# Translanguaging in English language classrooms in India: Why, when and how?

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**ELTAI Conference 2017**

**Kochi, Kerala**

**Watch the talk as it was delivered 30 June 2017 here:**
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w93mMJzGgnA**



The Human Body in Bangla and English

*'L1' today:*
*All the prior linguistic and cultural resources of the learning community, Agar's 'languaculture' (1994)*

# Structure of the talk

1.  What is translanguaging?
2.  Why not 'L1 use'?
3.  Research from Anderson 2017 on learners in UK
4.  Your learners
5.  L1 use and translanguaging in India: our recent survey
6.  Practical ideas for translanguaging in the language classroom

# What is 'translanguaging'?

Ask the person sitting next to you.

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# What is 'translanguaging'?



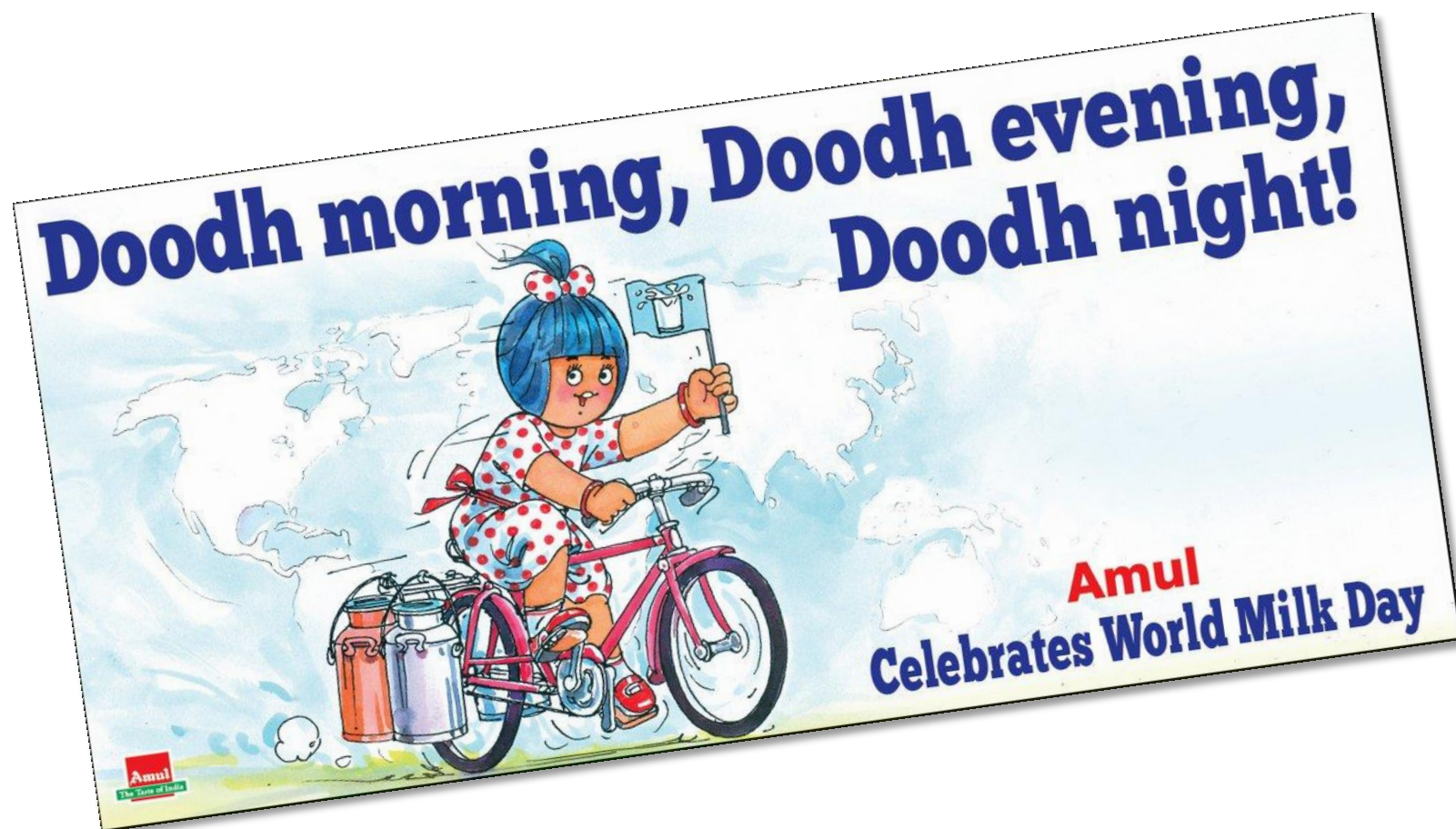**From 'Jab We Met' (2007)**

**Aditya:** Geet, I think hum logon ko utarnaa chahiye.

**Geet:** Try karna chahiye. Bahut mazaa aayega.

**Aditya:** Ek second, ek second.Mujhe tumse kuch poochna tha. Tumne kabhi kisi psychiatrist ko consult kiya hai?
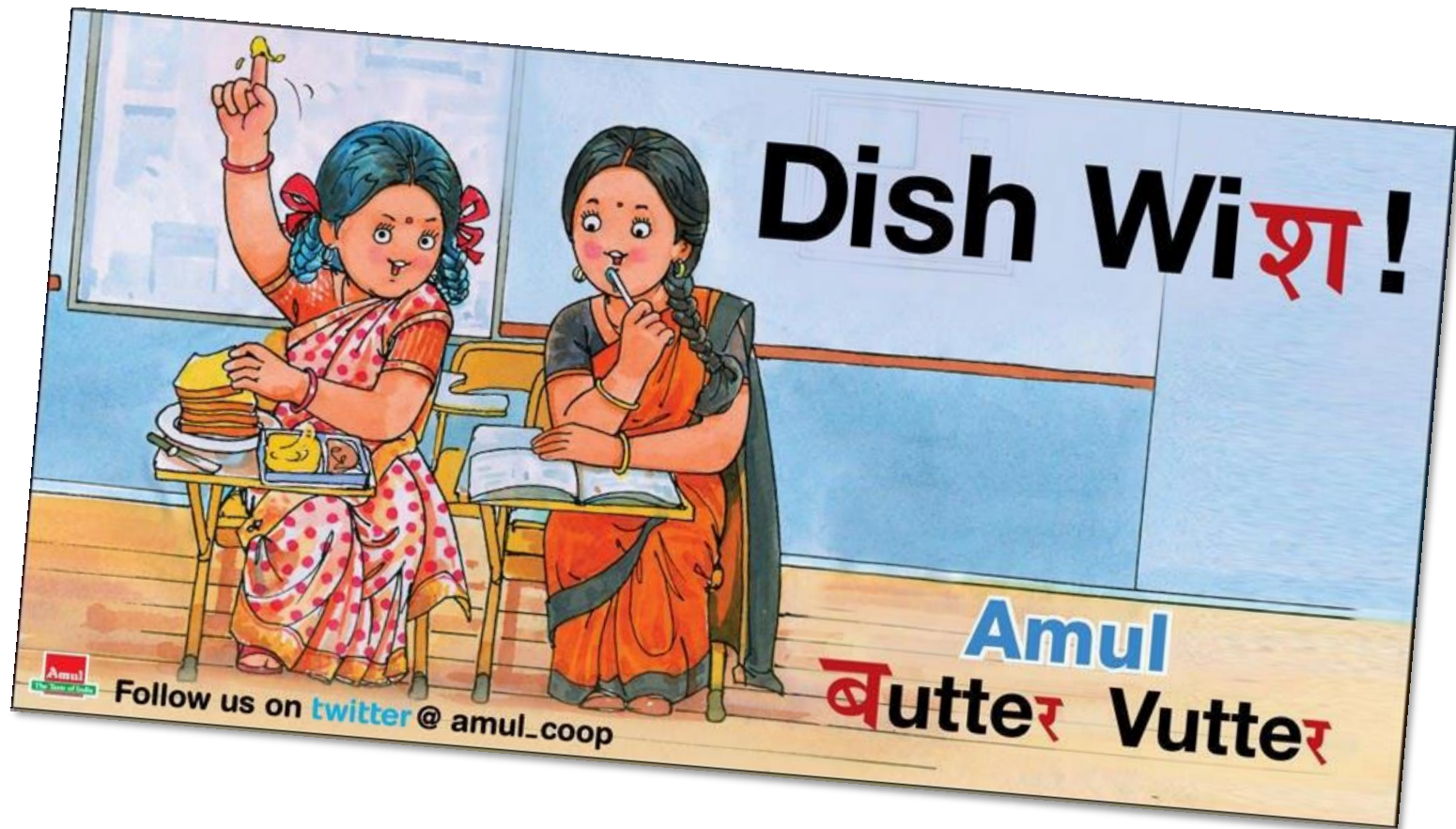
**Geet:** Oh, shut up!

**Aditya:** Nahin nahin, tumhein zaroorat hai, Geet.

# What is 'translanguaging'?

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# What is 'translanguaging'?

**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..."

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

**English/Malay What's App chat**



Halo friends, ada email frm ▓▓ ▓▓..
pls check forum unit 18..scholarship
buat master in English in the UK, 1
thn je...starting 24th october 2014..
ada yg bminat?..    14:19

Yeah td sa br baca  14:25

Sa dah email ▓▓ dan fia tggu yg
lainn lg    14:26

▓▓..ko online ka skrg  14:29

Ask ▓▓ klu blh extend due date
for assignment vg unit2 n

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# 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?'

If I start speaking the way I did in those days, you'll get a headache. So I'm going to say everything in English, just imagine my words in Bhojpuri-laced Hindi, with the worst possible English thrown in.

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'?

Imagine 'languages' are 'colours'
Mondrian (1930): codeswitching.

de Kooning (1955):
translanguaging.



