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# Adopting a plurilingual approach to language learning with young learners

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# Aims

- Talk about the **plurilingual approach** to learning languages.
- Consider the **benefits** of this approach for young learners.
- Share **classroom ideas** on how this approach can be facilitated.
- Consider **student, teacher and parent perspectives** on this approach.

# Terminology Checkpoint

## Multilingual

Ability to communicate in more than 2 languages.

## Plurilingual

It focuses on the interconnectedness of different languages.

It views the different languages we engage with as one's linguistic resource.

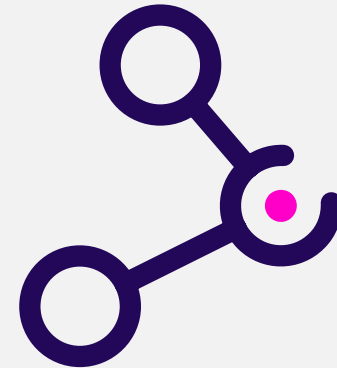
It draws from this linguistic resource to mediate/communicate.

(Council of Europe, 2023)

# What is a plurilingual approach to language learning?

A plurilingual approach to learning new languages does **not develop them in isolation** but involves learners **drawing upon previously known languages** and experience to help mediate meaning. (*Common European Framework of Reference 2001*)

- *Inclusive practice*
- *Values diversity*
- *Challenges English-only perspectives*



# Benefits of a plurilingual approach for Young Learners

Cognitive benefits

Linguistic benefits

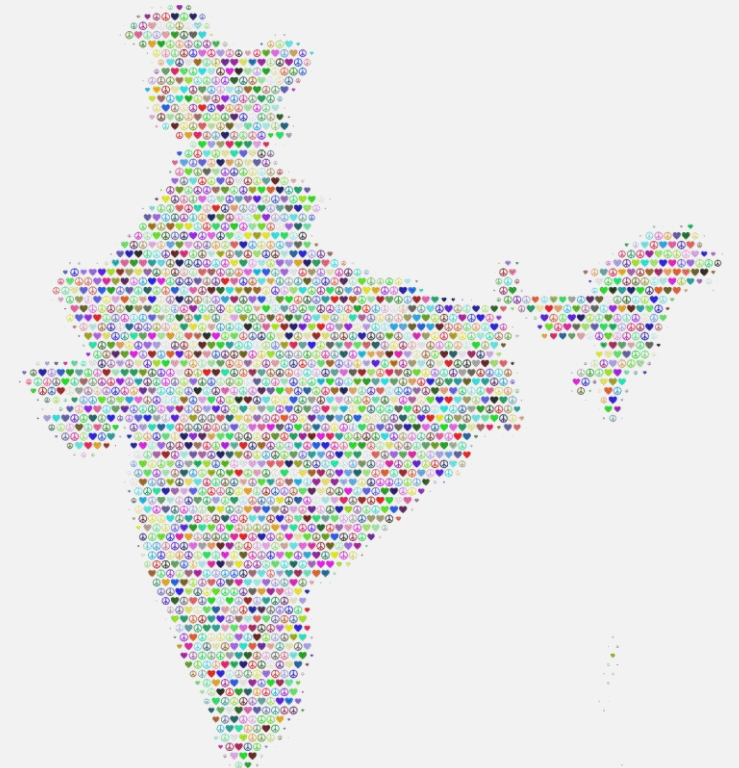
Affective benefits

# How can we incorporate learners' other languages?



# 1. Create a class linguistic profile

Aatif	2	Tamil *** English **	
Rutva	4	Telegu * English *** Hindi *** Tamil *	
Seyon	5	Tamil ** English *** Telegu * Malayalam * Hindi *	
Mithra	3	Tamil *** Hindi * English ***	



Teacher notes

I know English, french, Tamil, hindi

English : ★★★★★ - the one star goes cuz of the grammar.

