Contemporary Education Dialogue

Teaching in Two Tongues: Rethinking the Role of Language(s) in Teacher Education in India

Shailaja Menon, Vanamala Viswanatha and Jane Sahi

The online version of this article can be found at:

Published by:

⑤SAGE

Additional services and information for *Contemporary Education Dialogue* can be found at:

>> Version of Record - Jan 6, 2014

What is This?

Teaching in Two Tongues: Rethinking the Role of Language(s) in Teacher Education in India*

SAGE

Shailaja Menon
Vanamala Viswanatha
Jane Sahi

Abstract

This article is a sharing of emergent ideas about the potential role of languages in teacher education (TE) programmes in multilingual contexts in India. Languages play a critical role in TE programmes where they shape both the learning as well as the future teaching of prospective teachers. This role acquires particular significance in multilingual contexts, such

*This is an article by Critical Language Practices for Multilingual India group, which consists of three members: Jane Sahi, Shailaja Menon and Vanamala Viswanatha. All the authors have contributed equally to the conceptualisation of this article.

Shailaja Menon is a teacher-educator and researcher who works largely in the area of early literacy. She is currently part of a longitudinal project studying various aspects related to literacy acquisition in Kannada and Marathi. She has a keen interest in exploring critical language pedagogies as applied to the learning of first-generation students in her university classroom. E-mail: shailaja.menon@apu.edu.in

Vanamala Viswanatha's primary areas of research interest and work lie in the areas of translation studies and English language teaching in multilingual Indian contexts. She is deeply concerned with developing a theoretically grounded understanding of multilingualism as applied to a wide variety of Indian educational settings. E-mail: vanamala.viswanatha@apu.edu.in

Jane Sahi is founder/teacher at Sita School and Adjunct Professor of Language at Azim Premji University. She is interested in developing her understanding of critical language pedagogies and multimodal pedagogies related to language. She has authored several books for teachers and practitioners on language and art teaching. E-mail: janehelensahi@gmail.com

as those encountered in most Indian settings. We draw upon multiple disciplines to develop a theoretical conception of language and language learning that is both socio-culturally located as well as critical in nature. We contextualise the discussion by describing the situation *vis-à-vis* languages and language teaching in India. Next, we develop and describe a rationale for adopting a bilingual/multilingual position in TE programmes in India. Finally, we describe a few possibilities for the practice of language teaching. The article should be read as an invitation to further study and dialogue, rather than as a definitive position on the issues addressed.

Keywords

Multilingual education, critical theory, language education, teacher education, higher education

> THERE are no handles upon a language
> Whereby men take hold of it
> And mark it with signs for its remembrance.
> It is a river, this language,
> Once in a thousand years
> Breaking a new course
> Changing its way to the ocean.
>
> Carl Sandburg, *Languages*

Any discussion about languages delves deeply into the history, politics, identities, imagination and aspirations of a people. It is a topic on which one can express educated views, but not known certainties, engage in conversations and debates, but not close the door to alternative viewpoints. It is a slippery, ambiguous and potentially polemical territory in which one ventures. Nevertheless, the university where we (the authors of this article) work asked us to venture into exactly this territory when it requested us to conceptualise a language policy for its teacher education framework. Feeling somewhat inadequate and not up to this task, we started as a reading group, with each member bringing in potentially pertinent readings from areas that we were familiar and comfortable with. As we met, read, talked and discussed matters, over the span of an academic year, we covered vast territory. We read across disciplines—from sociolinguistics to critical theory, language and literacy studies, from the history of English in India to second-language teaching and

learning—and more. Our thoughts began to coalesce and take shape, tending towards particular viewpoints and positions.

In reading, discussing and writing the position paper for our university—which has a stated commitment to creating a just and equitable society—we realised its potential relevance to teacher educators outside of our own university. In this article, we share our emergent ideas. We hope that what we propose here will spark off a dialogue amongst professionals involved in teacher education (TE) in the country, and eventually lead to the formation of more robust and substantiated articulations. Ground realities, experiences from the field and substantive dialogue amongst teacher educators relating to these issues will provide feedback and help to refine it further.

While much of what we have to say about the role of languages in education might be applicable to a wide variety of educational contexts, we have developed these arguments in the context of thinking about the role of languages in TE programmes, in particular. Historically, there has been little discussion of the specific challenges in designing TE courses in multilingual contexts. If the enterprise of education has to do with the shaping of minds, then this can happen only in and through language, which is central to all human transactions. Languages, therefore, play a potentially critical role both in shaping the prospective teachers' learning as well as their future teaching. We hope that as this dialogue evolves, and our own understanding grows, we will be able to make clearer and sharper distinctions between language teaching and learning in general, and between language teaching and learning in TE programmes.

We begin by presenting a theoretical conception of language and language learning, one that guides our thinking. Next, we contextualise the discussion by describing the situation vis-à-vis languages and language teaching in India. Third, we develop and describe a rationale for adopting a bilingual/multilingual position in TE programmes. Finally, we describe a few possibilities for practice.

Language and Language Learning through a Socio-cultural, Critical Lens

We view language as a multidimensional phenomenon. Therefore, rather than relying exclusively on discourses from linguistics or language teaching that deal with matters of language as their central preoccupation,

we have derived our understanding of language and language learning from a number of allied discourses, as described earlier.

