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The nature of banal normal-languaging across rural, urban southern settings. Language as an issue of who, what, where, when, why, and how[1]

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Abstract

The study presented in this paper aligns with the entanglements of two epistemological clusters that bring together decolonial, southern, indigenous thinking on the one hand, and those that arise from the meshes of sociocultural, dialogical, integrational, sadharanikaran perspectives on the other hand. Together, these build a *Second Wave of Southern Perspectives*, SWaSP framing. N/ethnographic materials generated during two phases across three decades in rural areas of Rajasthan and urban centers in Maharashtra in India, in the project *Gender Talk Gender Spaces* (GTGS) (at Örebro University, Sweden) are engaged with. The primary data, termed 'in the wild', has been generated and approached through 'Naturalistic Inquiry'. Thus, banal everyday social practices in and across everyday life arenas *inside* and *outside* formal institutional spaces, including contemporary virtual sites, and written (in)formal documents, are engaged with. Through empirically rich explorations, the study aims to illuminate this thing called language by unpacking it in terms of people's mundane engagements, its nature, where it resides, when and why it emerges in and across rural-urban southern spaces. The study empirically troubles mainstream hegemonic conceptualizations related to webs-of-understandings that reproduce north-centric nomenclature when more than one named-language and named-modality are engaged with. It offers (an)other 'metalanguage' to understand language.

Keywords: languaging, language learning, identity, females, SWaSP, n/ethnography

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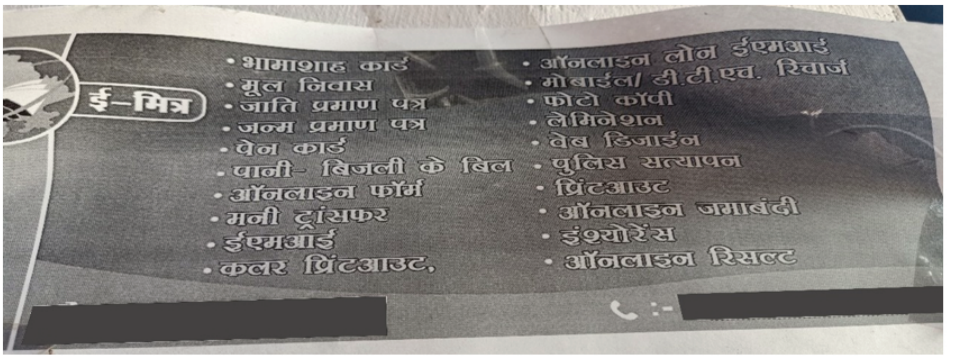
Hindi abstract

इस शोध-पत्र में प्रस्तुत अध्ययन दो ज्ञानमीमांसात्मक समूहों के अंतर्संबंधों के अनुरूप है। ये समूह एक ओर उपनिवेश-विमर्शोत्तर, वैश्विक दक्षिण तथा स्वदेशी चिंतनधाराओं को समेकित करते हैं, और दूसरी ओर वे दृष्टिकोण सम्मिलित करते हैं जो सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक, संवादात्मक, समाकलनीय तथा नाट्यशास्त्रीय 'साधारणीकरण' परिप्रेक्ष्यों के अंतर्संयोजनों से उत्पन्न होते हैं। इन्हीं के समेकन से सेकंड वेव्ह ऑफ सदर्न पर्स्पेक्टिव्ह्स अर्थात् Second Wave of Southern Perspectives (SWaSP) रूपरेखा का निर्माण होता है। भारत में राजस्थान के ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों तथा महाराष्ट्र के शहरी केंद्रों में तीन दशकों के दौरान दो चरणों में उत्पन्न कथात्मक-नृवंशविज्ञानात्मक सामग्री का, स्वीडन स्थित ओरेब्रो विश्वविद्यालय में संचालित परियोजना जेंडर टॉक जेंडर स्पेसेस अर्थात् Gender Talk Gender Spaces (GTGS) (Örebro University, Sweden) के अंतर्गत, विश्लेषणात्मक रूप से उपयोग किया गया है। स्वाभाविक/यथार्थ जीवन-परिस्थितियों में, बिना किसी कृत्रिम नियंत्रण के अर्थात् 'In the wild' के रूप में निर्दिष्ट प्राथमिक आँकड़े प्राकृतिक संदर्भों में, न्यूनतम हस्तक्षेप के साथ, संदर्भ-संवेदी एवं व्याख्यात्मक अध्ययन-पद्धति अर्थात् 'Naturalistic Inquiry' के माध्यम से उत्पन्न किए गए हैं तथा उनका अध्ययन किया गया है। इस प्रकार, औपचारिक संस्थागत स्थलों के भीतर और बाहर स्थित दैनंदिन जीवन-क्षेत्रों में तथा उनके पार व्याप्त साधारण दैनिक सामाजिक व्यवहारों—जिनमें समकालीन आभासी मंच और लिखित (अन)औपचारिक दस्तावेज़ भी सम्मिलित हैं—का विश्लेषणात्मक रूप से संज्ञान लिया जाता है। अनुभवजन्य रूप से समृद्ध अन्वेषणों के माध्यम से यह अध्ययन 'भाषा' नामक इस परिघटना को स्पष्ट करने का उद्देश्य रखता है, जिसमें इसे लोगों की दैनंदिन संलग्नताओं, इसकी प्रकृति, इसके अवस्थान, तथा ग्रामीण-शहरी दक्षिणी परिक्षेत्रों में और उनके पार इसके उद्भव के समय और कारणों के संदर्भ में विश्लेषित किया जाता है। यह अध्ययन अनुभवजन्य आधार पर उन मुख्यधारा, प्रभुत्वशाली संकल्पनाओं को समस्याग्रस्त ठहराता है, जो तब उत्तर-केंद्रित नामकरण-प्रणालियों का पुनरुत्पादन करती हैं जब एक से अधिक नामित-भाषाएँ और नामित-माध्यम सक्रिय होते हैं, और जो समझ के जालों अर्थात् webs-of-understandings से संबंधित हैं। यह 'भाषा' को समझने के लिए एक (अन्य) 'मेटा-भाषा' भी प्रस्तावित करता है।

Marathi abstract

या संशोधन-पत्रात सादर केलेला अभ्यास दोन ज्ञानमीमांसात्मक समूहांच्या अंतर्संबंधांशी सुसंगत आहे. हे समूह एका बाजूला वसाहतवादमूक्त, वैश्विक दक्षिण तसेच स्वदेशी चिंतनप्रवाहांना एकत्र आणतात, तर दुसऱ्या बाजूला ते दृष्टिकोन समाविष्ट करतात जे सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक, संवादात्मक, एकात्मिक तसेच नाट्यशास्त्रीय 'साधारणीकरण' परिप्रेक्ष्यांच्या अंतर्संयोजनातून उद्भवतात. यांच्याच एकत्रीकरणातून Second Wave of Southern Perspectives (SWaSP) ही रूपरेषा निर्माण होते. भारतामधील राजस्थानच्या ग्रामीण भागात आणि महाराष्ट्रातील शहरी केंद्रांमध्ये तीन दशकांच्या कालावधीत दोन टप्प्यांमध्ये निर्माण झालेल्या लोकलेखात्मक सामग्रीचा, स्वीडनमधील Örebro University येथे राबविण्यात आलेल्या Gender Talk Gender Spaces (GTGS) या प्रकल्पांतर्गत, विश्लेषणात्मक वापर करण्यात आला आहे. दैनंदिन जीवनातील विविध क्षेत्रांमध्ये, कोणत्याही कृत्रिम नियंत्रणाशिवाय म्हणजेच 'In the wild' म्हणून निर्देशित प्राथमिक माहिती, नैसर्गिक संदर्भांमध्ये, कमीतकमी हस्तक्षेपासह, संदर्भाला अनुसरून आणि व्याख्यात्मक संशोधन पद्धती म्हणजेच 'Naturalistic Inquiry' च्या माध्यमातून संकलित करण्यात आली आहे आणि तिचा अभ्यास करण्यात आला आहे. या प्रकारे, औपचारिक संस्थात्मक स्थळांच्या आत आणि बाहेर तसेच त्यापलीकडे पसरलेल्या दैनंदिन जीवनक्षेत्रांमधील साध्या दैनंदिन सामाजिक व्यवहारांचा—ज्यात समकालीन आभासी व्यासपीठ आणि लिखित (अन)औपचारिक दस्तावेजांचाही समावेश आहे—विश्लेषणात्मक विचार केला जातो. अनुभवावर आधारित समृद्ध अशा विश्लेषणाच्या माध्यमातून, हा अभ्यास 'भाषा' या गोष्टीचे स्पष्टीकरण करण्याचा प्रयत्न करतो, ज्यामध्ये लोकांच्या दैनंदिन व्यवहारांमध्ये तिची गुंतवणूक, तिचे स्वरूप, तिचे स्थान, तसेच ग्रामीण-शहरी दक्षिणी परिक्षेत्रांमध्ये आणि त्यापलीकडे तिच्या उदयाचा काळ आणि कारणे यांचा संदर्भ घेऊन विश्लेषण केले जाते. हा अभ्यास अनुभवसिद्ध पद्धतीने त्या मुख्यप्रवाहातील, प्रभुत्वशाली संकल्पनांना प्रश्नांकित करतो, ज्या webs-of-understandings शी संबंधित आहेत आणि ज्या उत्तर-केंद्रित नामकरण प्रणालींचे पुनरुत्पादन करतात जेव्हा एकापेक्षा अधिक नामांकित-भाषा आणि नामांकित-माध्यम सक्रीय असतात. तसेच, 'भाषा' समजून घेण्यासाठी हा अभ्यास एक (इतर) 'meta-language' देखील प्रस्तावित करतो.