Note colours are still present in both, but the borders are fluid and relationships are much more complex in the de Kooning. Also see Makoni & Pennycook (2005) for discussion of sociopolitical issues and the invention of 'languages'.
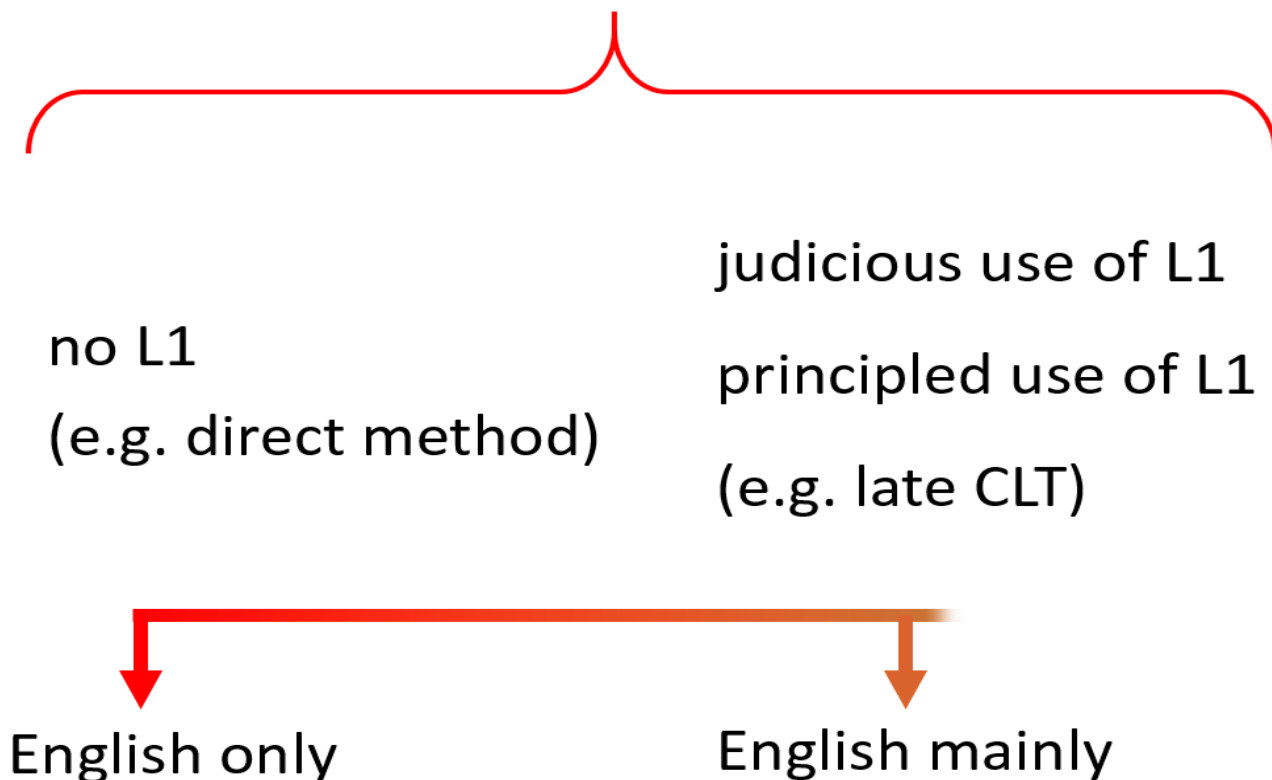
# Why not 'codeswitching'?

"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)

# The multilingual turn

# 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

...ual paradigm

# The translingual paradigm

judicious use of L1

principled use of L1

(e.g. late CLT)

effective use of all

languaging resources

English mainly

English appropriately

(verb)

# Potential barriers preventing more translingual practices in ELT

1. Current understandings of communicative competence

2. Perceptions of learner needs

3. Conservative practices in assessment

4. Conservative practices in publishing

# ~~COMMUNICATIVE~~ *translingual* COMPETENCE

Communicative competence (e.g. Canale 1983) assumed monolingual 'NS' 'target language community', with no consideration of code choice or translanguaging.

**Anderson 2017:** In translingual competences (e.g. Canagarajah's 'performative competence' 2013)…

1. Monolingual NSs are replaced by multilingual users as the most appropriate models for learners (shared with English as a lingua franca).

2. The notion of 'target language community' complexifies, as communities and codes are reshaped, appropriated and blended by social media.

3. The object of study changes. Chomskyan NS competence (1965) loses validity; alignment (translingual accommodation) gains validity.
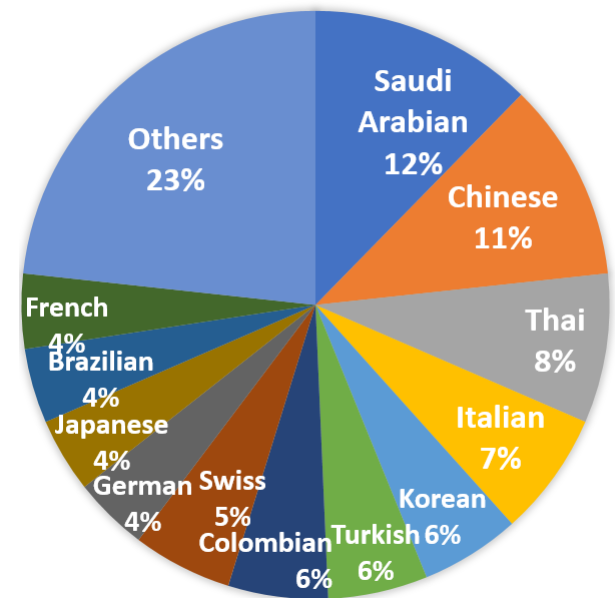
*But what about our EFL/ESL learners?*