First, we view language as socially situated in relations of power. Street (1995, 2003), for instance, argues that literacy and languages are not 'autonomous' entities or skills that can be understood or acquired in acultural and mechanistic ways. Languages are always 'ideological', in that language use is always located in particular contexts, and is steeped in histories, power relationships, identities and more. The language of education is never neutral (Bruner, 1986); theories and practices associated with language and language learning are always ideologically based and contested because they are rooted in particular worldviews. Freire (1970/2007) argues that the language of education serves either as an instrument of oppression of human beings or as an instrument of human liberation.

Second, we view language as not merely an individual, in-the-head phenomenon, but as a socially acquired set of practices or discourses (Gee, 2001a, 2001b). Discourses are defined as particular ways of using languages within specific contexts that lead to the acquisition or assignment of particular identities within that community or context. Languages are typically acquired and used in local contexts and among groupings of people who use particular forms and discourses of language to achieve particular ends (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Such communities transact the knowledge held by and among them with and through language. Therefore, it is not possible to separate out language from knowledge construction and acquisition.

Viewing language as a set of context-specific discourses also permits us to notice that a given language is not a single, monolithic entity, but may take on many different forms depending on the contexts of use. Newcomers are positioned in particular ways when they enter communities; they learn not just a set of skills and strategies, but a *way of being a person* within that community (Wenger, 1998). Language as *identity* is, therefore, a critical concept. Acquiring (or not acquiring) a given language, using (or not using it) with a certain standard of proficiency to transact the knowledge held within a given community is, ultimately, about becoming (or not becoming) *a certain kind of person*. Developing this awareness is especially critical in Indian contexts where English and higher forms of the regional languages stand as symbols for much more than the acquisition of a set of value-neutral skills.

Third, we view language proficiencies in multilingual contexts in terms of emergent and intersecting continua of proficiencies (Hornberger, 2004). In several Indian contexts, language proficiencies in the mother tongue, the standard regional language, as well as in Hindi and English are likely to be intersecting, adaptive and practice based, as interlocking spheres of a single competence (Mohan, 2012). Understanding language from this perspective breaks down binaries in terms of thinking about language teaching and learning (for example, first language/second language; receptive/productive), and shifts the focus, instead, to continuities that might exist along different dimensions. This provides for a more fluid model wherein proficiency is achieved through practice in relevant contexts for select purposes, and meanings are negotiated collaboratively, even as grammar gets co-constructed. In the present context of globalisation, speech communities have radically changed from the homogeneous models that existed earlier. Technology, for example, has made possible digital communication that goes beyond the borders of nation or region or social class. This multimodal, multidimensional understanding of language challenges conventional language teaching methods and goals.

To sum up our perspective in the words of Canagarajah (2007, p. 936), 'The previously dominant constructs, such as form, cognition, and the individual[,] are not ignored; they get redefined as hybrid, fluid and [are] situated in a more socially embedded, ecologically sensitive and interactionally open model'. This understanding of language learning and proficiency in a multilingual setting is foundational to our discussion and proposal of ideas.

Contextualising the Discussion: Languages in India

Multilingual Setting

An estimated 70 per cent of people on earth speak two or three languages, such that multilingualism is increasingly recognised as the norm, and not the exception, around the world. The way that speech communities have creatively borrowed, adapted, assimilated and built on each other's words is evident of a pattern of exchange and growth throughout history.

India is a richly multilingual country with thousands of languages and dialects and a history of linguistic and cultural borrowing and learning. According to the 2011 census, there are a total of 122 languages and 234 mother tongues in India that are spoken by more than 10,000 speakers.

Despite the overwhelming presence of multiple languages in the 'real world' outside the classroom, schooling regimes have continued to operate within the 'language of rule', thereby privileging the middle classes who succeed academically because they are closer to the language of the classroom, both socially and culturally. Only 41 of the 122 major languages are taught as school languages (first, second or third); of these, only 18 are offered as possible media of instruction at the higher secondary (university) level. Describing the plight of tribal children, Mohanty (2009, pp. 5–6) writes:

> Fifty percent of the tribal children who join school never reach grade 5 and only 20% survive the years of schooling to take the high school examination which only about 8% actually pass. The 80% are counted in *sarkari* (government) records as 'drop-outs'…The untold truth is that they were *'push-outs'* in an unresponsive system that systematically devalues them—their culture, their languages and their identities.

Although there is an official multilingual policy, that of the three-language formula, in the Indian educational context, it has not been implemented with any seriousness on the ground. Languages are often used as symbols of regional or national identity in the curriculum (for example, Marathi for Maharashtrians or Hindi for all Indians); they are also used in a routinised manner to access the canon of the 'high' culture in a given language without necessarily generating a sense of connection or critical engagement with, and a questioning of, the texts.[1] As we will argue in a later section, making critical connections to texts is foundational to all learning, including language learning.

Hierarchy of Languages

There are several aspects of hierarchy related to languages in India. First, there is the dominance of English vis-à-vis other Indian languages.[2] Second, there is the dominance of the national language, Hindi, which

undermines regional languages. Third, the official language of the state undermines the minority languages of the region, for example, Kannada marginalises Tulu, Konkani and Urdu in Karnataka. And, finally, the standard written form of the regional language is privileged over all other local forms, variations and dialects, thereby setting the ground for unequal access to educational opportunities. To set pragmatic boundaries on the scope of this discussion, we focus here on the first and the last of these issues, that is, the privileging of English and the dominance of standard forms of the regional language.

