western understanding of the world." (Santos, 2014, p. viii)

- "I use the term 'Southern' not to name a sharply bounded category of states or societies but to emphasise relations-authority, exclusion and inclusion, hegemony, partnership, sponsorship, appropriation-between intellectuals and institutions in the metropole and those in the world periphery." (Connell, 2007, pp. viii-ix)

- It has much in common with 'Subaltern Studies' (e.g., Spivak, 1988), but seeks to avoid the **sub**ordination implicit in "subaltern", and to create a sense of solidarity among the exploited and colonised peoples and states of the world.

Southern theory from Southern practice

- "useful Southern theory can emerge from research into Southern practice, providing that such research aims to valorise these practices by evaluating them in their own contexts through appropriate frames of reference and without subordinating them to Northern norms or assumptions of 'best practice'" (Anderson, 2023, p. 238)

- This may involve research into Indian practices that does not accept and draw upon Northern assumptions, theoretical frameworks and models, but either crafts its own from current observations or draws upon endogenous (e.g., pre-colonial) wisdom.

- E.g., How do writers writing in Indian languages understand, describe and theorise Indian ways of languaging?

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

- Steadily increasing!
- Survey by Anderson and Lightfoot (Anderson, 2017; Anderson & Lightfoot, 2018/2021)
- 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.