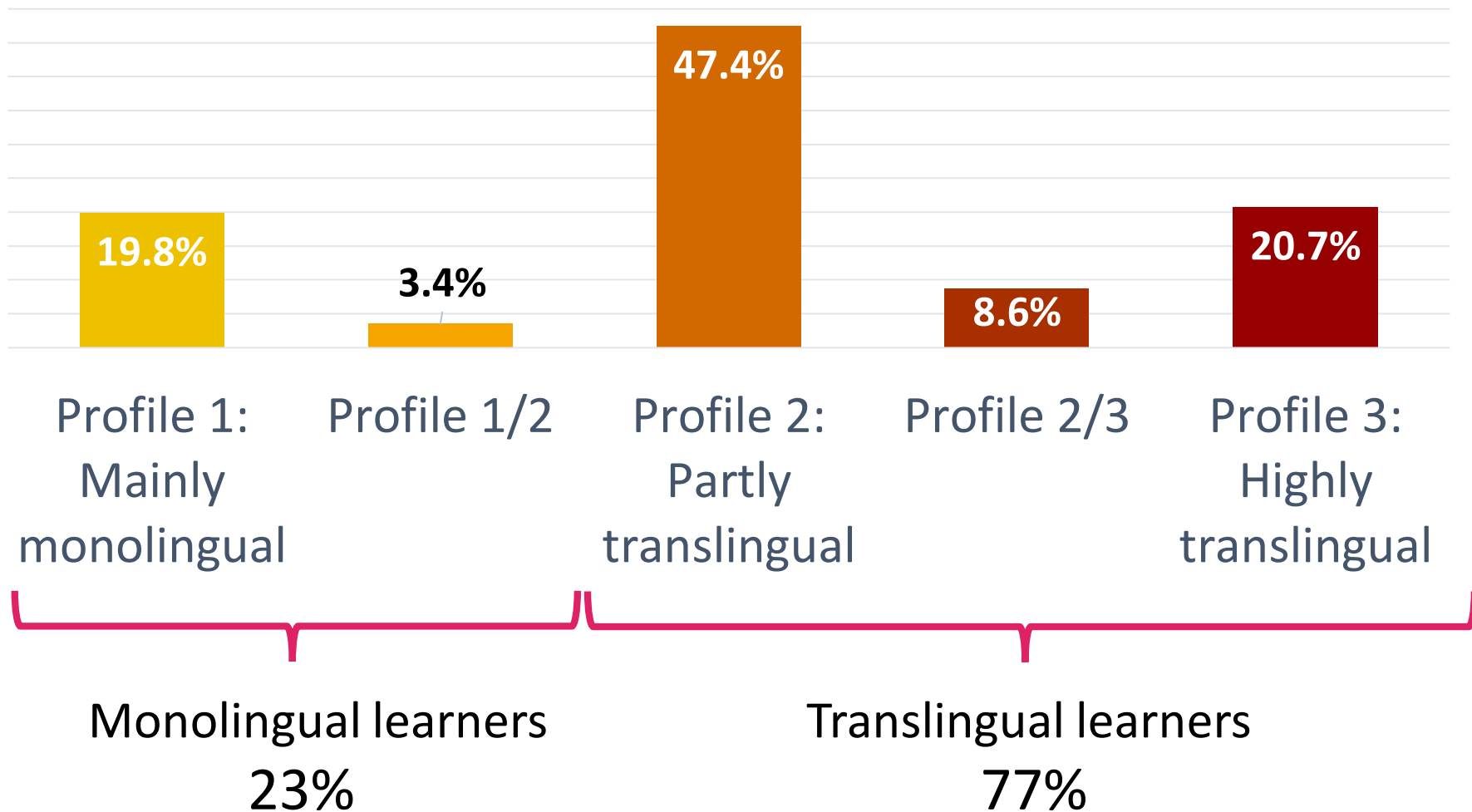*They need a monolingual system, don't they?*

# I asked 116 adult learners from a EFL organisation in the UK: "How do you expect to use English in future?"

- **Profile 1:** I expect to use English in isolation from other languages.

- **Profile 2:** I expect to sometimes use English in close conjunction with other languages.