It is common knowledge that English has historically played a divisive role in India by reinforcing and maintaining the position of the elite and by creating a new caste system. Ananthamurthy (2005) points to the great cultural crisis spawned by English and describes it as the 'Bharat versus India divide', a divide between the India that speaks English and the Bharat that speaks Indian languages. Following independence, schooling became available to much wider sections of society, across different classes and castes, than was previously available. This democratisation, however, largely failed to translate into a movement aimed at providing the majority of students with effective access to learning. Coleman (2011), in his study of the role and status of English in India, corroborates this trend when he observes that failure in English constitutes a significant factor for higher dropout rates in school education. Despite these ground realities, there is a strong aspiration for English since it constitutes a visible vehicle for upward social mobility. This economic condition largely explains the currently powerful trend—the social aspiration for English in Indian society wherein the people who have been excluded have started to demand English-medium schooling for their children from the very beginning of the schooling process. The writer and columnist, Chandra Bhan Prasad, has argued forcefully (see Venkatesan, 2002) for the potential of English for the empowerment of Dalits. He argues that if Brahmins and other upper-caste people could achieve economic power across the country, the process owed a lot to their knowledge of English; likewise, if Dalits learned English, they could plan common struggles and aspire to economic success. Dalit scholars have, therefore, argued against language instruction in the mother tongue, which they claim would make the oppressed carry the burden of maintaining culture and nativism (Prasad, 2010), even while denying them opportunities of economic, social and political advancement. Thus, historically,

different constituencies have used English in India to serve different purposes: the British, to create a class of ruling elites who were schooled in Western thinking and ways; the Indian upper classes, to retain control over the language of power (which shifted from Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian to English); and the oppressed classes, to resist further oppression through denial of access to the language of power and to claim access to increased economic opportunities in a globalising world. All these debates in the Indian context point to an essential ambivalence towards English—as a colonial and neocolonial oppressive presence to be resisted, while simultaneously serving as a liberatory force for social and economic reasons. Lodge (1997, as cited in in Janks, 1998) refers to this situation as the 'access paradox'. The paradox is that if you provide access to the dominant language, you entrench its dominance; if, on the other hand, you deny students access to the language of power, you entrench their marginalisation (Janks, 1998).

Likewise, the standard form of the language (for example, Mysore–Bangalore Kannada) is privileged in formal settings over other dialectical variants (for example, Kannada spoken in Yaadgir). The standard form—inflected with its own caste, region and community markers—is typically the language of the textbook and of formal schooling. This can be highly alienating to students from diverse and underprivileged backgrounds, and can be a big hurdle for students to cross. For example, the vocabulary used in standard Kannada is substantially different from dialectical usages, making the formal language encountered in the school environment an alienating thing for students entering the formal educational set-up. Ilaiah (1996, p. 15) makes this point eloquently when he asks:

> What difference did it make to us whether we had an English textbook that talked about Milton's Paradise Lost or Paradise Regained, or Shakespeare's Othello or Macbeth,...or a Telugu textbook which talked about Kalidasa's Meghasandesham, Bommera Potanna's Bhagavatham, or Nannayya and Tikkana's Mahabharatham[,] except the fact that one textbook is written with 26 letters and the other in 56 letters? We do not share the contents of either; we do not see our lives reflected in their narratives. In none of these texts do we find words that are familiar to us.

There is little effort to sensitise teachers about the need to include or validate less powerful dialects of the regional language in their instruction. Education made inaccessible through unfamiliar languages potentially

participates in a cyclical relationship with the poor material and the eco-nomic conditions in the backward districts of a state.

Language Learning and Teaching: 'Collapse at the Foundation'

Luke and Freebody (1990) identify four necessary (but not exhaustive) roles that readers and writers need to play with regard to texts. They need to function as 'code breakers' who can decipher and encode the script fluently. They also must learn to make meaning from texts. They must develop pragmatic competence in using the texts in their lives. And finally, they must develop critical competencies in terms of analysing, critiquing, resisting and revising texts, as appropriate. When we compare these four roles of language/text users with what is happening in the Indian school-ing system, we notice a massive failure to address even one of these roles adequately at all levels of the educational system. Maxine Bernsten (2003), in her seminal study of the reading skills of third-grade students in Marathi, referred to this situation as a 'collapse at the foundation', a collapse that has a far-reaching impact on educational learning at the higher levels or later stages of education. While acknowledging that issues relating to elementary education are somewhat different from issues relating to higher education, we wish to make two points here: first, that the seeds of later failure are planted during the earliest years of schooling; and second, that the failure to attend seriously to languages is not a problem merely of the elementary schools, but is also evidence of a larger, more systemic problem throughout our educational system.

The four-roles model is based on the idea that beyond the question of the medium of instruction, there is the wider question about how lan-guages are used and for what purposes. Irrespective of the evident differ-ences in the material conditions, status, levels of hygiene and discipline in English-medium, private schools, as opposed to vernacular-medium, government schools, the learning in both systems is largely information based rather than understanding based (Sinha, 2012). Language teaching and learning is largely restricted to the imparting of a set of 'autono-mous' skills related to decoding and spelling. Reproducing correct gram-mar and form is also important. Information is often presented in separate, de-contextualised chunks, unconnected to students' lived experience. Very little emphasis is placed on meaning-making and writing, and even

less emphasis is laid on the need to understand how students might use languages and literacies meaningfully in their lives to achieve certain goals and purposes. Contrast this situation to what Paulo Freire describes as the essence of language and literacy learning:

> Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world. As I suggested earlier, this movement from the word to the world is always present; even the spoken word flows from our reading of the world...For me, this dynamic movement is central to the literacy process. (Freire and Macedo, 1987, p. 35)

If, as Freire claims, reading the word and reading the world are fundamentally the same process, then Indian students are, indeed, left challenged in both respects, irrespective of the languages in which they are taught.