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Transliteration	Translation	Transliteration	Translation
• **bhamashah** card • mul niwas • jati praman patra • janma praman patra • *pen* card • pani-bijli ke bill • online form • money transfer • *emi* • colour printout.	• **Bhamashah** card • Bonafide certificate • Cast certificate • Birth certificate • *PAN* card • Water-Electricity bill • Online form • Money transfer • *EMI* • Colour printout.	• online loan *emi* • mobile/**d.t.h** recharge • photo copy • *lemination* • web design • **police** satyapan • printout • online jamabandi • *insorence* • online *result*	• Online loan *EMI* • Mobile/**D.T.H** recharge • Photo copy • *Lamination* • Web design • **Police** verification • printout • Online land records • *Insurance* • Online *result*
(Contact person's name)		(telephone symbol) 1234567890	

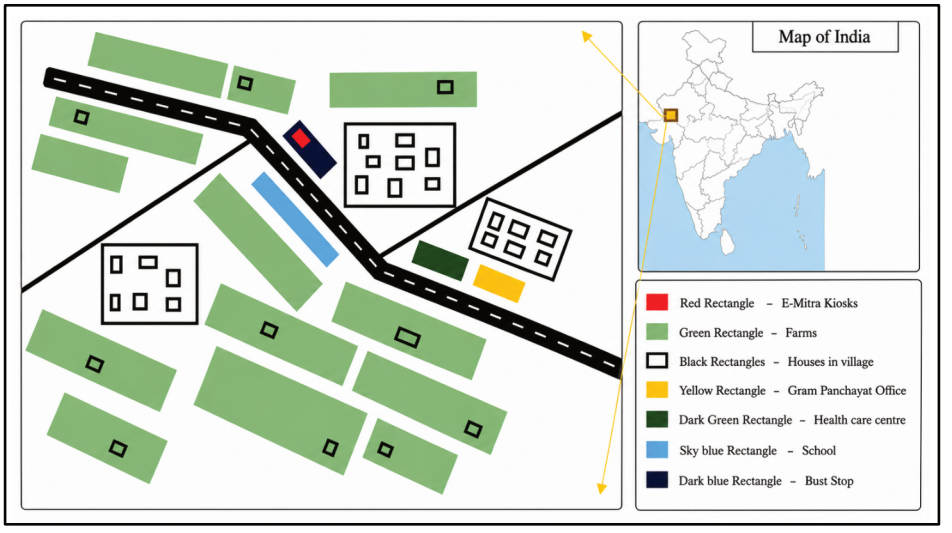
Figure 1: E-mitra poster at a village bus stop in Rajasthan, and transliterated and translated representations

Transcription key for figures 1, 2, and 4:
Shaded - English terms in Latin script (including Arabic numerals, symbols)
Abcd - English terms in Devanagari script
Abcd - Hindi terms in Devanagari script
Abcd - *Hindi terms in Latin script*
Abcd - **Proper nouns and abbreviations, symbols and terms that are not specific to a named-language written in Latin**
Abcd - **Proper nouns and abbreviations, symbols and terms that are not specific to a named-language written in Devanagari**
Abcd - Proper nouns and abbreviations, symbols and terms not specific to a named language written in Latin and with different pronunciations
Abcd - *Proper nouns and abbreviations, symbols and terms not specific to a named language written in Devanagri and with different pronunciations*
x#x#x - Unclear text
[redacted] - Blacked out text for ethical reasons

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ON THE BANALNESS OF NORMAL-LANGUAGING

Figure 1 displays information, presented in two columns, regarding ई-मित्र (e-mitra/e-friend)[2], a digital platform initiated by the Government of Rajasthan in 2004. ई-मित्र aims to provide citizens with various digital services. The affordances of mobile apps, websites, and SMS appear to be beyond the reach of many inhabitants, not least in rural spaces of pre-pandemic Rajasthan. In addition to not having access to digital devices and/or being familiar with digital platforms generally, infrastructure concerns like electricity supply, Internet connection and bandwidth constitute challenges for peoples' direct engagement with digital tasks that include arranging for various official certificates, money transfers, color printouts, etc. ई-मित्र kiosks (map 1), where posters like the one represented in figure 1 are displayed (see also figure 6), play a significant mediating role in such rural settings. Small-scale entrepreneurs, also called ई-मित्र, function as contemporary digital scribes. They provide one-point solutions in villages, facilitating inhabitants' engagement with tasks through their services (see empirical section below).[3]



Map 1: Map of fieldwork site in rural Rajasthan

Furthermore, figure 1 represents what we have previously discussed as 'normal-languaging', i.e., the banal ways in which the majority of humans on the planet communicate or 'do language'. As a meaning-making inscription, the poster constitutes a notational space that highlights use of terms in the named-language Hindi, in the named-script Devanagari (patra/letter, pani-bijli/water-electricity), 'chained' with terms in the named-language English that have been transliterated into Devanagari (online loan, photocopy, color printout), entangled with symbols (a telephone at the lower right-hand corner) chained with European Arabic numerals. Such chaining illustrates the fluid nature of languaging or 'ways-of-being-with-words'. Transliteration of English word items into Devanagari (photocopy) illustrates the seamless nature of banal written-languaging, including official nomenclature that draws upon historically framed proper nouns (Bhamashah[4], PAN[5] Card), words that are commonplace in these settings (money order), abbreviations (EMI), etc. In the lives of rural languagers, i.e., language-users, such terms do not belong to specific named-languages. It is for heuristic purposes that we, the researchers, transliterate and translate them here, not least to unpack the poster for languagers (our readers), who are either not acquainted with the named-language/script Hindi/Devanagari or not used to noticing such layered meaning-making. Such

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languaging fluidity emerges both because of the communication repertoires of governmental parlance, technological terminologies, as well as people's social lives in these rural communities.

Another relevant issue for present purposes concerns the non-recognition of the named-language English as part of these languagers communicative repertoires by society at large (and in the scholarship). While English is an aspirational language in this, other rural and urban spaces of the Indian nation-state, and English education has been offered in many schools since colonial times, all children are tasked to study it from the primary grades onwards. While the perceived communication repertoires of these rural languagers include the named-languages Marwari and Hindi, English can be included, given what can be gleaned from ई-मित्र posters (figures 1, 6). The relevance of both the deployment of and the distributed experiences with named-languages across such rural settings (see also empirical section below) is related to how people learn to navigate tasks where such semiotic resources are deployed. Pertinent questions here include how villagers navigate tasks related to e-mitra when they are seen as being unacquainted with English. Or, for that matter, not acknowledged as knowing how to read *or* write any of the named-languages used in rural spaces.

Languaging, as we argue through the presentation of other empirical examples later in the paper and based on sociocultural, dialogical, integrational, sadharanikaran, activity perspectives, needs to be rescued from the clutches of lingering hegemonic universalism and disciplinary boundaries in the scholarship. Situated-distributed dimensions of languaging have important repercussions on issues of people's positionalities, and languagers learning of languages as a salient feature of everyday life (inside *and* outside classrooms). It is an integral part of what Tim Ingold calls 'humaning', a dimension of people's embeddedness-related participation in social practices. The salient point is that membership in activities wherein different named-languages and named-modalities are deployed is contingent upon the situated-distributed nature of people's experiences, rather than language expertise individually.

This empirically-driven, theoretically-framed study presents an analysis of mundane languaging as a dimension of social practices from across rural-urban spaces, inside and outside institutions in the territories of two states of India: Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The intent is to illustrate the banal ways in which individuals and communities perform language and the mundane nature of language itself embedded in such performativity. The aim of illuminating the thing we call language through empirical explorations showcases people's languaging in terms of its nature, where it resides, when and why it emerges in and across rural-urban timespaces. These explorations trouble mainstream hegemonic conceptualizations in the language sciences related to webs-of-understandings that reproduce a problematic 'metalanguage' when more than one named-language and named-modality are deployed, and when rural and urban spaces are focused upon. The next section points to some relevant previous scholarship and our theoretical alignments. The section that follows introduces the two settings of our n/ethnographic engagement against the backdrop of declared-perceived-practiced language policies. The analysis presented in the section thereafter augments the introductory illustration above, and the paper concludes with an overarching discussion.

SITUATING ISSUES OF LANGUAGING FROM SOUTHERN FRAMINGS

Going beyond hegemonic framings in the language scholarship that continue to explicitly classify languagers (based on the naming of and the quantification of languagers language knowledge in terms of a metalanguage that includes hyphenated and numerical terms like mono/bi/multi-lingual, first/second/third language, etc.), frontline scholarship in the language sciences troubles the very naming of human meaning-making in terms of language labels. This multipronged frontline often draws from decolonial, southern epistemologies and tends to point to people's meaning-making and developmental trajectories embedded in their *interactions* (even though these are often presented as people's accounts or

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perceptions of interactions), how people fit into larger systems of cultural meanings and practices, issues of language reproduction and transformation across time, etc. Despite being in the margins of the language sciences, such frontlines represent onto-epistemological shifts that call for a radically different metalanguage, i.e., nomenclature shifts and terminological plurality that is relevant for the increased perceived and real human mobilities, particularly in northern settings. While the 21st-century has seen an emergence of neologisms in the north-centric scholarship (like trans-languaging/lingualism) particularly in the domain of education that encourage teachers and policy makers in northern settings to accept pupils bi/multilingualism, the scholarship from outside educational settings in northern territories that draws on and contributes to this nomenclature pluralism has focused specifically upon urban spaces (for instance, market settings where languaging is explored in situ offering terms like metrolingualism). Such neologisms notwithstanding, there continues to be a paucity of focus on the nature of languagers languaging in mundane settings of both rural and urban spaces in northern settings generally and in southern territories specifically. There is also a conspicuous lack of terminological contributions that emerge from southern scholars and territories that constitute rich sociocultural-historical contexts. This points to a heightened need to explore normal-languaging from southern territories where multilingualism has long been recognized as people's 'parent tongue' with the intent to contribute to the experienced after-effects of recent migration waves in northern territories generally and the language sciences frontlines specifically. While north-centric scholars work on migrant communities in northern settings envisages the majority societal language as a second, additional, or foreign language, such work is primarily attended to for integration purposes of displaced, mobility-marked people or migrants. Here, languages of instruction, rather than the dynamic communicative repertoires engaged with or mundane languaging inside *and* outside schools, continue to constitute a hegemonic dimension of inquiry. In addition, this scholarship tends to be marked, explicitly and implicitly, by a neoliberal individualistic agenda. Against this overarching snapshot, socially, culturally, geographically, and linguistically rich geopolitical spaces of southern settings like India constitute important exploratory sites that can further our understandings related to the nature of normal-languaging, and languagers meaning-making.

While migration in and across northern spaces is, in the educational scholarship, primarily studied in terms of the language socialization of mobility-marked groups, Indian spaces (similar to the geographies of many southern territories) are marked by internal, seasonal, rural to urban migration patterns, including the urban to rural displacements created in the wake of the 2020 pandemic. Beyond issues of mobility, languaging constitutes a dimension of people's socio-political-economic circumstances, which is salient in how language gets perceived and enacted in and across (non)institutional and rural and urban contexts. The linkages of named-languages to named-scripts also play an important role in linguistically diverse spaces. While contemporary studies that focus on oral-script associations from sociocultural, historical, literature, and language policy perspectives exist, these pay little attention to the banalness of everyday communication in people's lives.

It is these types of lacunas that the present theoretically-framed, empirical paper aims to contribute to. Exploring languaging in this broad sense circumvents the existing metalanguage that builds on mainstream theoretical tenets, i.e., how languaging in the (mainstream) scholarship itself contributes to a single grand narrative. Building upon an iteration of southern perspectives, and at the confluence of two clusters of analytical framings that constitute a *Second Wave of Southern Perspectives* (SWaSP), importantly enables a *global-centric* framing that transcends both north- and south-centrism. These clusters go under the umbrella terms sociocultural, dialogical, integrational, sadharanikaran, perspectives[6] and de/anti/postcolonial, southern framings[7], and encompass theories related to communication, learning, and knowledge hegemonies. Humans are, from a SWaSP framing, viewed as members of specific knowledge/able communities, whose skills,

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orientations, and practices enable participation in social life. While language socialization can be a highly formalized activity that focuses on specific kinds of learning, it is an omnipresent dimension of everyday life both inside and outside institutional settings.