- **Profile 3:** I expect to regularly use English closely with other languages, sometimes switching, sometimes mixing them.
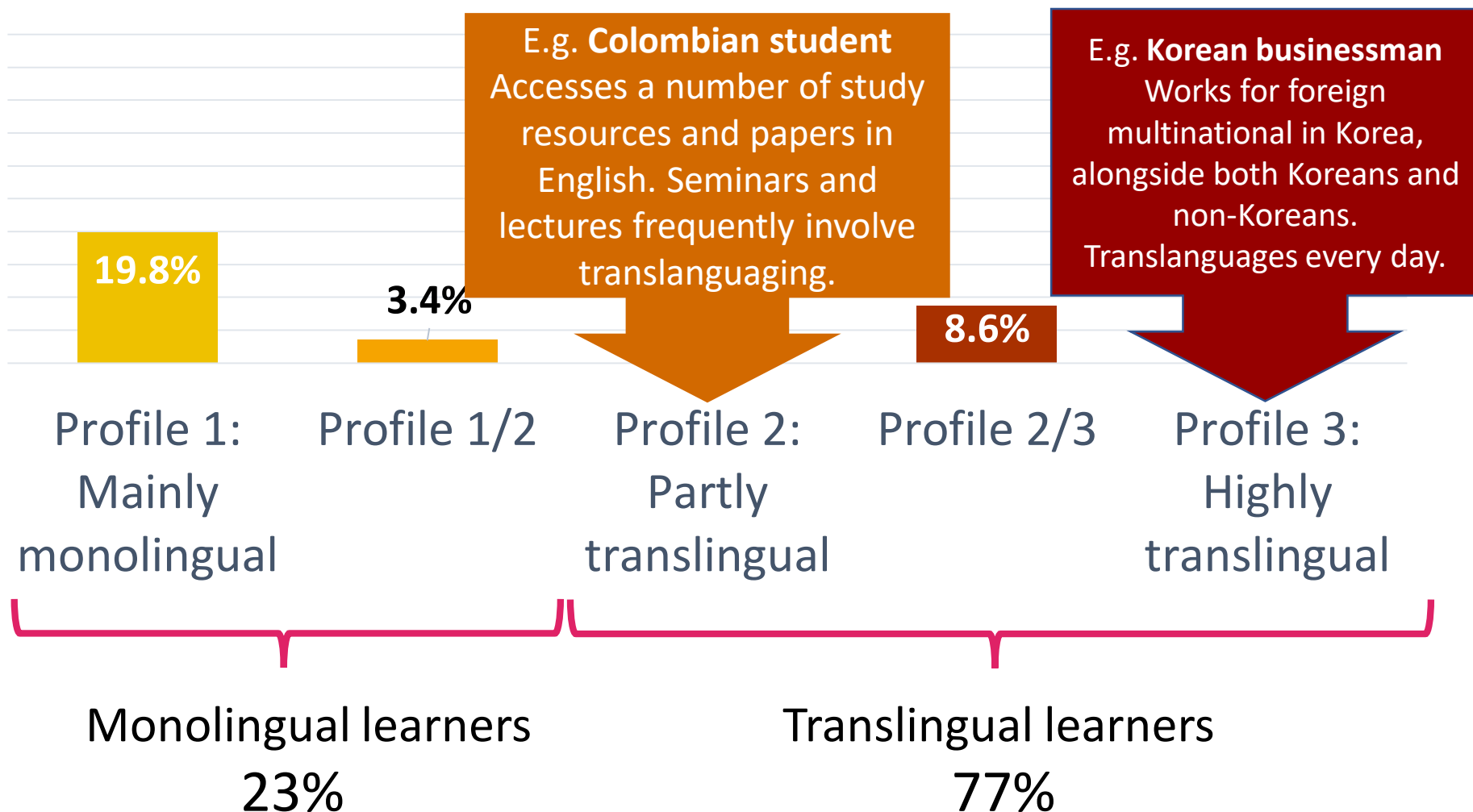


Saudi Arabian 12%
Chinese 11%
Thai 8%
Italian 7%
Korean 6%
Turkish 6%
Colombian 6%
Swiss 5%
German 4%
Japanese 4%
Brazilian 4%
French 4%
Others 23%

See: Anderson (2017)

# UK 'EFL' learners = translingual learners



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19.8% | 3.4% | 47.4% | 8.6% | 20.7% |
| Profile 1: Mainly monolingual | Profile 1/2 | Profile 2: Partly translingual | Profile 2/3 | Profile 3: Highly translingual |

Monolingual learners
23%

Translingual learners
77%

See: Anderson (2017)

# UK 'EFL' learners = translingual learners

**19.8%**

**3.4%**

E.g. **Colombian student**
Accesses a number of study resources and papers in English. Seminars and lectures frequently involve translanguaging.

E.g. **Korean businessman**
Works for foreign multinational in Korea, alongside both Koreans and non-Koreans. Translanguages every day.

**8.6%**

Profile 1:
Mainly
monolingual

Profile 1/2

Profile 2:
Partly
translingual
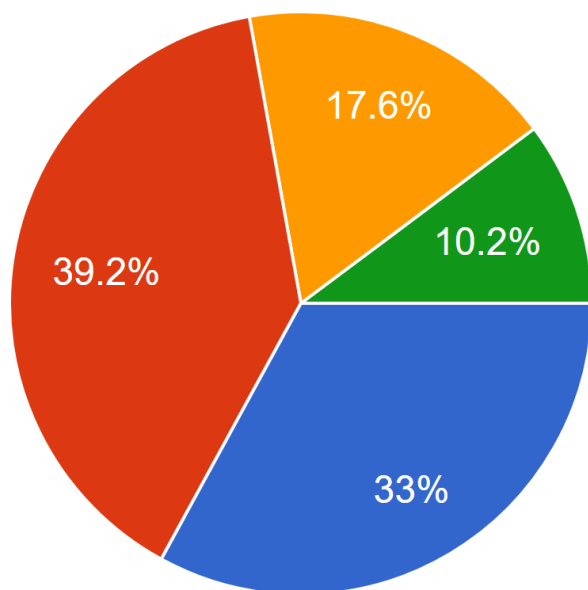
Profile 2/3

Profile 3:
Highly
translingual

Monolingual learners
23%

Translingual learners
77%

See: Anderson (2017)

# So what about learners in India?

How much do you think your students will need to mix English with other languages in their future careers?



Legend:
- A. They won't need to mix English with other languages.
- B. They may need to a little.
- C. They may need to frequently.
- D. They will probably be mixing languages all the time.

Pie chart values: 39.2%, 17.6%, 10.2%, 33%

(174 respondents)

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# So what about learners in India?