A Bilingual/Multilingual Model for Languages in Education and Teacher Education

We argue here that many of the issues discussed in the preceding sections can be addressed, at least partially, by engaging seriously with proposals and programmes for developing strong bilinguals who are proficient in both English and the regional language.[3] Languages can be viewed as mirrors that reflect the students' own lives, aspirations and goals. They can also be viewed as windows that expand the students' horizons, taking them into unfamiliar, unknown places, and introducing them to new, exciting ideas. A strong programme of education would balance both these roles of languages; it would connect students strongly with their lived realities, even as it opens doors to imagined possibilities.

The offering of bilingual programmes at the university level is not a novel idea in the Indian context (see Jayaram, 1993); many colleges offer instruction in English and the regional language. The main difference between our proposal and the existing bilingual programmes is that in the latter, language is seen simply as a means of accessing content; developing bilingual competencies in students is not a matter of concern. Conscious bilingualism at the university level would be of value in most fields of study. However, as noted earlier, it assumes special significance

in the context of TE programmes because teachers are potentially critical change agents in society. It is critical that teachers be sensitised to the role of languages(s) in education if they are to teach effectively in their own classrooms. Further, if we want a truly multilingual society, we cannot avoid developing those capacities and sensibilities in our teachers.

Several arguments can be made in favour of including a strong emphasis on deliberately cultivating bilingual teachers. We will first make a case for including regional languages in TE programmes. We will then turn to an examination of the role of English within these programmes.

Including Regional Language Instruction: A Socio-political Argument

Education, admittedly, should make for a creative and responsible citizenry in a democracy. But TE students need to be citizens in their small hamlets, tiny villages and *taluka*s, even as they learn to be citizens of their region, India or the world. They also need to guide their students towards assuming such roles in society. Proficiency in the languages spoken around oneself is imperative for discharging this function in the socio-political and cultural spheres. As noted earlier, it is a fallacy to assume that students in TE programmes have a strong base in their regional languages and require help only with learning English. Bilingual education helps in strengthening language proficiencies in both languages. Rather than using the regional language merely as the means of accessing content developed elsewhere and in other languages, Indian languages need to be promoted as strong languages in which one can pursue education beyond the first 12–14 years, as languages in which new content of local relevance can be created and used. A strong emphasis on regional languages in the formal educational system also enables access to the affective and social domains of knowledge through the vernacular, while simultaneously creating access through English.

Including Regional Language Instruction: Pedagogical Arguments

One of the established learning principles is that human beings, in the process of learning, move from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex and from the concrete to the abstract. We acknowledge

that the regional language may not be the students' first language or home language. Yet, the regional language, as a language of the environment, is likely to be a key resource brought by students to the classroom; if this resource cannot be used to teach concepts and ideas, it is an opportunity lost. Relatively speaking, English, which is so far away from most Indian languages, is likely to be only a language of rote learning.

The need for strong connections with the lived realties of students can be justified on the basis of at least two different arguments. First, we have learned from constructivist theories of learning that learners build on the known; the new is always assimilated into pre-existing structures, which then change to accommodate the new learning. Taking into account the pre-existing concepts and structures of students' lived realities outside of educational programmes is thus a substantiated pedagogical move (Driscoll, 1994; Halliday and Hassan, 1989). Second, it can be argued that the development of critical competencies in students would necessarily involve attempts that enable them to 'locate and re-locate their experiences in a personal, cultural and socio-historical context' (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 150). While the need for this connection would apply to all language teaching programmes, it acquires a special significance in the context of TE programmes, where teachers' own competencies in languages need to be built up and built upon, even as their ability to critically engage their own students with language teaching and learning must also be engaged with, if we are not to cyclically repeat the 'collapse at the foundation' documented by Bernsten (2003).

English in Perspective

Even as we value the power and potential of the regional language in pedagogy, we have to enable the acquisition of English, given the unquestioned significance of English in contemporary India and in the global order. As pointed out earlier, knowledge of English has become a visible sign of upward social mobility and an aspiration for the majority. Increasingly, there is a sense of social and economic disadvantage for and among people who do not know English. English has been promoted by some as an alternative to the dominance of Sanskritised and standardised regional languages that are associated with the upper castes. Further, English is one of the key languages in which knowledge circulates in the

world today, and it is also largely the language of technology and even the media.

Ilaiah (2005) warns us about the tendency of dominant intellectual groups to use the notion of instruction in the mother tongue or in the regional language as a tool of manipulation. While English has become the preserve of the rich, and the means of making them even richer, the burden of upholding native cultures has been the lot of the poor, giving rise to populist slogans such as 'English for the classes, mother tongue for the masses'. Hence, Ilaiah (2005) writes, 'From Class One to Ten in both government and private schools, three subjects should be taught in a regional language and three subjects should be taught in English...Then the education system can stand on its two legs.' It is possible that even an *emergent* knowledge of English can potentially provide one with the means to challenge and question dominant positions in society.