Instead of using alignments to framework(s) that scholars are most familiar with or have been socialized into in their academic trajectories, SWaSP framings resonate with broader democratic epistemic agendas that are unfolding. SWaSP specifically transcends universalizing hegemonic stances of mainstream scholarship and contributes to multiversalizing theoretical-methodological framings. This constitutes a dimension of epistemological ethics. Recognizing the boundary-marking nature of all languaging, including scholars' languaging, a southern multilingual *mobile gaze* here builds on *ideas* rather than *places of articulation*. By recognizing human mobility, including digitalization, as significant dimensions of contemporary meaning-making, SWaSP highlights the complex diversities of timespaces. It embraces complexities.

Disturbing the hegemonic naturalized metalanguage and its assumptions regarding the nature of language and socialization by engaging with empirical data wherein scholars gaze as well as their languaging experiences enable deepened participation constitutes a basic ethical tenet. Thus, being able to understand the communicative repertoires of humans and collectives, rather than approaching the multilayered complexities of languaging through translators, assistants, including what subjects report about their languaging in a language that the scholar is conversant in, rather than what people are comfortable in, is deemed significant. Here, our own experiences of the languaging repertoires in the settings that we explore, where multiple spoken and written languages are engaged with, are salient. Language in a SWaSP gaze constitutes people's most fundamental tool that mediates (rather than mirrors) human reality. Furthermore, juxtaposing multilayered data from across timespaces constitutes a critical non-programmatic framing that enables explorations of the social life of banal normal-languaging. Such assumptions are entangled and important for scholarly engagement that enables reinvigorating the language sciences broadly.

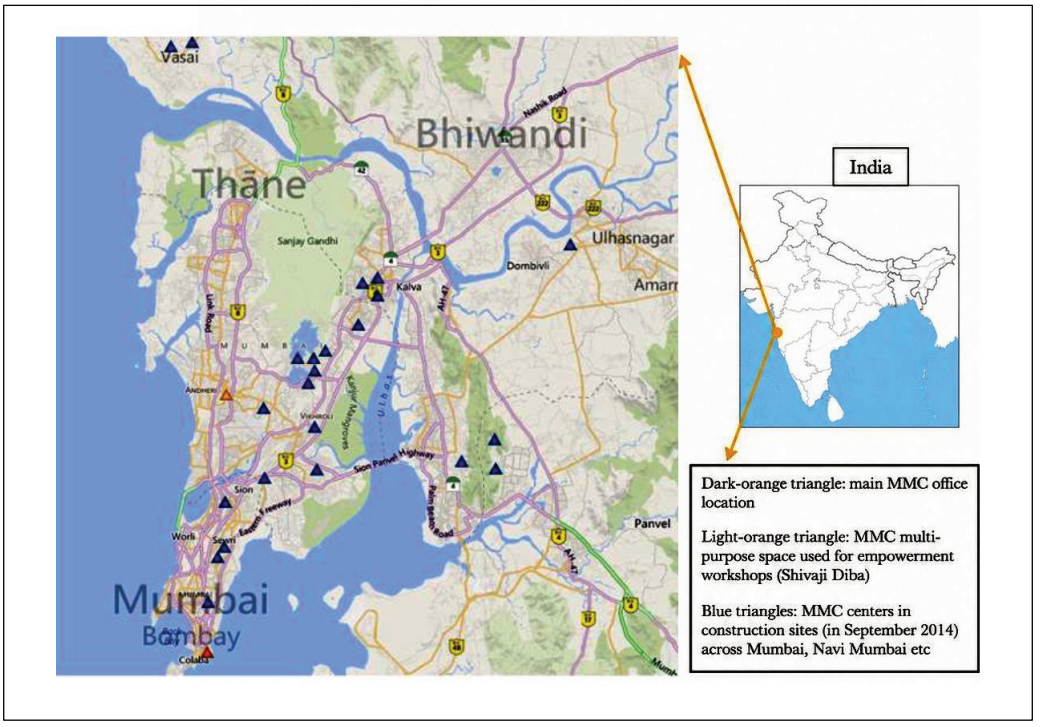
Acknowledging hegemonies of the knowledge production enterprise and their circulations globally, including the existence of hegemonic stances in spaces irrespective of their coloniality, a SWaSP framing is invested in mainstream scholarship with the intent to create a solidarity-based global-centric epistemology that is not linear, not universal, and neither north- nor south-centric. In doing this, it builds on and pushes the scholarly agendas of what can be understood as a *first wave* of southern perspectives that have highlighted the continuing colonial-order-of-things in terms of a natural-order-of-things. Interested in complexities instead of authenticities and homogenous ontologies, SWaSP also cultivates a problematizing gaze from the confluence of an inter-/multi-disciplinary, albeit *undisciplinary,* stance that situates humans in entangled ecologies with tools (material and intellectual) and nature (i.e., non-humans), thus contributing to a non-binary *meshwork* beyond language-nonlanguage, mind-body, individual-group, etc. It attempts to cultivate understandings regarding the many-ways-with-words, the plurality of ways-of-seeing, -knowing, and -being as dimensions of multiversal knowledge-construction. Troubling hegemonic colonial gazing that exists in the present everywhere, rather than as a product of the past of colonized places, SWaSP creates possibilities to (re)centre the communicative and democratic agendas of language. It significantly expands colonial hegemonies by attending to marginalizations marked by class, functionality, gender, sexuality, race, etc., and thereby confronts ableist, colonial, gendered, racist, etc. tendencies. The five key SWaSP themes that have been explicated in this section include *languaging, entanglements of theories* and *methodologies, timespaces, ethics,* and *positionalities* (both scholars' positionalities and those they focus upon). These frame the analysis of the n/ethnographic datasets from across physical, virtual, rural, urban, institutional, and (in)formal spaces that we now turn our attention to.

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INTRODUCING THE SETTINGS, POLICIES AND DATASETS

Data are drawn from the multi-sited project Gender Talk Gender Spaces (GTGS) where issues of communication and identity have been explored inside and outside three Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) situated in rural and urban settings in India. The datasets we engage with include audio and video documentation, fieldnotes, pictures, casual conversations, case studies, diaries, official documents, etc., from an n/ethnographic engagement in people's everyday lives. These contribute to a *Naturalistic Inquiry*.

SuSumer Foundation and Prabha Foundation were engaged in providing after-school English education in 'government school' premises in rural Rajasthan (see map 1), where fieldwork was initiated in 2017[8]. In these 'Hindi medium' schools, Hindi is the language of instruction, and English is taught as a language subject from class 1[9]. These NGO foundations recruit young college graduates (from across the subcontinent of India) who are seen as experienced users of the named-languages English, Hindi, and other state languages; none of them are, however, users of the primary named-language in Rajasthan, Marwari[10].



Map 2: Fieldwork site in Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Maharashtra

The third NGO, MMC[11] provides a range of services for migrant construction laborers, their families, and children in the state capital of Maharashtra, the megacity of Mumbai. Fieldwork was conducted in its dispersed locations (see map 2)[12] across two phases: 1991-93 and 2012-14. MMC was established at the end of the 1960s in three urban settings across India to provide nutrition, health, and safety for mobility-marked families and their children who spend their lives on construction sites. In Mumbai, it operates day-care and educational centres on 25-30 construction sites

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annually. Here, trained early childhood care-givers, teachers, and professional staff, including volunteers, deliver numerous services for children (from birth to adolescence) and their families.

Map 2 indicates MMC centres in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), which consists of the megacity and its satellite townships. Densely populated, the MMR region is 1000 times bigger than a village in Rajasthan, our second field-site which is represented in map 1. MMR region, commonly known as the economic capital of India, draws people from across the country, including our rural fieldwork site situated 850 km away[13].

Declared language policies in India, decreed by its constitution, not only define official languages for administrative purposes but, in parallel, provide recognition for language diversity by grouping languages in (non)mainstream vocabularies: official languages, scheduled languages, non-scheduled languages, classical languages, state official languages, minority languages, etc.

The gigantic national census in India, conducted every 10 years, builds on *perceived* policies, i.e., language-use as *reported by* 1.3 billion Indian citizens. The latest available census[14] from 2011 reported the use of 270 mother tongues grouped under 121 languages divided into 22 scheduled languages and 99 non-scheduled languages. 96.71 percent of the population is reported as using at least one of the scheduled languages as their mother tongue. The vast language diversity is *under*-reported in such accounting: 19569 mother tongues recorded in the 2011 census were treated as raw returns and were included only if at least 10,000 people reported using a mother tongue. Thus, these 19569 mother tongues morphed into 270, grouped under 121 scheduled and non-scheduled languages based on their affiliations. This rationale gives Hindi the position of the most widely used named-language in India, with over 55 mother tongues included in it; its hegemonic status across several states (in northern India), also gives it, together with English, the status of an official language for the Government of India.

The nomenclature and criteria deployed for grouping languages constitute a baseline for hierarchising the *practiced* language policies across Indian spaces. While scheduled languages occupy the primary spaces of written-languaging in administration, institutions, literary, media, and educational spaces, other named-languages, labelled as mother tongue, regional or local-language, vernacular, oral-language, or dialect, have limited or no presence in administrative, institutional, literary, media spaces generally, and in the written modality specifically. These declared language policies create, as we will see, hierarchies that are out of sync with the practiced policies, i.e., languaging across rural and urban spaces.

While declared policies attempt to limit explicit named-languages and scripts for specific spaces, the Indian census data creates a meshwork since numbers of different categories and boundaries where languagers are boxed into labelled groups don't tally. In contrast, languagers' language in ways that transcend both established nomenclature and mythical boundaries. Thus, while the named-language Marwari, with 7.8 million users, is labelled mother tongue, it is officially affiliated to the scheduled language Hindi, and is practically non-existent in all formal spaces, including in the written modality. In contrast, English, a non-significant, non-scheduled language with merely 0.26 million users who claim it as their mother tongue across India, has the status of associate official language and is used across modalities in formal, institutional, and administrative spaces in our rural and urban fieldwork sites. The widespread use of mobile technologies in India has introduced English across settings in novel ways, and with the prosperous service sector relying on it, English has become an indispensable part of the communicative repertoires of people in (in)formal, official, and analogue-digital spaces. Its omnipresence has made it an aspirational language, encouraging parents to educate their children in 'English medium' schools. This constitutes a major change in the Indian education system, including its overall languaging as the next section illustrates[15].

A significant shift towards 'English medium private' schooling, where English is purportedly the language of instruction, has been established across rural and urban settings[16]. When parents cannot, for various reasons, access these sought-after schools for their children, they opt for either 'vernacular medium private' or 'vernacular

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medium government' schools. In Rajasthan, vernacular medium government and private schools have Hindi, Sanskrit, or Urdu instructional profiles, with Hindi medium schools constituting the majority[17].

These trends and shifts are entangled with ideas about class mobility and livelihood opportunities, where English is seen as enabling. Issues of disparity and access have led to the growth of NGOs like SuSumer and Prabha, whose primary intent is to support the English language development of students enrolled in vernacular medium schools, through after-school provision. Our third NGO, MMCs wide-ranging support for migrant construction workers in urban settings include after-school support for children whose experiences of multiple languages vary. Although provision of education is primarily conducted in (Mumbaiya) Hindi and Marathi, the MMC staff deploy other named-languages depending on their trajectories of migration, education, and linguistic experiences. It is to such complexities that we shift our gaze now.