## A case study: Meet Arjun

"I am an Indian professional working in a multinational corporation in India. I work in the senior management team with 100 employees directly reporting to me. I have team members who speak more than 10 different Indian languages. For writing emails or documents, I only use English. However, depending on the situation I also use Indian languages to connect with the team members or other employees in my office. These situations are typical in my one to one conversations about sensitive issues or some short conversations where I want to appreciate, encourage or express my emotions." (real person, pseudonym used)

# What would your learners say?

- Choose an English-language learner that you know well (e.g. student, friend, relative)

- Imagine them in a few years time
  - Where will they be?
  - What languages will they be using?
  - Will they need to translanguage?
  - How? Why?

- Discuss in pairs

# An 'L1-inclusive' policy in India

Indian National Council of Educational Research and Training: National Focus Group on Teaching of English Position Paper (2005, p.12):

- suggests 6 types of translingual practices

- e.g. 'hav[ing] inputs in a foreign language with production in a familiar language'

- 'Linguistic purism, whether of English or the Indian languages, must yield to a tolerance of code-switching and code-mixing if necessary.'

# Prior research in India

**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)

# Our survey: Translingual practices

- 174 respondents to questionnaire

- 66 added qualitative data

- Note of caution:

"Good questions. But I doubt, if you get real answers! Because the teacher of English avoids telling the truth about the languages he/she uses in the classroom."
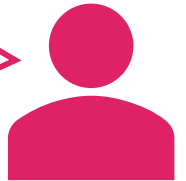
- Jindal (2013): many teachers in India still feel guilty about using L1.

# Our survey: Who responded?

- 48% secondary; 41% tertiary/adult; 11% primary
- 36% government; 26% government aided; 38% private
- experience: 51% over 10 years; 33% 4-10 years
- languages spoken by teachers: 3+ (79%)
- medium of instruction: English 48%, Hindi 10%, others 42%
- levels:

| A0-A1 | A1-A2 | B1-B2 | C1+ |
|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| 21% | 35% | 39% | 5% |

# Our survey: Are teachers 'allowed' to use other languages?

Are you allowed to use other languages in English lessons?
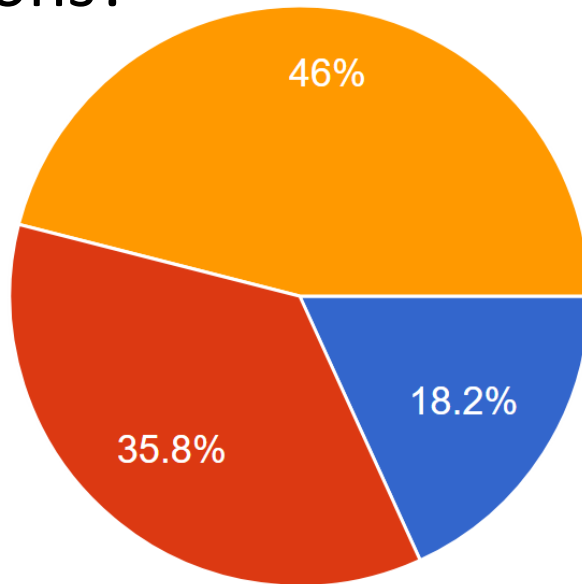


- No. I am told to teach using only English.
- There is no policy, but using other languages is discouraged.
- Yes. I'm allowed / free to use other languages in English lessons.

● "Translation into a vernacular language is absolutely banned in my classes."

● "We do encourage children to speak strictly in English."

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# Our survey: Translanguaging in the community and school

- 79%: Translanguaging is very common/quite common in community around school

- 99%: This includes English (13% a lot of English; 44% regular English; 43%: only a little)

- 70%: Translanguaging is very common/quite common among students during English lessons

- Do you share any languages other than English with your students?

🔵 Yes. Most, or all, of the students speak another language that I know.

🔴 With some of the students only.