Therefore, we believe that ensuring that students are proficient in English can contribute to the creation of a more equitable and democratic society. The challenge for TE programmes in our country is to balance the need or desire for learning English and for learning in English with a strong commitment to also fostering regional-language proficiencies. Therefore, it is important that English be seen in a critical perspective and that neither we nor our students become passive consumers of the language of the market if we are to address the basic vision of creating an equitable society. We, therefore, recommend that: (*i*) English be seen as *one* of the students' languages, and not be given undue importance or an exclusive status; (*ii*) monolingual models of English proficiency not be applied to students' language learning; and (*iii*) rather than being transacted as a set of autonomous skills, English be used to encourage a critical engagement among, and on the part of, students.

Contours of a Bilingual/Multilingual Programme in Teacher Education

Much of what we have to offer in this section is highly speculative in nature at present for lack of sufficient empirical evidence. Given the complex sociolinguistic and pedagogic scenarios in the Indian education system, we contend that we cannot afford to take an either/or stand in this matter. As Joseph and Ramani (2006) have demonstrated through

their work on TE programmes in South Africa, the only way we can negotiate the access paradox is by strengthening the non-dominant language(s) even as we continue to provide access to the dominant language. We suspect that bilingualism could potentially play a significant role in fostering critical thinking, and could provide an objective lens through which to re-view old knowledge. It could, if taught critically, create a 'contact zone' where a text does not merely reflect back what is known, but opens a window onto unexpected, unimagined worlds. The different worldviews constituted by each of the languages could provide an illuminating study in contrast, which, in turn, could provoke critical engagement with issues raised in the classroom.

Bilingualism within an institutional context can be defined as any system of education in which 'instruction (is provided) in two languages and the use of those two languages as mediums of instruction for any part, or all, of the school curriculum' (Andersson and Boyer, 1970). There are several different models of bilingualism (May, 2008). Certain forms of bilingualism use the second language only with the intent of transitioning students from the less powerful language to the dominant language. These are referred to as displacement models of bilingualism. Others expose students to two languages, but make little effort to shelter them by making the unfamiliar language more accessible or meaningful. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the different models of bilingualism in detail; here, we discuss our favoured approach—that of integrated, or additive, bilingualism.

Additive bilingualism has been defined by Cummins (1994) as the form of bilingualism in which students add a second language to their intellectual toolkit, while continuing to develop conceptually and academically in their first language. This model was not developed in a multilingual context with added complexities, such as the home language of the students being different from both the languages (for example, regional language and English) offered by the institution. However, we might expect that most students who have enrolled in a TE programme might be acquainted (through the formal schooling process) with either the regional language or with English, even if neither of these is their home/first language. It is a different matter that the students may not be fully proficient in either of the two languages, despite formal schooling, due to weak language instruction. Hence, the TE programme would likely need to build needed competencies in both languages simultaneously.

Hornberger (2004) suggests that a continual framework of literacy can function as a valid way of evolving policy and practice for implementing bilingual training for teachers. One feature of this framework is that it sees students being placed at different points on a continuum with a range of intersecting paths. The concept is one of *emergent learners* collaborating and adjusting to each other and to the instructional setting to communicate effectively. This model encourages, for example, code switching and code mixing as desirable and normal. This position is in contrast to the resistance to mixed-language usage of the monolingual paradigm that compartmentalises different languages. It also supports students by drawing on all manner of communicative resources and multiple literacies beyond reading and writing, including visual and audial modes, to maximise their use of language for reflection.

The notion of an emergent proficiency raises the issue of paying attention to form—a standard, agreed-upon way of using language—which is a matter of deep concern for most educators. Developing a standard form is critical if we are to enable students to interact and negotiate successfully in the world within and beyond formal educational spaces; this might even be the aspiration of many students. Instruction and resources for form should be made available on an 'as-needed' basis (Gee, 2001a, 2001b), rather than becoming the mainstay of language instruction in TE programmes. Programmes should also cultivate a critical engagement with form, rather than a passive consumption of it. Narayana (2000), a Kannada scholar and linguist, argues that teachers make unreasonable and unrealistic demands on students for gaining proficiency in standard English. He suggests that given the fact that vast numbers of students in India study and use English in distinctive ways, it would be more appropriate to legitimise these forms as valid and legitimately different, rather than insisting that everyone speak and write a standard version of English.

The languages included in the TE programme will also serve as mediums through which to transact content. Providing students with basic skills in reading and writing does not automatically equip them with higher-order learning skills within particular domain areas or disciplines (Shanahan and Shanahan, 2008). Cummins (2008) pointed out that the cognitive demand and contextual support for basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) differed significantly from those for cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Further, CALP may not be a unidimensional capability, but is likely to be domain specific, because of

disciplinary variations in the organisation of knowledge. Therefore, these languages cannot be discussed independently of the requirements of knowledge construction; this is especially critical in areas where specialist or academic discourses might be called for.

There are several documented approaches outside India that attempt to teach content with and through a second or less familiar language (for example, Coyle et al., 2010; Echevarria et al., 2008; and O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). The TE programmes in India could study some of these approaches to gain insights into what may work best in Indian contexts and situations.