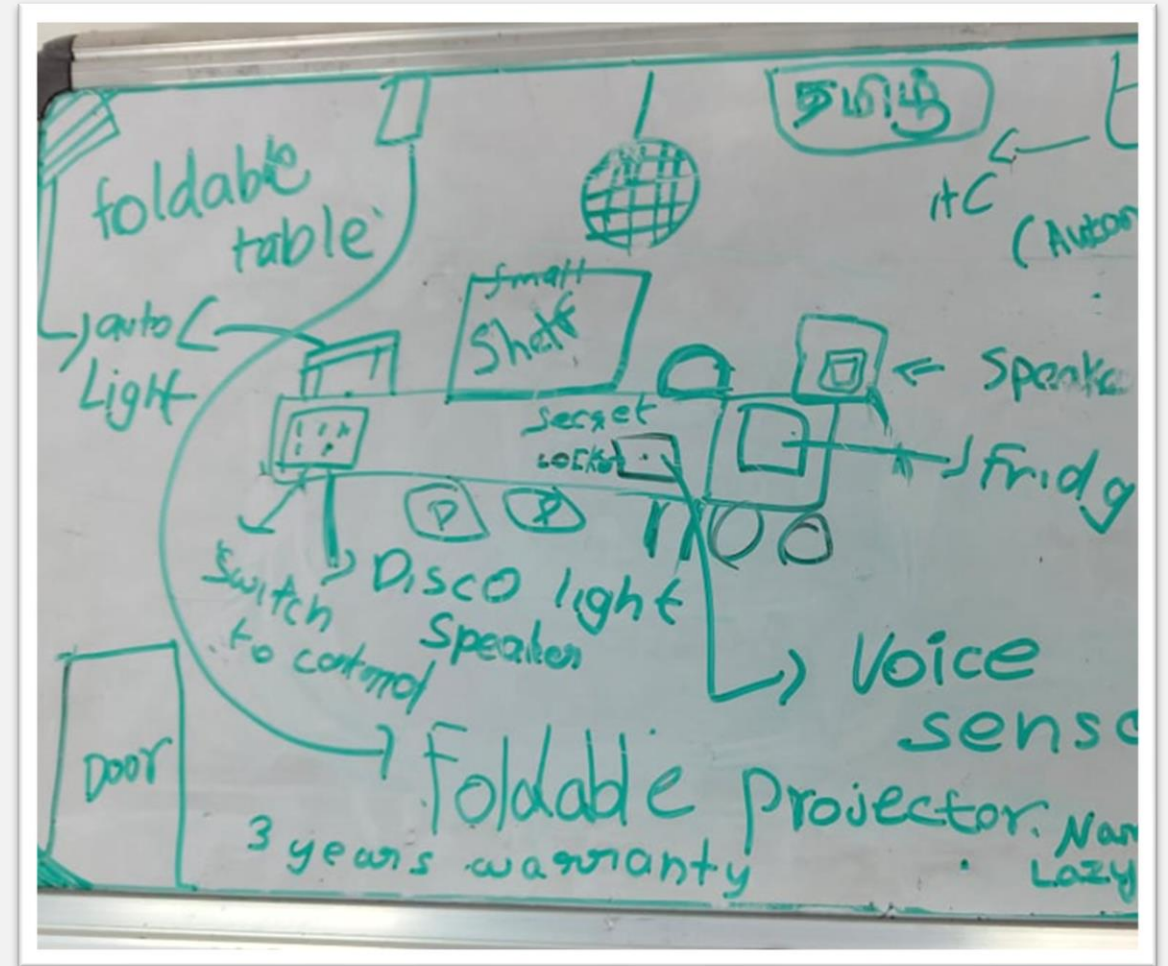
French : ★★★★★ - I need to listen my classes more.

Tamil : ★★★★★ -

Hindi : ★★★★★ -

## 2. Give option to do tasks in English and other languages

- Start by doing the task in English, do it again in other languages.
- Allow opportunity to use other languages (in Tamil, Telugu, English, Hindi) to prepare for a task.
- Brainstorm ideas for a task in other languages, present ideas in English.