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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.
```

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)

Call for more research and (Southern) theory

We need more theory and research in Indian contexts:

- Scholarship that links translanguaging to, or critiques it (e.g., Menon & Pallavi, 2022) from Indian theoretical perspectives and in(cluding) Indian languages: How do we understand multilingualism in Telegu, Hindi, etc.?

- Historical research that identifies potential links (or differences) with pre-colonial understandings of multilingualism.

- 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 (Mahapatra & Anderson, 2023; Simpson, 2019)

Implications for teaching and learning English (and other languages) in India

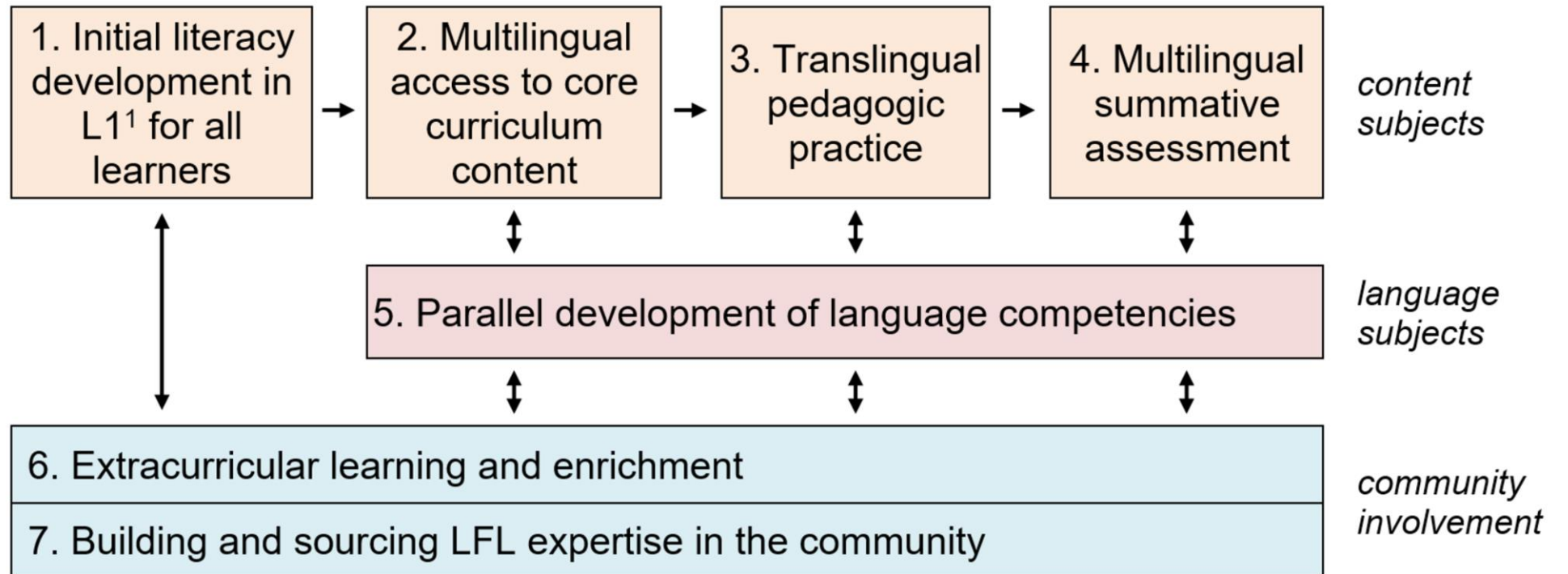# Implications for teaching and learning English (and other languages) in India

- We move away from '**English only**' teaching.

- We, recognise, praise, value and encourage our learners' languages.

- We **embrace our multilingual norms** – meshing, mixing, switching, subverting and playing with language; the भाषा-संकर (Kachru, 1983) that is part of Indian poetry and **identity**

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

- We become '**translingual teachers**' (see Anderson, 2018, p. 34), able to "understand interpret, scaffold, and challenge their learners' choice of linguistic resources appropriately" and also "to model effective translingual and monolingual practices across the translingual continuum."

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

Implications for Indian curricula: The languages for learning framework

Principles

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

Elements

| 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 | *content subjects* |

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

| 6. Extracurricular learning and enrichment | *community involvement* |
| 7. Building and sourcing LFL expertise in the community | |

Rejects the idea of 'medium of instruction'

- 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

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)
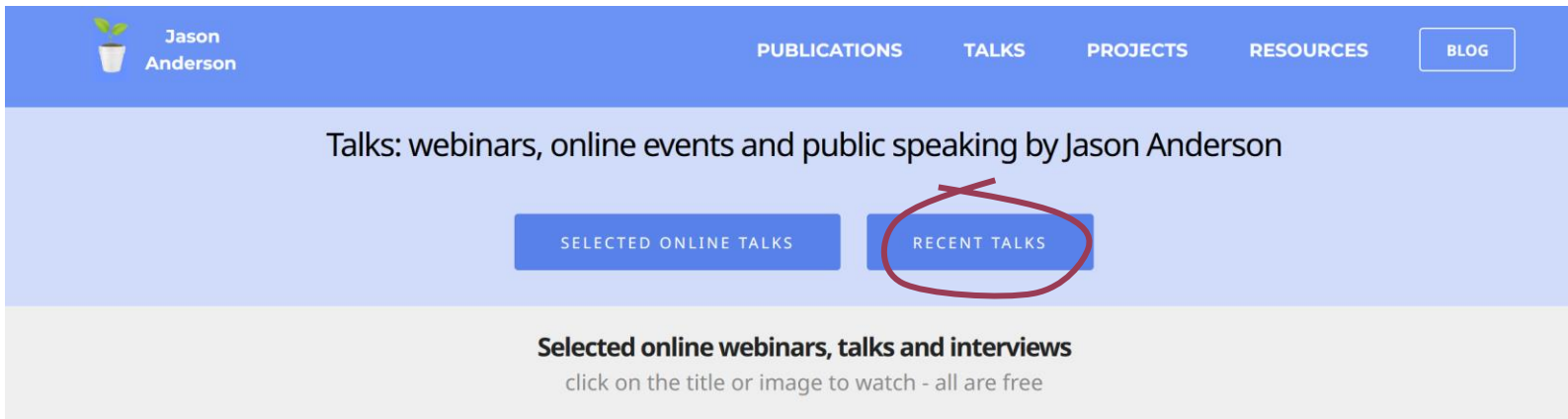
- E.g., Mr 'Banglish'
- Good at primary level
- Bilingual poster
- Each card is stuck on with sticky tape
- English on one side
- L1 on back
- Helps to develop an understanding of equivalence between languages

Slides are here

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

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