Exploring Possibilities for Implementation

Even though the possibilities for implementing a bilingual/critical framework in TE have not been tested out rigorously in Indian contexts, we are aware of a few international efforts in this regard or direction that suggest that working towards such a model, while ambitious, is feasible. Hawkins and Norton (2009) cite a number of examples of 'pedagogies of possibility' across the world, including the Literacy Archive Project in South Africa (Stein, 2004), where critical language TE has been put into practice; and work in the United States (Pavlenko, 2003) where teacher learners who were emergent learners of English were encouraged to explore notions of multi-competence (Cook, 1992, 1999) to establish their own identity as legitimate users of the target language and not as 'failed native speakers'. These examples, and others, are characterised by dialogic engagement where the language teacher or educator uses collaborative dialogue to construct and mediate meanings and understandings to enable students to critique educational practices.

Three key principles underlie our recommendations for exploring the pedagogical possibilities for preparing teachers: (*i*) to encourage a strongly additive bilingual approach, rather than a transitional approach (towards English); (*ii*) to value the processes of meaning-making and participation that characterise emergent proficiencies; and (*iii*) to encourage students and teacher educators to develop a critical understanding of multilingualism, language and language use in our society. Here, we give just a few examples of what this could look like in practice, both in terms of process and outcome. Many of these suggestions are empirically

unsubstantiated at present, and require considerable collective thinking, research and revision before they can serve as the bedrocks of educational programmes. Despite this limitation, the suggestions are rooted in theory and are consistent with the model we have proposed in this article. As such, they could be used as the starting point for conducting classroom- and programme-level research in higher educational settings.

Principle 1: Encouraging a Strongly Bilingual Approach

1. Students could be immersed in rich contexts for the learning of two languages, and for different varieties of each of these languages. Contexts could be created for the acquisition and practice of conversational, literary and academic forms of each language, and TE programmes could be designed for a sustained engagement with these contexts and forms.
2. Teacher educators could be sensitised to the need for deepening knowledge of the regional language (in addition to English), especially to developing CALP and the literary forms of these languages.
3. The TE programmes could be designed to have an appropriate balance between the teaching of certain subjects in English and of other subjects in the regional language. In a one-year programme, for example, in addition to learning to teach English, students could learn one other subject (say, psychology or child development) in English. In programmes of longer duration, the proportion of subjects taught in English could be progressively increased as students become more proficient and confident. The intent of this suggestion is not to transition students 'out' of the regional language and into English, but to help build greater proficiency with the less familiar language (assuming that English is the less familiar language).
4. Bilingual components could be included in different classes, for example, collaborative translation of particular relevant texts. For example, Viswanatha (1998, 2005) has demonstrated the potential of translation for teaching English language and literature as well as for negotiating the alien.
5. Bilingual instructors could model bilingual ease by weaving between the two languages, but in ways other than direct translation.

6. Both oral and written forms of the language(s) could be nurtured. Visual and digital literacies could also find a place in these programmes.

7. A course to enable teachers to teach English through English could serve the purpose of guiding effective classroom practice and simultaneously improve the teachers' spoken English. Tasks, activities and discussions related to classroom teaching would provide opportunities for practice in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in a meaningful context. This method of teaching a second language does not exclude the use of the regional language in the classroom, but teachers would learn to use it judiciously and effectively, and not for parallel translation, which often detract students from learning the target language.

Principle 2: Valuing the Processes of Meaning-making and Participation that Characterise Emergent Proficiencies

1. When content is taught in English, programmes could use 'sheltered' approaches, such that the language may be simplified, but that the issues and concepts are explored in depth.

2. Teachers could be encouraged to create a pedagogical space where students feel free to communicate in whatever language they prefer without being graded or judged, so that the stress is on communicative effectiveness and not on correctness. Students could be allowed to ask and answer questions in the language of their choice, and perhaps even to respond to certain written assignments in the language of their choice.

3. Here, we emphasise the notion of 'emergent form', that is, communication through pragmatic strategies that are not dependent on achieving monolingual proficiency. The perspective is one of developing emergent capabilities in each of these languages through the adoption of the $X + 1$ approach, where X is the students' current capability in a particular form of a particular language. It is anticipated that longer-duration programmes might achieve better success with the cultivation of the standard form, as compared to shorter-duration programmes. The success of TE programmes in this respect could be measured both in

terms of the opportunities provided for language learning, as well as the progress made by students during their time at the institution, rather than being assessed against standard measures of correctness.

4. The unfamiliar language or form of the language can be 'sheltered' in meaningful ways (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Short and Echevarria, 1999) so that students do not experience a sense of 'submersion' in the unfamiliar. Prabhu (1987), who has studied second-language pedagogy in India, argues that (language) form is best learned when overt attention is not on form but on meaning. He has demonstrated that this can be achieved through a procedural syllabus of task sequences and task cycles, which, when pitched at the right level of challenge, will demand from learners a rigorous cognitive engagement with content, thereby leading to an internalisation of linguistic form inseparable from its meaning in a context of active language use.

5. Experiments with role play, theatre, music and visuals in different languages would support oral fluency and build confidence. Students could be encouraged to share relevant poems, stories and experiences in different languages related to the subjects that they are studying.

6. Discussions about certain technical terms and concepts (for example, 'child centred', 'interactive', 'critical practice', 'whole language' and 'emergent literacy'), and their negotiable equivalent terms and meanings in different languages, would be a useful way of exploring the deeper meanings of these words and their implications for practice in different cultural settings. A glossary could be prepared as an aid to learning.

7. A variety of academic and popular cultural resources in different languages, such as film and media clippings and songs, could be used to stimulate discussions.