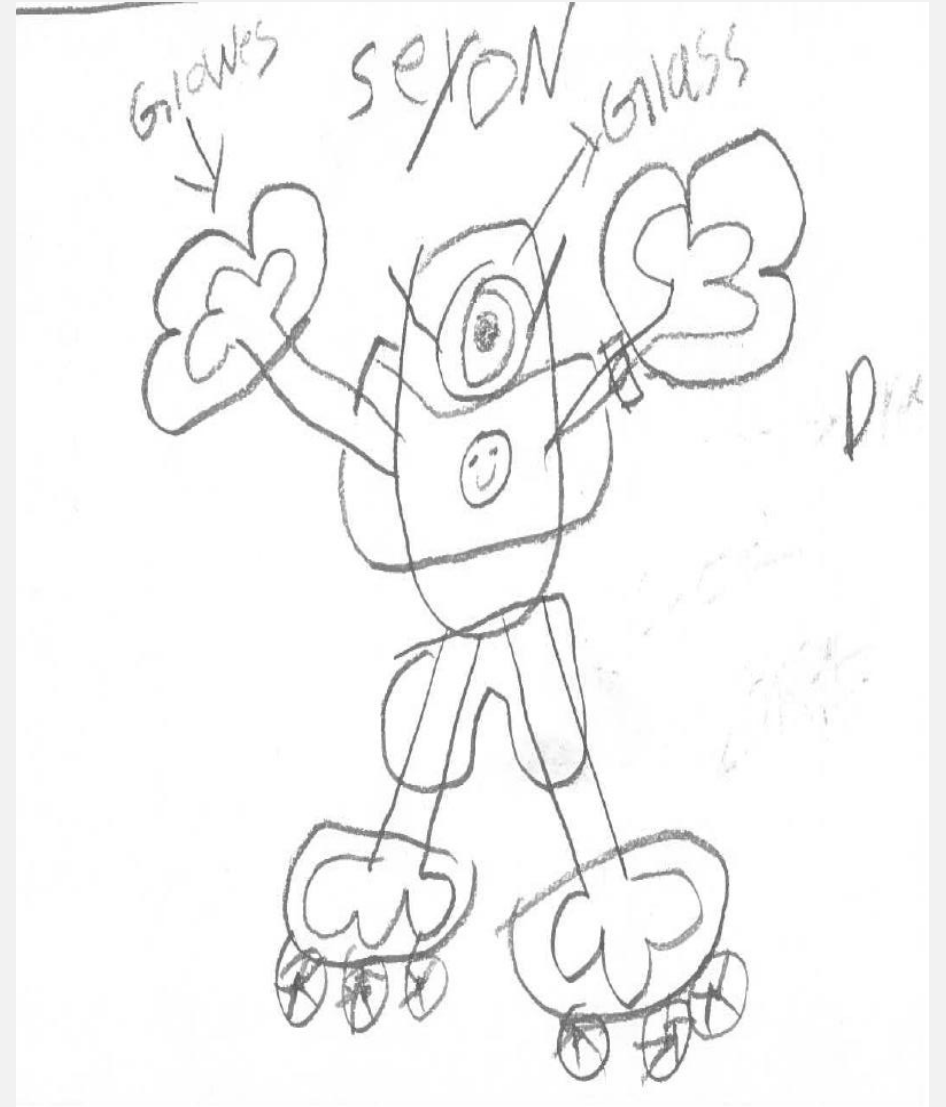
### 3. Draw attention to strategies they use when speaking/listening in other languages.

- **Expression** : *Eyes widening, more animated*
- **Paralinguistic features**: *Tone, voice, volume, rate of speech*
- **Follow up questions**
- **Challenging others' ideas**

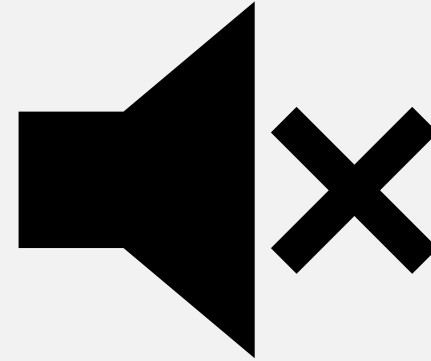


## 4. Use translation in discussions

- Asking for words in English
- Asking for clarification
- Summarizing a text in other languages



## Young Learner reactions: **Primary**



# Young Learner perspectives: Secondary

- **Lower levels:** A2 levels appreciate this more.
- More engaged, asked questions, challenged ideas for the first time.
- Lower affective filter: Engaged with the meaning more deeply.
- **Higher levels:** B1, B2 levels preferred it less
- Many biases about using other languages.



# Parent Perspectives

**Most parents agreed that there are benefits when used judiciously.**

**Every parent agreed that children should value other languages and not any one language.**

**Some parents shared concerns about their child's English learning goals being impacted.**

# Teachers' perspectives

- Learners needed assurance and modelling.
- Baises ingrained – a lot of hesitation, fear, discomfort.
- Primary learners more open to trying other languages than secondary.
- Rapport with teacher/peers improved after using other languages.
- Learners were more creative, vocal, questioning, leading discussions.
- Higher volume, snatching opportunities to speak, involved, animated.
- 1 or 2 learners' hesitation in both languages - not only linguistic difficulty.



# Final thoughts

## Teachers can...

- Create a safe space for linguistic diversity.
- Build awareness and value linguistic diversity.
- Breaking barriers/hierarchy/biases about using other languages.

## To encourage this approach...

- Starting younger is better.
- Support/training from organisation is necessary.
- Using other languages judiciously may be the key.

# Which one would you like to try?

1. Create a class linguistic profile to help plan.
2. Give option to do tasks in English and other languages.
3. Draw attention to strategies used (when speaking/listening in other languages).
4. Use translation



# References & Thanks

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## Thank you

**Cathy, Divya, David, Aardra, Ankita** for your support in classroom research!

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# Thank you for coming

**We would love your feedback**