EVERYDAY LIFE INSIDE, OUTSIDE, AND ACROSS RURAL-URBAN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

In this section, we illustrate and discuss how ways-of-being-with-words play out in everyday settings *outside* formal schools across rural and urban arenas before shifting attention to languaging and socialization *inside* rural school settings.

15-year-old Kanika is a class 10 student in a Rajasthan village 'Hindi medium government' school. She is the first member of her family to have reached the senior secondary school level and is one of 30 students in a new language training program. Kanika's father, a construction worker and the sole breadwinner of the family of six, died a few days before she joined the training programme. While her elder sister had been married off, at that time her family comprised of her mother (a housewife who had never attended school) and two younger brothers aged 10 and 12.

After her father's death, Kanika became the pillar of her low-income family. She started working at her uncle's vegetable shop nearby and in parallel continued to attend school while shouldering responsibilities for a large part of the household work. Soon afterwards, her uncle decided that Kanika should be sent to another relative in the state of Gujarat to learn tailoring. Realizing that leaving the village would halt her education and that such a move would destine her future as a domestic maid before being married off, Kanika rejected the proposition. Her infuriated uncle refused to share his business profit with Kanika's family, and she was forced to find another part-time job in the village. In rural settings of Rajasthan, where women are neither expected to, nor allowed to work outside their homes, Kanika had no option but to look for work. She soon started working in a grocery shop as a helper. She is the only unmarried female in the village who is gainfully employed and is open about the fact that she would never even consider doing such work if her father was alive or she had an elder brother.

Kanika regularly visits the village *Panchayat* (local government) office and the bank to take care of formal tasks that include getting her father's death certificate, removing his name from formal identity cards (like the ration card), applying for governmental schemes where her mother can become a beneficiary, applying for scholarship programs, withdrawing money from the bank, etc. Every written document related to these tasks is in Hindi and/or English. Kanuka, though fluent in Hindi and with some knowledge of English, initially found it difficult to handle these tasks independently. She regularly sought the assistance of officials, who generally guided her in Marwari and occasionally in Hindi. In due course, Kanika started handling these tasks independently. She rarely approached the e-mitra since she could not afford its services. She has established a reputation for herself as an expert, i.e., as someone who knows how to fill different bank and application forms for different purposes. Many people, including her uncle, request her to accompany them to the bank or Panchayat office or to help them obtain different documents. Kanika is keen to handle the computer and wants to improve her English so that she can find a better job or become an entrepreneur like an e-mitra.

(All personal names used are pseudonyms.)

Vignette 1: Language repertoires of young rural students

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As a child, 25-year-old Shabnam dreamed of becoming a lawyer. Born in the mid-1990s at a construction site in the suburbs of Mumbai, she dropped out of school after completing class 7 to take care of the household when her father passed away. It is not uncommon for children to drop out of school at this stage generally. Her mother and older brother were gainfully employed. After turning 16, Shabnam started working at a construction site where she heard about MMCs *Bal Palika* (Child Carer) teacher Training (BPT) programme for women living on construction sites. She signed up for the course after convincing her mother and brother that her training would not interfere with her daily household chores. Waking up early she cooked, cleaned, and completed all her household work before leaving for the training classes. Shabnam's challenges were compounded since her knowledge of reading and writing in Urdu in the Nastaliq script conflicted with the Hindi in the Devanagari script used at the BPT training course.

Shabnam has a patient nature and the MMC trainers felt that she had a flair for interacting with children. After completing her training, she worked as a pre-school teacher for four years at different MMC centres. Encouraged by her MMC mentors, Shabnam in parallel completed her high school education (class 12) and then enrolled and graduated from Mumbai University. She then became part of a new MMC group – the *Bal Palika* trainers – that conduct training sessions similar to BPT, the one she attended when she was 16. Shabnam aspires to make efficient use of technology to raise the quality of the training sessions she conducts. She explores web media for video films to support her training sessions and has recently learnt to use e-mail communication.

Shabnam was part of MMCs first batch of community trainees and is seen as a role-model for other young women who aspire to experience life outside construction sites. She now contributes towards the family income and assists young women from her class background to become independent.

Vignette 2: Shabnam: profile of an MMC worker

Languaging (outside institutions) across rural-urban settings

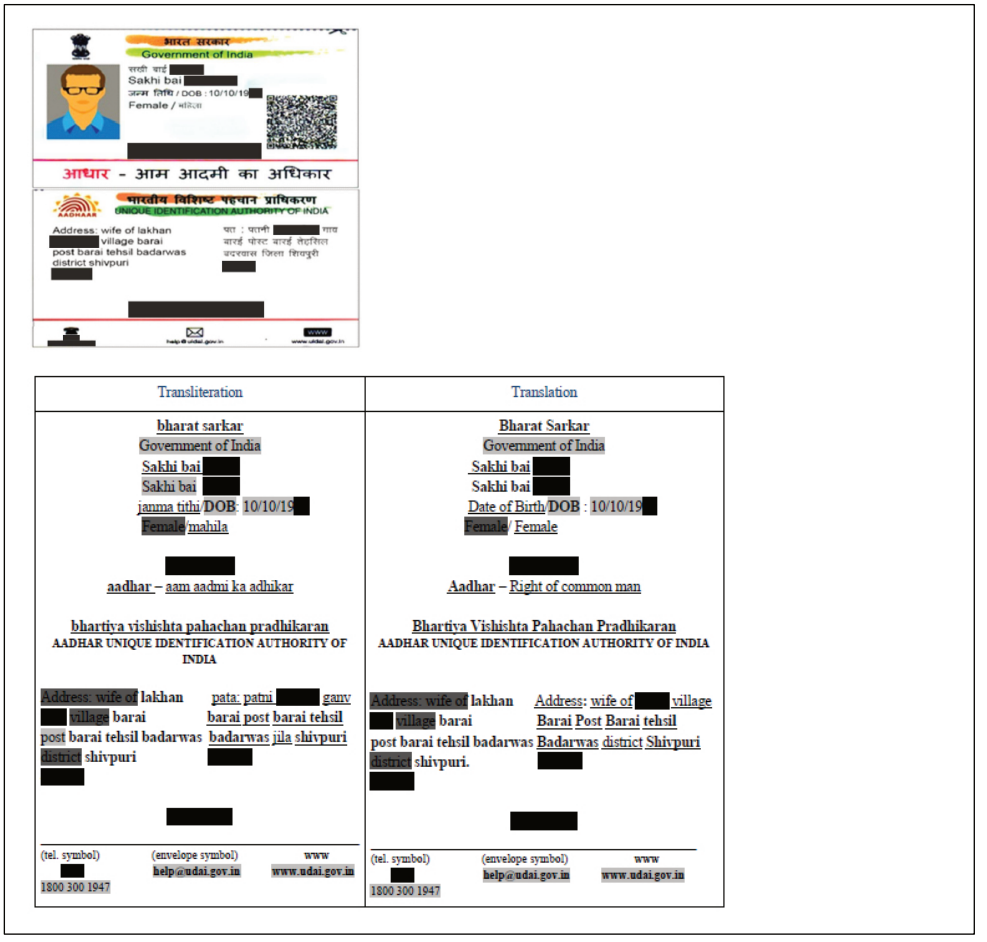
Vignettes 1 and 2 highlight the precarious lives that women like Kanika and Shabnam lead within and across rural and urban settings that they call home. The women working at MMC have left behind materially impoverished rural settings from across different parts of the Indian subcontinent, either as adults or during their childhood. Their migration to Mumbai relates to hopes of upward mobility. Mass-media and MMC accounts, however, indicate that these women often find their status in urban settings further exacerbated by urban poverty, limited educational opportunities, precarity across urban-rural communities, and invisibility in urban governmental support networks[18] (see vignette 1).

Three 20, 32, and 35-year-old women, like Shabnam (vignette 2), had moved from construction sites and had graduated from MMCs *Bal Palika* (Child Carer) teacher Training (BPT) course. They were deputed in 2008 to a year-long leadership program at another NGO. This leadership course spurred them to focus on financial issues and self-help strategies. The trio established new opportunities for themselves and 50 other MMC staff with similar life trajectories. The small self-help initiative subsequently grew into a formal group, the *Sakhi* (female friend) Group, (figure 3). Its explicit aim was to enable MMC women staff, like Shabnam, to become financially independent. Importantly, the support platform created by the Sakhi Group enables women working at MMC to meet regularly during office hours (figure 3).

One of the Sakhi Group leaders identified ways to acquire the Government of India *Aadhar* (foundation) card[19] (figure 2). Obtaining an Aadhar card was a key step that enabled opening personal bank accounts, something that had been outside their reach previously. Similar to the e-mitra analysis (figure 1), a cursory gaze indicates that multiple semiotic resources in more than one named-language and more than one script, pictures, numerals, a QR code, and other symbols are displayed on this formal ID document.

Given that most Sakhi Group members lead challenging private and working lives (as vignette 2 & figure 4 illustrate), networking and the bottom-up generation of opportunities for their *mutual* empowerment become key scaffolding opportunities in general, including expanding their languaging repertoires. The

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Transliteration	Translation
bharat sarkar Government of India Sakhi bai Sakhi bai janma tithi/DOB: 10/10/19 Female/mahila aadhar – aam aadmi ka adhikar bhartiya vishishta pahachan pradhikaran AADHAR UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY OF INDIA Address: wife of lakhan village barai post barai tehsil badarwas district shivpuri pata: patni ganv barai post barai tehsil badarwas jila shivpuri (tel. symbol) 1800 300 1947 (envelope symbol) help@udai.gov.in www www.udai.gov.in	Bharat Sarkar Government of India Sakhi bai Sakhi bai Date of Birth/DOB : 10/10/19 Female/ Female Aadhar – Right of common man Bhartiya Vishishta Pahachan Pradhikaran AADHAR UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY OF INDIA Address: wife of lakhan village barai post barai tehsil badarwas district shivpuri. Address: wife of village Barai Post Barai tehsil Badarwas district Shivpuri (tel. symbol) 1800 300 1947 (envelope symbol) help@udai.gov.in www www.udai.gov.in

Figure 2: An important identity proof: Aadhar card (Transcription key in figure 1)[20]

expansion of languaging at MMC and in the Sakhi platform constitutes an important dimension of learning for its members, as these communication and literacy activities are dramatically different from what they have engaged in as part of their labor at construction sites. Figure 4 illustrates a Sakhi member, Seema's, languaging outside MMC activities.[21] It also illuminates the chained entanglements of resources that constitute her written-languaging. 46-year-old Seema's daily schedules across two days illustrate the banal nature of a Sakhi member's life as well.

Seema's day, as gleaned from her diary entries, is dominated by household responsibilities that leave her with limited time for rest, personal recreation, or self-development. Her handwritten diary entry is organized in two columns: the left column illustrates periods, while the right column explicates tasks undertaken during specific times. While time is presented in English Arabic numerals with English terms written in the Latin script, entries in the right column display a chaining of Hindi and English terms written in Devanagari, and English terms written in Latin. Here, symbols (like +) and terms that belong to multiple named-languages (like chai & TV) can be noted. Unlike in mathematical languaging, the + in the diary perhaps illustrates both a differentiation and

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In April 2009, at a monthly meeting, the women became nostalgic and recalled their association and time spent with each other during their training period. They shared their experiences--including an incident when they collectively protected their friends from police harassment. They also decided to create a federation, which they named 'Sakhi', Hindi for close female friend. Although they were especially keen to help people in their communities open bank accounts (we had assisted all of them to open accounts the previous year) it proved to be very difficult because banks had tightened their rules, making it impossible for construction workers with no proof of their identity to open accounts. However, Sakhi continue to meet and its members are currently in the process of forming two self help groups. They want to start saving and, hopefully, start their own enterprises one day.