Principle 3: Developing a Critical Stance Towards Language(s)

Canagarajah (2002) makes a number of practical and pragmatic recommendations for helping students to develop a critical stance towards language(s). A few examples are provided here:

1. Students could be asked to conduct critical ethnographies of language use in different contexts; for example, they could examine variations in the form of the same language across different contexts, or they could analyse how an author's form changes depending on her audience. They could be encouraged to 'talk back' (critique, resist) to dominant forms of the languages to which they are exposed in appropriate ways.
2. They could be exposed explicitly to theories related to language, mind and society.
3. They could be encouraged to be active participants in ongoing 'authentic' debates about language policies, for example, about the introduction of English in primary grades and of English-medium instruction from Class VI. Likewise, they could be asked to read and respond critically to other ongoing debates reported in the media.

Conclusion

We educate teachers primarily with the intent that they should be able to help their students to learn in purposeful ways, and to build on and extend what they know. Teachers should have had this experience as students, if we would like them to be able to do this as teachers. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (National Council of Educational Research and Training [NCERT], 2009) lays great emphasis on learning that is not a product of fixed knowledge, but a means of developing attitudes of doubt and questioning that subjects existing knowledge claims, beliefs and dogmas to critical scrutiny. Language is central to this process since the acts of learning and knowing happens in and through language. When we see clearly that learning a language, or learning through a language, is about the acquisition of particular identities, roles and relationships of power within a given context, we note both the complexity of the situation as well as its potential for enabling teachers and learners to be critical language users. If TE programmes equip students to become critical consumers and producers of language(s), they will be more likely to be in a place where they can facilitate the development of the same critical awareness of language and society in their students.

The learning of language(s) is meant to both deepen and widen the experience of the world and our relationships to each other. Acquiring correctness and native-like proficiency in English may not be the first priority either for teacher trainees or pupils as they position themselves on a continuum of learning to communicate effectively in a multilingual context. We propose, therefore, that language needs to come alive for future teachers, so that they are not merely passive recipients of well-formulated sentences, but are also enabled to become active agents in meaning-making through a shared engagement in critical enquiry. Texts need to be viewed critically and in the light of their relevance for practice, and not as abstract theories. Further, teachers need to be encouraged to generate and share their own texts, and to use oral, written and visual languages to deepen and express their understandings of the world and of their place in it.

Teachers potentially have a significant role to play, not only in their own classrooms but also in responding to language policies that could affect their students positively or adversely. The TE programmes could prepare prospective teachers to look critically at the way different languages are used in schools and to value their own, and their students', emergent capabilities with languages.

What we have proposed in this article needs to be subjected to thorough scrutiny for practicability, feasibility and the possibility implementation. Even while acknowledging the preliminary and tentative nature of the claims we have made here, we end by asserting that we are not ready to throw the baby out with the bathwater. We believe that regional languages in India have a robust, rich and complex history, and need to be kept alive, dynamic and functional—even as we widen access to English for a large number of people.

Notes

1. Giroux (1985, p. xxi) defines culture as 'the representation of lived experiences, material artifacts and practices forged within the unequal and dialectical relations that different groups establish in a given society at a particular historical time'. Thus, the high culture includes a political and contested dimension.
2. We take the view that English is an Indian language in contemporary India.
3. We propose 'bilingual' as opposed to 'multilingual' programmes only due to pragmatic constraints that are anticipated in developing such programmes. Institutions do not need to necessarily limit themselves to bilingualism, as

much as make bilingualism the basic minimum standard of quality in their TE programmes.

References

Ananthamurthy, U.R. (2005, May 15). The great lit bazaar. *Sunday Times of India*, p. 10.

Andersson, T., & Boyer, M. (1970). *Bilingual schooling in the United States*. Austin, Texas: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Bernsten, M. (2003). Collapse at the foundation: A study of literacy amongst third standard students in western Maharashtra. *Journal of Indian School of Political Economy*, *15*(4), 776–796. Retrieved from http://www.ispepune. org.in/PDF%20ISSUE/2003/JISPE403/2036DOCU-1.PDF (last accessed on 13 November 2012).

Bruner, J.S. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Canagarajah, A.S. (2002). *A geopolitics of academic writing*. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press.

———. (2007). Lingua franca English, multilingual communities, and language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal, 91*(5), 923–939.

Coleman, H. (2011). *Dreams and realities: Developing countries and the English language*. London: British Council.

Cook, V.J. (1992). Evidence for multicompetence. *Language Learning*, *42*(4), 557–591.

———. (1999). Going beyond the native speaker in language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, *33*(2), 185–209. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/ stable/3587717

Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and language integrated learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Cummins, J. (1994). The acquisition of English as a second language. In K. Spangenberg-Urbschat & R.H. Pritchard (Eds), *Kids come in all languages: Reading instruction for ESL students* (pp. 36–62). Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Cummins, J. (2008). BICS and CALP: Empirical and theoretical status of the distinction. In B.V. Street & N.H. Hornberger (Eds), *Encyclopedia of language and education (2nd ed.), Vol. 2: Literacy* (pp. 71–83). New York: Springer Science + Business Media LLC.

Driscoll, M.P. (1994). *Psychology of learning for instruction*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Echevarria, J., Short, D., & Powers, K. (2008). Making content comprehensible for non-native speakers of English: The SIOP Model. *International Journal of Learning*, *14*(11), 41–50.