🟠 No. English is the only language I can use to communicate with them.
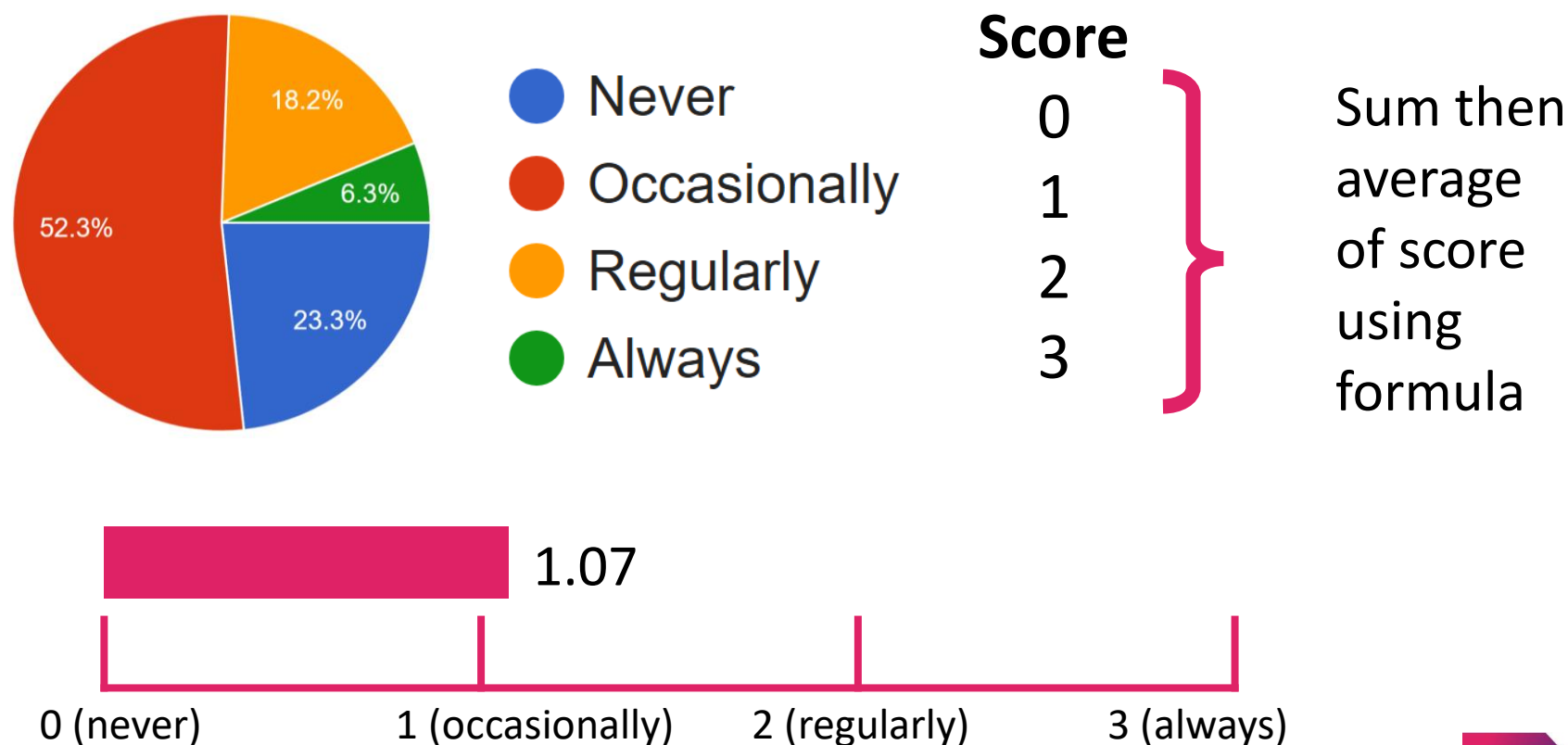
31.3%

13.6%

55.1%
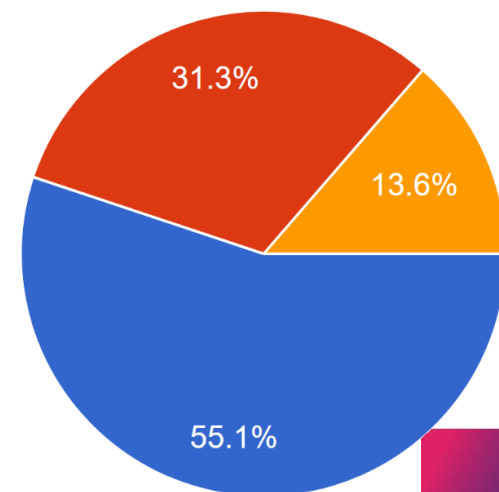
# 4 ways of translanguaging

1.  **Framework tasks:** (from Hall & Cook 2013) e.g. classroom management, discipline.

2.  **Using L1 as scaffolding resource:** e.g. explaining to ss., allowing or encouraging ss. to use it, etc.

3.  **Crosslanguaging:** e.g. translation, use of bilingual dictionaries, comparing equivalence.

4.  **Meshing:** (from Canagarajah 2013) e.g. mixing languages when speaking, using texts with mixed languages.

# Scoring responses

E.g. item: "I use other languages for classroom management during English lessons."



**Score**

- Never — 0
- Occasionally — 1
- Regularly — 2
- Always — 3

Sum then average of score using formula

1.07

0 (never)    1 (occasionally)    2 (regularly)    3 (always)

# 4 ways of translanguaging: Our findings

**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)**

# "What might effective pedagogies that draw upon translanguaging look like?"
Simpson (2017, p.221)

- The most L1-inclusive practitioner who responded to our survey:

  Professor Julu Sen, Head of Dept. of ELT, School of Distance Education, EFL University, Hyderabad

# Practical ideas for translanguaging 1. Culture share (from Prof. 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. Meshed news report (from Prof. Sen)

- Works better with students at higher levels of proficiency in English (B2-C1).

- Students listen to a news report in English, and 'attempt' to report key details in a chosen other language simultaneously.

- Time pressure forces students to translanguage, meshing bits of English with the other language, as happens outside the classroom.

# Practical ideas for translanguaging 3. Five sentences (from Dr. 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 4. Translingual text challenger

- Good for speaking practice after reading or listening.
- In pairs, ss. work separately for 5 mins.
- Student A makes notes (L1 only), summarising the key points from text.
- Student B notes down questions to ask about text in English.
- Then student B interview student A who must work only from L1 notes but respond in English.
- Student B can look at text, and help.
- Forces students to transfer meanings into L1: deep coding and practice of a useful skill for translingual world.