Sakhi's monthly discussions have also prompted us to become part of a network working on migrant workers' rights and issues and to seek funding from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust to conduct a detailed study on construction workers in the coming year. We hope that the study will throw light on how and what forms of identity construction workers and their families can obtain to access cheaper food grains, banking services and insurance schemes.

(accessed May 2020).

Figure 3: Formation of the Sakhi Group (MMC Annual report 2009-10)

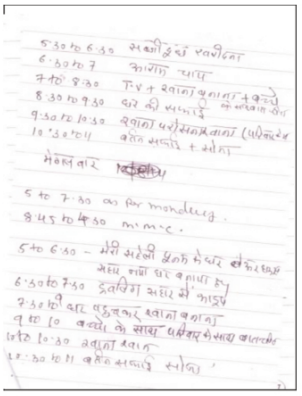
Handwritten daily diary	Transliteration	Translation
	5.30 to 6.30 sabji doodh kharidna	5.30 to 6.30 buy vegetables milk
	6.30 to 7 aaram **chai**	6.30 to 7 rest **chai**
	7 to 8.30 **T.v** + khana banana + bacche ke sath bathchit	7 to 8.30 **TV** + cook + chitchatting with kids
	8.30 to 9.30 ghar ki safai	8.30 to 9.30 house cleaning
	9.30 to 10.30 khana parosna khana (parivar ke sath	9.30 to 10.30 serve food eat (with family)
	10.30 to 11 bartan safai + sona	10.30 to 11 clean utensils + to sleep
	mangalwar x#x#x#	**Tuesday** x#x#x#
	5 to 7.30 as per **Monday**.	5 to 7.30 as per **Monday**.
	8.45 to 4.30 **m.m.c.**	8.45 to 4.30 **m.m.c.**
	5 to 6.30 - meri saheli **Poonam** ke ghar **ware house sahar** naya ghar banaya hai	5 to 6.30 - at my friend **Poonam's** house new house has been made **ware house Sahar**
	6.30 to 7.30 travelling **sahar** se **bhandup**	6.30 to 7.30 travelling **Sahar** to **Bhandup**
	7.30 to 9 ghar pahoonchkar khana banana	7.30 to 9 reach home and cook food
	9 to 10 bacchon ke saath parivar ke sath batchit	9 to 10 chitchatting with kids with family
	10 to 10.30 khana khana	10 to 10.30 eat food
	10.30 to 11 bartan safai sona	10.30 to 11 clean utensils sleep

Figure 4: Seema's daily diary (Transcription key in figure 1)

an association marking the women's multitasking lives. In other words, it differentiates one task from another, cooking + chit-chatting, while displaying their association with another task, watching TV. Furthermore, upper and lower lines in the notebook become structuring devices for writing in the Devanagari and Latin scripts. The chaining and association of different semiotic resources across named-languages and conventions here are similar to the banalness of normal-languaging illustrated in our earlier examples of the e-mitra poster (figure 1) and the Government of India Aadhar Card (figure 2).

The e-mitra entrepreneur functions as a mediator who facilitates services (see figures 1, 5) that deploy different technological and literacy tools across physical-virtual timespaces. This facilitating process is a dimension of extending people's expertise (or lack thereof) and constitutes aspects of banal socialization

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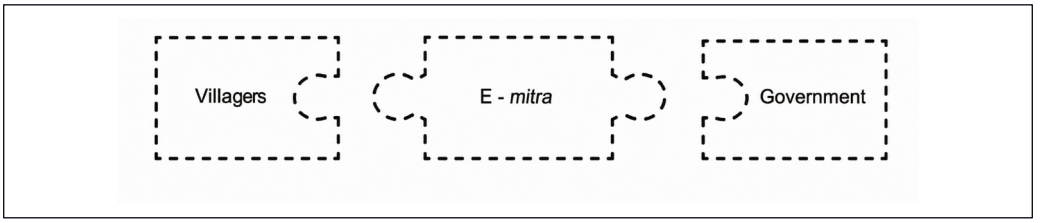


Figure 5. E-mitra as mediator

processes. Knowing who to approach to accomplish one's task constitutes an aspect of the banal nature of learning. Figures 5, 6, and 7 illustrate the entanglements of participants, timespaces, and sequential processes when a villager turns to e-mitra services to obtain specific governmental documents.

Governmental information regarding ई-मित्र, both in posters and digital portals, makes use of semiotic resources that include pictures and texts in different named-languages. Figure 6 illustrates web-based information material wherein a sari-clad, head-covered woman, called Chanda Devi, is shown holding a large envelope that signifies a certificate. Chanda Devi stands at a door opening, next to a wall where hand-painted e-mitra information is displayed in Hindi in the Devanagari script. The digital picture displays a setup similar to the e-mitra centres in the village. Printed text, in a beige-marked over-imposed box (re-sized at the right for access in figure 6), is made available in English in the Latin script. The text highlights the potential clients of e-mitra centres: villagers, particularly women, who are aware of digitalization but are digitally unsavvy.

Five inter-linked phases emerge in the analysis of the processes involved, including specificities of the languaging in play, when villagers use ई-मित्र-services (figure 7). During *Phase 1*, a villager approaches an e-mitra kiosk with the intent to take care of a task, like obtaining a bona fide certificate. They inform the e-mitra about their needs and receive information regarding the application process, support documents that need to be submitted, and relevant application forms. While this discussion takes place in oral Marwari, the written materials that the villager receives are either in standardised Hindi or standardised English.

Phase 2 involves filling out the forms that the villager has obtained. The e-mitra can support this work if the client cannot fill it out in Hindi or English themselves or with the support of family members or friends. The villager returns to the e-mitra (*Phase 3*) with the filled-in application form and the necessary supporting documents. After checking that everything is in order, the e-mitra proceeds to create a receipt in either printed Hindi and/or English for his services. This monetary transaction shifts the villagers' status to that of a formal applicant. *Phase 4* is initiated with the e-mitra logging on the governmental portal to transfer the information from the paper forms to the online form. He also scans and uploads the applicant's submitted documents to the digital system. In addition to the conversion of physical documents to digital ones, this phase involves obtaining a receipt and verification of the application by the concerned governmental department. After being checked, the application may be forwarded to another authority for further processing before the relevant certificate is issued. The applicant is alerted to each stage of the process through SMSs (application submission, verification, and certificate issuance) that are in the named-languages Hindi and/or English. The applicant returns to the e-mitra kiosk in what constitutes the final *Phase 5* of this activity-chain to receive their certificate (figure 7). Printed physical copies of the digital certificate issued by the government in standardised Hindi and/or standardised English are handed to the applicant by the e-mitra.

Figures 5, 6, and 7 explicate physical-digital entanglements and chained semiotic resources. While the physical and digital documents, including the services displayed in posters (figures 1, 6), can be ascribed to the named-languages Hindi and/or English, the discussion of the services and their delivery in the physical spaces of the e-mitra kiosk is carried out primarily in

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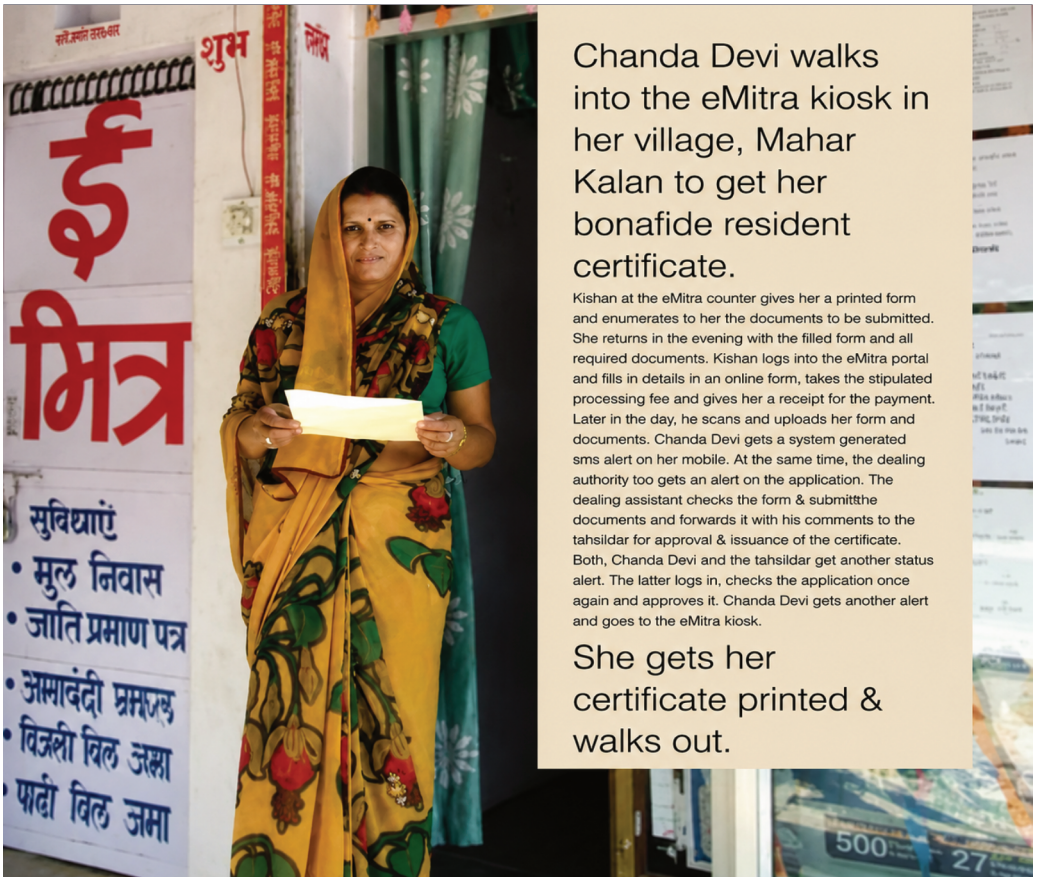


Figure 6. Digital illustration regarding access to services through e-mitra

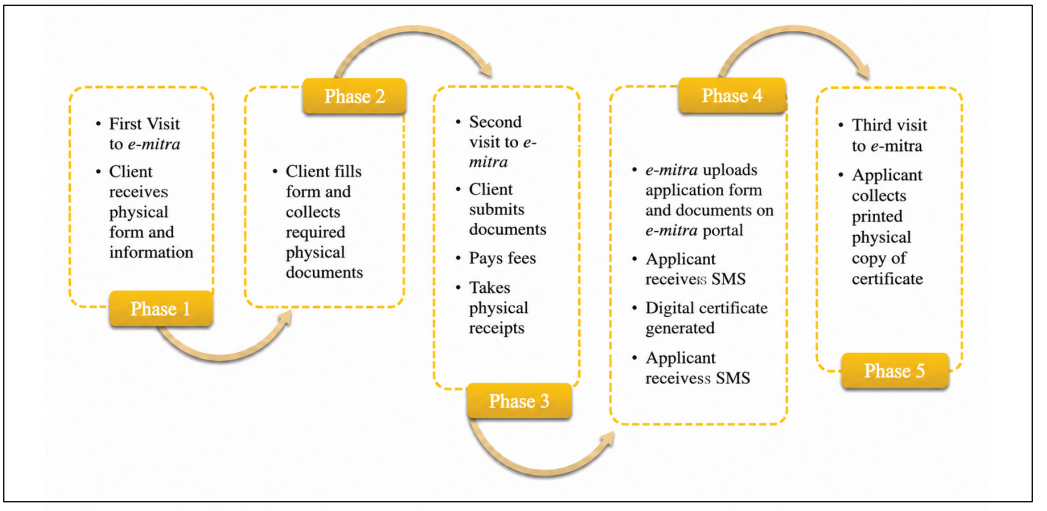


Figure 7: Chained and layered languaging across spaces: Processes of e-mitra services

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Marwari. Thus, while Marwari is erased in the written modality in both physical and digital spaces, it is audible in the oral modality in physical spaces. It constitutes a key resource for meaning-making in the processes involved in the villagers' access to governmental services that are mediated through the e-mitra. Here, the chaining of at least three named-languages in oral-written modalities across physical-digital spaces constitutes the banalness of normal-languaging.