Freire, P. (1970/2007). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Freire, P., & Macedo, D.P. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. London: Bergin & Garvey.

Gee, J.P. (2001a). Reading as situated language: A sociocognitive perspective. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *44*(8), 714–725.

———. (2001b). A sociocultural perspective on early literacy development. In S.B. Neuman & D.K. Dickinson (Eds), *Handbook of early literacy research* (pp. 30–42). New York: Guilford Press.

Giroux, H.A. (1985). Introduction. In P. Freire, *The politics of education: Culture, power, and liberation* (pp. xi–xxv). South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Gutiérrez, K.D. (2008). Developing a sociocritical literacy in the third space. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *43*(2), 148–164.

Halliday, M.A.K., & Hassan, R. (1989). *Language, context, and text: Aspects of language in a social–semiotic perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hawkins, M., & Norton, B. (2009). Critical language teacher education. In A. Burns & J.C. Richards (Eds). *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 30–49). Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hornberger, N.H. (2004). The continua of biliteracy and the bilingual educator: Educational linguistics in practice. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *7*(2–3), 155–171.

Ilaiah, K. (1996). *Why I am not a Hindu: A Sudra critique of Hindutva, philosophy, culture, and political economy*. Calcutta: Samya.

———. (2005, August 25). Walking on two legs. *Deccan Herald*. Retrieved from http://archive.deccanherald.com/Deccanherald/aug252005/editpage 1622462005824.asp (last accessed on 12 October 2012).

Janks, H. (1998). The access paradox. *English in Australia*, *123*. Retrieved on 10 November 2012, from: http://www.aate.org.au/view_journal.php?id= 21&page_id=24

Jayaram, N. (1993). The language question in higher education: Trends and issues. *Higher Education*, *26*(1), 93–114. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3447879 (last accessed on 9 October 2012).

Joseph, M., & Ramani, E. (2006). English in the world does not mean English everywhere: The case for multilingualism in the ELT/ESL profession. In R. Rudby & M. Saraceni (Eds), *English in the world: Global rules, global roles* (pp. 186–199). London: New York: Continuum.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Luke, A., & Freebody, P. (1990). *Further notes on the four resources model*. Reading Online. Retrieved on 12 February 2013, from http://www.readingonline.org/research/lukefreebody.html

May, S. (2008). Bilingual/immersion education: What the research tells us. In J. Cummins & N.H. Hornberger (Eds), *Encyclopedia of language and education (2nd ed.), Vol. 5: Bilingual Education* (pp. 19–34). New York: Springer Science + Business Media LLC.

Mohan, P. (2012). *Is English the language of India's future?* Retrieved on 18 July 2013, from http://www.india-seminar.com/2005/545/545%20peggy%20 mohan1.htm

Mohanty, A. (2009). Multilingual education—A bridge too far? In A. Mohanty, M. Panda, R. Phillipson & T. Skutnabb-Kangas (Eds), *Multilingual education for social justice: Globalising the local* (pp. 5–19). New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

Narayana, K.V. (2000). The English that Kannada people speak. *Namma Kannada*, *41*, 1–2.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). (2009). *National curriculum framework for teacher education*. New Delhi: NCERT.

O'Malley, J.M., & Chamot, A.U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pavlenko, A. (2003). 'I never knew I was bilingual': Re-imagining teacher identities in TESOL. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, *2*(4), 251–268.

Prabhu, N.S. (1987). *Second language pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Prasad, G.J.V. (2010). A minute stretching into centuries: Macaulay, English, and India. In M.R. Paranjape & G.J.V. Prasad (Eds), *Indian English and 'vernacular' India* (pp. 3–17). New Delhi: Pearson.

Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2008). Teaching disciplinary literacy to adolescents: Rethinking content-area literacy. *Harvard Educational Review*, *78*(1), 40–59.

Short, D.J., & Echevarria, J. (1999). *The sheltered instruction observation protocol: A tool for teacher–researcher collaboration and professional development* [Educational Practice Report, 3]. Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence; Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Resources Information Center.

Sinha, S. (2012). Reading without meaning: The dilemma of Indian classrooms. *Language and Language Teaching*, *1*(1), 22–26.

Stein, P. (2004). Re-sourcing resources: Pedagogy, history and loss in a Johannesburg classroom. In M.R. Hawkins (Ed.), *Language learning and teacher education: A sociocultural approach* (pp. 35–51). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Street, B.V. (1995). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography, and education*. London: Longman.

Street, B.V. (2003). What's 'new' in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, *5*(2), 77–91. Retrieved from http://people.ufpr.br/~clarissa/pdfs/NewInLiteracy_Street.pdf

Venkatesan, V. (2002, February 2–15). The dalit cause. *Frontline*, *19(3)*. Retrieved on 12 July 12 2013, from http://www.frontline.in/navigation/?type=static&page=flonnet&rdurl=fl1903/19030920.htm

Viswanatha, V. (1998). Literary translation: A technique for teaching English literature in a bi-literacy context. In S.J. Tharu (Ed.), *Subject to change: Teaching literature in the nineties* (pp. 170–179). New Delhi: Orient Longman.

———. (2005). Language, literature, culture: Through the prism of translation. In Udaya Narayana Singh & P.P. Giridhar (Eds), *Translation Today, 2*(1). Retrieved on 22 September 2013, from http://www.anukriti.net/vol2/notes2/page1.asp?

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.