# Practical ideas for translanguaging 5. Translingual storytelling

- Works well at any level. Essential at primary level.
- One student is asked to tell a story from the local community in L1. Prepares in advance.
- This student tells the story in the lesson.
- Students work in groups to write the story in English. They use L1 words/phrases wherever they don't know the English. Teacher supports.
- Then… many options (e.g. 1: teacher tells same story in English. Students listen for words they wrote in L1 and modify their stories).

# Practical ideas for translanguaging
# 6. Translingual posters

- Many types are possible.

- This e.g. is interactive: students can flip cards to see word in both languages.
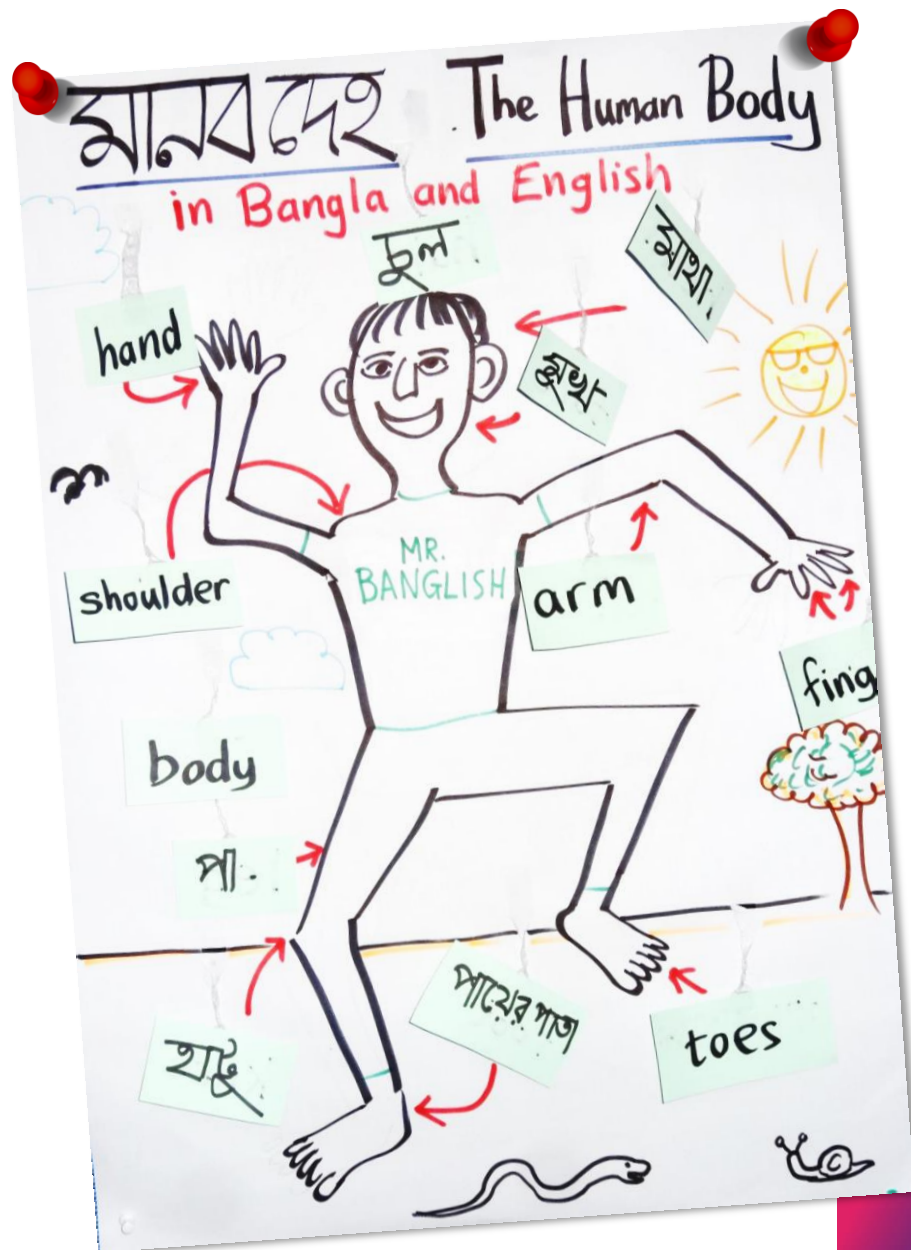
# Summary

- All language classrooms should be inclusive of all languages. Let's move from 'judicious use of L1' to effective use of all resources.

- India can take the lead in helping us to move from monolingual notions of communicative competence to a more translingual competence.

- Teacher education: "a course in multilingual education practices ought to be mandated in all teacher education programs".

Durairajan (2017, p.314)

# Free resource booklet and references on my website:

www.jasonanderson.org.uk

Go to the 'publications' page for the article (click on the title)
Reimagining English language learners from a translingual perspective:
www.jasonanderson.org.uk/publications.htm

Go to the 'Talks' page for the references and free booklet of
translanguaging activities: www.jasonanderson.org.uk/talks.htm
Please send me your suggestions for additional activities for the
booklet: jasonanderson1@gmail.com

# Translanguaging in English language classrooms in India: Why, when and how?

## Jason Anderson

**Many thanks to ELTAI and to British Council, India.**

**Many thanks also to Prof. Julu Sen, Dr. Heera Rajwani, 'Arjun' and all respondents to our survey.**

**Many thanks to Amy Lightfoot for her collaboration and support.**

**Watch the talk as it was delivered 30 June 2017 here:**

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w93mMJzGgnA**

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