The dynamic complex life trajectories and social contexts of females across urban and rural settings (see particularly vignettes 1, 2) display the nature of normal-languaging, and the organization of banal socialization across settings. We now shift our gaze from the banal nature of chaining that characterizes normal-languaging across urban and rural southern settings to the nature of languaging specifically in rural school settings. Here, the named-language Marwari, a key resource for meaning-making outside school settings, becomes *both* invisible and inaudible.

Languaging and learning in rural school sites

The ways-of-being-with-words inside rural school settings are explored in this empirical sub-section through a continuing focus on the banal nature of languaging and socialization. We first explore written-languaging inside institutional settings and note that this resembles the chained nature of normal-languaging we have seen so far. Unpacking the nature of English teaching-learning in institutional settings, however, indicates novel languaging.

The organization of school days

School policy documents display chaining of named-languages in ways that resemble the banalness of normal-languaging outside institutional settings (figures 1, 2, 6, 7). The organization of timespaces in rural schools (figure 8) indicates cyclically chained time slots assigned for different purposes. 11 time slots of a routine school day schedule are marked with English-Arabic numbers in the first column, I.No. (Index Number). The

School time-table

समय विभाग चक्र

क्र.सं.	कालांश	समय	समयावधि
1.	सूचना घंटी	प्रात: 8:00 बजे	–
2.	प्रार्थना सभा	8:05 से 8:35	30 मिनिट
3.	I	8:35 से 9:15	40 मिनिट
4.	II	9:15 से 9:55	40 मिनिट
5.	III	9:55 से 10:35	40 मिनिट
6.	IV	10:35 से 11:15	40 मिनिट
7.	मध्यावकाश	11:15 से 11:40	25 मिनिट
8.	V	11:40 से 12:20	40 मिनिट
9.	VI	12:20 से 1:00	40 मिनिट
10.	VII	1:00 से 1:35	35 मिनिट
11	VIII	1:35 से 2:10	35 मिनिट
			टन् टन् टन्

Transliteration

samay vibhag chakra

kr. san.	kalaansh	samay	samavavadhi
1.	suchna ghanti	pratah 8:00 baje	-
2.	prarthana sabha	8:05 se 8:35	30 minute
3.	I	8:35 se 9.15	40 minute
4.	II	9.15 se 9.55	40 minute
5.	III	9.55 se 10.35	40 minute
6.	IV	10.35 se 11.15	40 minute
7.	madhyavkash	11.15 se 11.40	25 minute
8.	V	11.40 se 12.20	40 minute
9.	VI	12.20 se 1:00	40 minute
10.	VII	1:00 se 1.35	35 minute
11.	VIII	1.35 se 2.10	35 minute
			tan tan tan

Translation

Time division cycle

I. No.	Period	Time	Time duration
1.	Notice bell	Morning 8:00 o'clock	-
2.	Praver Meet	8:05 to 8:35	30 Minute
3.	I	8:35 to 9.15	40 Minute
4.	II	9.15 to 9.55	40 Minute
5.	III	9.55 to 10.55	40 Minute
6.	IV	10.35 to 11.15	40 Minute
7.	Recess	11.15 to 11.40	25 Minute
8.	V	11.40 to 12.20	40 Minute
9.	VI	12.20 to 1:00	40 Minute
10.	VII	1:00 to 1.35	35 Minute
11.	VIII	1.35 to 2.10	35 Minute
			(Textual expression of sound of school bell)

Figure 8: Rural school time-table

Transcription key for Figure 8
abcd – Hindi terms in Devanagari script.
abcd – Terms written in Devanagari script but not associated with any named-language.

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bottom row displays a textual expression of a 'gong-sound', an instrument used previously as a bell in schools. While gongs have been replaced by digital systems, the 'tan-tan-tan' gong-sound is present textually in school time-tables, signifying both an Indian school bell and the school institution.

Two semiotic resources, Roman numbers and Hindi terms in Devanagari, are chained in the second column. These numbers and terms offer specific meaning potentials. For instance, the activity marked V does not start after period IV, but after the Recess (मध्यावकाश/madhyavkash). The school day does not commence with activity I, but with the notice bell (सुचना घंटी/suchna ghanti) that is followed by a prayer meeting (प्रार्थना सभा/parathna sabha). This means that numbers in themselves do not offer a linear fixed meaning. Their meaning potentials are embedded in the Hindi terms, which are chained with the social organization of what constitutes a school day.

Time durations, written in Arabic-English numbers, are chained with Hindi lexical terms in the third column. These connect different time-slots and indicate specific sessions of the school day (like morning in the third row). Like the languaging in the daily diaries (figure 4), making sense of the time-slots necessitates chaining resources across named-languages, here English-Arabic numbers, and Hindi terms written in Devanagari. While the deployment of named-languages has specific meaning-making functions inside and outside institutional learning spaces, teaching-learning is characterized by patterned boundary-marked languaging. Although chaining of named-languages is a hallmark of languaging both inside and outside institutions like schools, a specific type of languaging exists in teaching-learning spaces when English is the subject in focus.

Doing English teaching-learning inside classrooms

After-school English sessions in our rural dataset illuminate the nature of language teaching-learning inside classrooms. The mediating role of language in these sessions is explicated through macro (figure 9) and micro (figure 10) scale analysis. Both scales contribute to illuminating the nature and complexities of normal-languaging inside schools.

The focus of the teaching-learning here is on a story from an English textbook that an NGO-employed teacher uses. An overarching analysis of the *interactional order*, including the focus of the activity, the named-languages deployed, and the organization of tools and spaces engaged with during one session, presents six sequentially interconnected phases. These are illustrated in figure 9 with the duration of each phase presented within brackets.

During the *introductory phase*, the teacher discusses students' access to notebooks, records their attendance, and refers to other tasks in Hindi. She introduces the story of 'The Last Stone' as a task (कार्य/karya) and asks the students what the term means. Presenting some clues in Hindi, she writes the term task in the Latin script on the blackboard. A student provides a Hindi translation, and the teacher repeats the word and its Hindi meaning, while walking around the classroom distributing black-white photocopies of the English story. Printed in English in Latin, the pages include some pictures. Languaging during *Phase 1* takes place in oral Hindi with the use of single English words that are directly related to the story and the activity. This oral-languaging is interspersed with the teacher writing the title of the story and single words in English/Latin on the blackboard. Tools like the blackboard, chalk, and photocopies are used. During *Phase 2*, the teacher reads the story from her text-copy and the students listen, following the teacher's rendition in their texts using a pen/pencil or their gaze. The interactional order shifts when students are called upon to retell the story that the teacher has read aloud (*Phase 3*). Initially reluctant, and on the teacher's insistence, a student attempts to present the gist of the story in oral Hindi. The teacher encourages the students to present any part of the story that they have understood. Three more students present short ideas in Hindi. The teacher uses Hindi and some English terms when she talks to the students, while the students respond only in Hindi.

The longest phase in the instructional activity, *Phase 4*, sees the teacher translating the English story to Hindi, both word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence.

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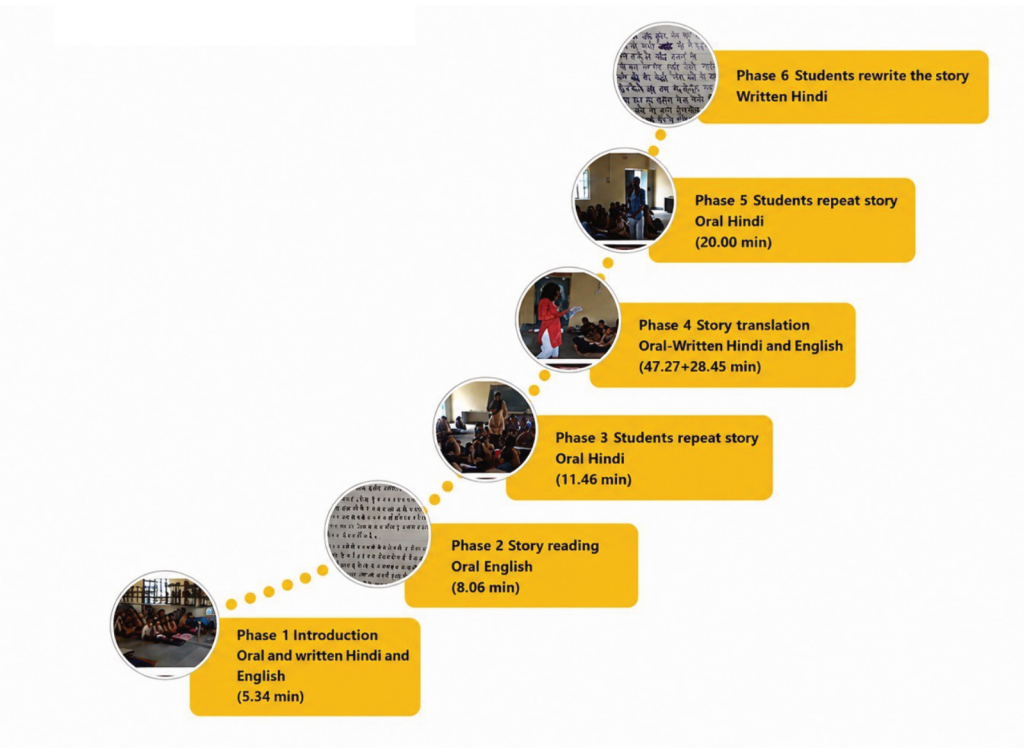


Figure 9: Activity-chaining in a classroom language learning session. Layered languaging

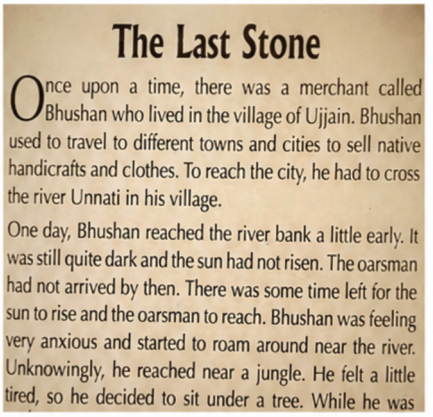
This translation work is interspersed with questions posed to the students in English and Hindi, wherein responses are elicited for the Hindi equivalent of English words. The teacher also writes some English words and their Hindi equivalents on the blackboard, felt (महसूस करना/mahasoos karna), tired (थकना/thakna), referring to these either with her gaze or through hand gestures.

Unlike *Phase 3*, many students during *Phase 5* appear eager and respond to the teacher's invitations at length. While some retell the entire storyline from memory and others refer to their photocopies, all presentations are in oral Hindi. The teacher discourages referring to the text, requesting retellings from memory. The final *Phase 6* sees the teacher presenting homework orally, wherein students are tasked to write the story in their notebooks for submission at the next session. Parts of four students' written tasks are presented in figure 11.

Different named-languages, named-modalities, and tools are deployed in complex, sequential, and interlinked ways in this teaching-learning activity. The literacy tools (photocopied texts, blackboard, notebooks) frame how the teacher and students' language. Hindi is a key semiotic resource in the teaching-learning of English. The fluidity in the deployment of different named-languages during the six phases is representative of languaging in English language teaching-learning classrooms in other parts of the subcontinent of India. In other regions or states, other named-languages take on the role of the mediating resource (here Hindi) in the teaching-learning of English.

Micro-scale chaining (figure 10) of different semiotic resources deployed in the languaging in these English language teaching-learning classrooms can be seen through the scrutiny of the micro-interactional order during *Phase 4* of the activity. The interactional order in the teaching-learning sequence represented in figure 10 has a 'presentation-translation-query-self/other response' (P-T-Q-S/OR) structure. P-T-Q-S/OR constitutes a teacher-student engagement genre where

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The Last Stone

Once upon a time, there was a merchant called Bhushan who lived in the village of Ujjain. Bhushan used to travel to different towns and cities to sell native handicrafts and clothes. To reach the city, he had to cross the river Unnati in his village.

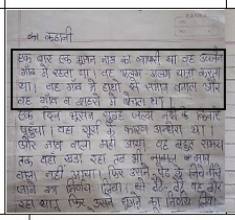
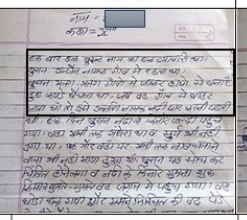
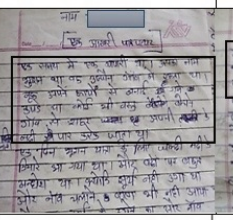
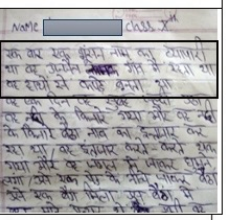
One day, Bhushan reached the river bank a little early. It was still quite dark and the sun had not risen. The oarsman had not arrived by then. There was some time left for the sun to rise and the oarsman to reach. Bhushan was feeling very anxious and started to roam around near the river. Unknowingly, he reached near a jungle. He felt a little tired, so he decided to sit under a tree. While he was

Teacher	Student/s
once upon a time [.] look into your xerox everyone [.] ढंग से बैठिए (*sit properly*) everyone sit straight [.] everyone	
हाँ (*yes*) दुबारा देखिए (*see it again*) [looks down at paper in her hand and then gazes up towards students] sit straight [.]	
[reads aloud] once upon a time [looks up at students] एक समय की [?] बात है (*once upon a time*)	[few students together] बात है (a time)
there was a merchant called Bhushan who lived in the village of Ujjain [.] एक बार एक [?] (*once there was one* [?]) [looks questioningly at the students and pauses]	
merchant [.] merchant यानी [?] (*means* [?])	[few students together] व्यापारी (*merchant*)
व्यापारी (*merchant*) called Bhushan [.] उसका क्या नाम था [?] (*what was his name* [?])	[few students together] Bhushan
[nods and looks at students] who lived [.] कहाँ रहता था [?] (*lived where* [?])	[few students together] Ujjain
in the village of Ujjain [.] एक गाँव मे रहता था [.] उस गाँव का नाम क्या था [?] (*lived in a village* [.] *what was the name of the village* [?])	[Many students together] Ujjain
Ok Ujjain [.] और उस व्यक्ति का नाम क्या था [?] व्यापारी का [?] (*and what was the name of the person* [?] *merchant* [?])	[few students together] Bhushan
Bhushan [.] Ok [.] so Bhushan used to travel to different towns and cities to sell native handicrafts and clothes [.] Bhushan used to travel [.] travel याने [?] (*means* [?])	[few students together] यात्रा (*travel*)
travel याने [?] (*means* [?])	[Many students together] यात्रा करना (*to travel*)

Figure 10: 'Once upon a time' – learning English in a 'Hindi-medium' school

Transcription key for Figure 10:
abcd – Teacher's English talk
अबकड – Teacher's Hindi talk written in Devanagari script
(*abcd*) – Teacher's Hindi talk translated in English written in Latin script
[. , abcd] – Punctuations and expressions in teacher's talk

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	Figure 11.1 Student 1	Figure 11.2 Student 2	Figure 11.3 Student 3	Figure 11.4 Student 4
Student text (boxed in text translite rated/tra nslated below)				
Transliterated text	ek bar ek bhusan naam ka vyapari tha vah ujjain gaon me rahata tha| vah alag alag yatra karta tha| vah gav me hathon se saman banta aur vah gav va shahron me bechta tha|	ek bar ek busan naam ka ek vyapari tha| ujjain namak gaon me rahata tha| Busan alag-alag gavo me jakar hatho se banaye huye kapde bechta thai jab vah gav se bahar jata tha to use unnati naam ki nadi par karni padti thi|	ek samay ek vyapari tha| uska naam bhushan tha vah ujjain gaon me rahata tha| vah apne hathon se banaye xxx gaye xxx kapde ya koi bhi vastu xxx bechne gav se shahar xxx apni xxx unnati nadi xxx par karke jata tha|	ek baar ek bhunsan naam ka vyapari tha| vah ujjain xxx gav me rahta tha vah hathon se kapde bunta tha|
English Translated text	Once upon a time there was a merchant named Bhusan, he used to live in Ujjain village. He used to do different different trips. He used to make handmade stuff in the village and he would sell it in villages and cities.	Once there was one merchant named Busan. Busan used to stay in Ujjain village. Busan used to go to different villages and sell handmade clothes. When he used to go out of the village he needed to cross the Unnati river.	Once upon a time there was a merchant. His name was Bhushan he used to live in village of Ujjain. He used to cross our xxx river Unnati xxx and go from one village to other city xxx, to sell clothes and any other things xxx he xxx made xxx himself.	Once there was a merchant named Bhunsan, he used to stay in village of Ujjain xxx he used to weave clothes.

Row 2 – Four students' written texts
Row 3 – Selected text [boxed in] transliterated to Latin script
Row 4 – Selected text [boxed in] translated to English

Figure 11: Student's written work in teaching-learning activity

the teacher presents a query (or reads a sentence), often in English, translates and repeats it in Hindi before presenting a query related to the meaning of a specific English word item (for instance, merchant, travel) or checking for comprehension (for instance, उसका क्या नाम था/uska kya nam tha/what was his name). Students offer, individually or in unison, one-word responses to the teacher's P-T-Q-S/OR. P-T-Q-S/OR constitutes a novel interactional pattern in the rural teaching-learning dataset where Hindi and English are deployed, neither of which constitutes the students' primary named-languages outside schools.

The doing of English teaching-learning (figures 10, 11) is marked by the consumption and production of two named-languages deployed in the written and oral modalities. While the photocopied texts are in English, and the classroom discussions and activity play out in English and Hindi, the students' written synopses are produced entirely in Hindi (figure 11). Different students present the story protagonist Bhushan in their homework assignments in different ways: भुसन/Bhusan in figure 11.1, बुसन/Busan in figure 11.2, भुशन/*Bhushan* in figure 11.3, and भुंसन/Bhunsan in figure 11.4. This perhaps builds on the relative phonetic strength of Devanagari in comparison with the Latin script. Thus, similar to what we saw in figure 1, the micro-interactional order in figure 11 illustrates that pronunciations play a salient role in the written-languaging of individuals navigating different named-languages and scripts.

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ON NORMAL-LANGUAGING. ON WHATS, WHERES, WHENS, WHYS, AND HOWS

The analysis of everyday life inside *and* outside rural and urban (non)institutional settings, and the recognition of people as being diverse and multilingual, disturbs hegemonic ideologies, including the contemporary metalanguage regarding language, and conceptualizations regarding languag*ers* languag*ing*. The analysis presented in this study troubles, to begin with, a persistent north-centric imaginary that such normal-languaging is the hallmark of urban settings alone. Naturalized prefixed concepts like mono/bi/multi/trans/pluri/metro-lingual, etc., part of an established nomenclature in the mainstream language sciences, become troubled by posing questions regarding which named-language(s) is(are) used in specific spaces, by whom, and for what purposes. Languagers languaging in terms of whats, wheres, whens, whys, and hows is key here. Languagers language to accomplish specific tasks or processes using communicative repertoires as structuring resources. While the existing metalanguage reinforces boundaries, the banal normal-languaging across oral and written modalities, and across rural and urban settings highlights a fluidity that illustrates specific patterns. The salient point is that shifts in focus towards *what, who, when, where, why*, and *how* language gets done are key for understanding languaging in linguistically diverse spaces. For languagers such languaging constitutes routine, banal dimensions of meaning-making. It is for us researchers that such languaging appears as being linguistically diverse or complex. Scholars' positionalities in terms of their own experiences of languaging in the named-languages of the people they are focused on constitute an epistemic ethical issue, a key theme highlighted in a SWaSP framing.

Given that institutional spaces are not hermeneutically sealed, and spaces understood as formal-informal, or analogue-digital are not bounded, scholarly attempts to analyze contemporary languaging call for mobile gazing *across* spaces. It is in this manner that the present study contributes to disentangling the messiness, i.e., the complexity of normal-languaging *across* spaces through empirical engagement. This has been accomplished by explicating the social life of banal languaging across settings, in geopolitical spaces where languagers multilingualism is recognized as the de facto norm. A SWaSP framing suggests that in addition to focusing upon social processes that play out in and across diverse spaces (itself a marginalized area in research) to illuminate languagers languaging, there is need to put the spotlight on alternative ontologies regarding the nature of language, including dimensions such as the relationships between oral-language and written script, language hierarchies in linguistically diverse spaces, the complicities of mainstream epistemologies in the language sciences scholarship, etc.

The situated-distributed nature of human meaning-making calls for transcending a priori etic perspectives by focusing on the social life of languaging and of languagers. Here, paying careful attention to sociocultural complexities in situ and languagers non-static multilayered identity-positions is important. For instance, gender identity, a key dimension of the social life of languaging inside and outside institutions in our study, collates with other layers of people's circumstances that are important for understanding issues of access and socialization. While framed in the scholarship as intersectionality, such positionality shapes languaging differently in different spaces. Thus, both Shabnam and Kanika (vignettes 1, 2) felt compelled to start working in their urban and rural settings, respectively, due to the demise of their fathers, the family breadwinners. However, their access to work generally and to opportunities of upward mobility specifically are contingent upon several overarching issues. While their work-life opportunities are supported through declared policies, it is the practiced policies in the informal sector, including ramifications of rural-urban expectations, that become salient. The social life of banal languaging, and socialization possibilities here are crucial dimensions.

Pioneering studies in language socialization in the mainstream scholarship, while exploring the language acquisition of children, have shaped research framings by acknowledging learning as a continuous, open-ended lifelong process. A child or a novice constitutes the unit of analysis, and such scholarship primarily focuses on

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specific communities or social processes. However, languagers are not merely members of boxed-in communities; they are participants in several ongoing, intersecting social processes *across* time-spaces. This means that languaging is contingent upon the communicative repertoires that languagers have access to *across* timespaces, rather than which or how many named-languages and modalities languagers deploy. Exploring languaging from emic perspectives and through macro-scale *and* micro-scale analysis of social processes, including interactions that languagers can access and/or participate in, thus, as this study suggests, offers richer potential for illuminating the nature of language in contemporary technologically infused settings across rural-urban settings.

Another key issue regarding the contextual nature of languaging lies in the fallacy of exclusionary binaries, given that formal/informal or institutional/non-institutional spaces are not hermetically sealed entities. Informal learning spaces exist within strictly structured formal institutional spaces through different processes; for instance, informal teacher trainers' activities (which gave rise to the formation of the Sakhi Group) at MMCs official monthly meetings or arrangements like e-mitra that take up outsourced governmental tasks. Translation-type strategies play a mediational function in formal institutional activities that are textually oriented, where language learning is a specific agenda. Here, an experienced languager (of a specific named-language) translates texts across named-languages and modalities. While less experienced languagers access and participate in several such social processes, their languaging is contingent on the chaining of semiotic resources rather than learning in boundary-marked languages. Addressing such languaging in terms of numerically framed (first, second) or relational (mother tongue, home language) single named-languages, as is the case in north-centric mainstream language sciences, is thus out of sync with participants' agendas and an emic stance.

The routine classroom teacher-student(s) interactional order in monolingual settings that has been discussed in the classroom interactional scholarship in terms of I-R-E, i.e., 'initiation-response-evaluation', expands in the context of our materials to include 'presentation-translation-query-self/other response', before (a response can be offered by students, and) the teacher's subsequent evaluation of this response. The meaning-making potentials of such P-T-Q-S/OR patterns can be significant for multilingual students' language socialization in both northern and southern settings. Here we can ask whether I-R-E sequences constitute dimensions of monolingual classroom settings and what other interactional orders exist in classrooms when multiple named-language are in play.

The P-T-Q-S/OR interactional order and the banalness of normal-languaging we see in figures 9, 10, and 11 disturb how language learning is conceptualized in the mainstream language scholarship, given that the latter continues to rest upon a monolingual ethos. The primary and secondary named-languages deployed in our datasets from both rural and urban settings illustrate the semiotic resources that participants, the staff, teachers, and students bring with them to various activities. Paying attention to these requires that we, the outsiders gazing at the mundane social practices in these settings, are familiar with the named-languages the languagers are drawing upon. This is a key dimension that enables transcending the ideological framings of the participants' imagined monolingual mother tongues or their imagined first or second languages. Given that most people in the world grow up multilingual and southern scholars call 'multilingualism their parent tongue', the metalanguage of mainstream language sciences needs re-imagining.

While the Government of Rajasthan publishes all information about e-mitra based on hegemonic linguistic norms, the e-mitra, in his[22] banal languaging with clients, uses resources from at least three named-languages, two named-modalities across physical-digital spaces to accomplish tasks (figure 7). Similarly, while information about the Sakhi Group is presented in an MMC annual report in English, the Sakhi members themselves deploy a range of other named-languages in their daily lives (figures 3, 4). While institutional language learning spaces like schools are framed through declared policies that sanction the implementation of one-language-at-a-time monolingual

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instruction, as imagined through school time-tables, the practiced policies of daily schedules (figure 8) and the (in)formal communication of students, teachers, parents, and villagers who visit the school, is marked by the use of multiple named-languages chained across oral-written modalities (vignette 1, figure 8), in addition to the novel languaging identified in this study as P-T-Q-S/OR. Thus, analyzing spaces across rural-urban or inside-outside institutions contributes to making visible subtleties and dynamic understandings of normal-languaging.

The relationship between oral-language and written scripts calls for further reflection. While scripts used in Indian spaces have been extensively studied, our empirical analysis highlights that dimensions of oral-written chaining in contemporary technologically infused spaces need to be explored from non-mainstream emic perspectives. The issue of oral articulation discerned through the micro-interactional order represented in figures 1 and 10 illustrates that pronunciations are salient in written-languaging. In the e-mitra poster (figure 1), written words like पेन कार्ड/Pan card are often orally articulated as pen card. Similarly, इंश्योरन्स/insurance is commonly rendered orally as inshorens or insurens, रिसल्ट/result as rejult or rejolt, and लॅमिनेशन/lamination as leminason. Here we see a dynamic, multi*layered* use of terms from a named-language and named-script that morph into other named-languages/scripts. While we can point to these complexities, we cannot analytically pin-point which boxed-in language or script is being engaged with without falling into an etic north-centric framing. This is why using the International Phonetic Conventions here would be counter-productive to our agenda. While figure 1 presents transliterations of the written mode from the Devanagari script in the poster, the verbal renditions require some work by outsiders (like us researchers) to make sense of what is presented. This appears to suggest that languagers *read off* a lexical item like रिसल्ट/result transliterated from result in the Latin script, given the fact that the Devanagari script is highly phonetic, i.e., it is amicable to being read in the manner it is written. However, languagers deviate from the oral pronunciation embedded in the word written in Devanagari, suggesting that people are not reading words but are using written lists as resources to call upon terms that they are familiar with. So, लॅमिनेशन/lamination is read as leminason, even though the written item लॅमिनेशन enables a reading of it *as* lamination. Given that English does not display this phonetic alliance between written mode and oral rendition, we see a variety of ways in which the Devanagari script is deployed to present terms that are understood as belonging to English. Importantly, this is precisely what we see students do (figure 11), when they present the name of the protagonist differently in their written assignment.

Scripts don't merely function as tools in literacy activities; they are identity markers as well. While formal communication and the existing language sciences scholarship emphasize that specific scripts are related to the use of specific named-languages, the present study highlights that such associations are not drivers of languagers meaning-making. This calls attention to the need for deemphasizing naturalized oral-written associations and trouble mainstream ideas that feed into declared policies that deal with linguistically diverse spaces *across* northern-southern settings. Does it matter, and if so, for whom, if the entangled use of different modalities undermines the aesthetics of pronunciation? Both chaining of different scripts and transliterations of banal normal-languaging are evidenced in social processes across contemporary linguistically diverse spaces. Having said this, it is also important to recognize that oral-written associations shape language hierarchies, for instance, in language socialization spaces of formal time-tables. Named-languages like Marwari have a lower currency: they are not aspirational languages for villagers and are (dis)preferred by policy-makers.

Technologically infused social spaces, inside *and* outside schools, are marked by the use of the named-language English either monolingually (figure 6) or chained with other named-languages (figures 1, 8). Being able to use English, and more significantly, knowing how to engage with others who can mediate linguistic resources, and their meaning-potentials related to different tasks, constitutes

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important dimensions of the social organization of learning across settings. English constitutes both a need and an aspirational language across rural-urban and vernacular medium school settings. Students in our datasets are familiar with English vocabulary and grammatical structures but are unable to use resources to communicate in English. These languagers draw traction from different kinds of scaffolding when they apply resources from this named-language inside and outside classroom settings. As we have seen, teachers (and others) mediate such processes through various named-languages and material resources. Like the e-mitra's work, Shabnam and Kanika deal with different named-languages across settings (training workshops, the bank, Panchayat offices, etc.) by using different mediators (trainers, officials, service providers, etc.). Similarly, text materials available in different named-languages and audio-visual-textual information accessed through the Internet also function as mediators. Teachers communicate in complex, patterned ways when English is in focus, in language learning spaces, since students have limited experiences with this named-language. Here, language learning is the institutional agenda and a process motivated by clear objectives such as understanding written texts or answering questions. While institutional activities maintain boundaries between different named-languages through time-tables and declared policies, a focus on banal normal-languaging illuminates complex patterns, including teachers' mediational translation work that supports meaning-making processes. Languagers like Kanika seamlessly navigate such formal language learning spaces, and also tackle languaging outside school settings, participating in the embedded learning processes of life. This, in Ingold's terms, constitutes *humaning*.

Drawing traction from SWaSP framings, this empirically pushed paper has illuminated languaging wherein more than one named-language, named-modality, use of tools and spaces, etc., are engaged with by humans. Although meaning-making is a central dimension of all languaging, hegemonic mainstream linguistic norms bring with them unidirectional, instruction-oriented, policy accountable gazing, reducing social processes in linguistically diverse spaces to a priori vocabularies[23]. We suggest that *omni*directional (rather than *uni*directional), application-oriented *multi*-versal (rather than *uni*versal), and mediational (rather than mirroring) points of departure enable richer understandings of normal-languaging through a focus on the social life of banal communication across settings[24]. Languaging is marked by the seamless chaining of semiotic resources that can at best be discussed as temporarily stable for heuristic purposes. This is highly relevant for rescuing language and language learning from the clutches of universalism and bounded disciplinary imaginations.

ENDNOTES

1. We acknowledge research grants by Örebro University, Sweden for project GTGS (2012-14), and access to multiple urban and rural settings by the leadership and members of the three NGOs that enabled the creation of rich datasets that we engage with in this paper.
2. We present a transliteration of terms in the Devanagari script before presenting their translations. Key terms in the Devanagari script are not repeatedly transliterated or translated. All transliterations and translations have been done by us.
3. Following southern/decolonial calls to disrupt the politics of referencing, we attempt to point the reader to various sources of further readings and relevant scholarship through a thematised list at the end of the paper.
4. See https://bhamashah.rajasthan.gov.in/content/raj/bhamashah/en/home.html#
5. Permanent Account Number.
6. Theorists like Roy Harris, Christopher Hutton, Jean Lave, Per Linell, Sinfree Makoni, Roger Säljö, Etienne Wenger, Jim Wertsch, J. S. Yadava, and others represent the first cluster.
7. Theorists like Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Walter Mignolo, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Cathrine Walsh, Martin Savransky, and others represent the second cluster.
8. In India, public funded schools are called government schools while the

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rest are called private schools. Government schools are often labelled 'vernacular medium' schools; here the language of instruction is either Hindi or the official state language. Private schools are often either Hindi or English 'medium' schools. All schools offer three named-languages as part of their curricula.

9. See note on declared languages in school settings below.
10. Marwari is a language used for communication in all life-spheres in our rural fieldwork setting except when languagers communicate with private or governmental institutions, including schools.
11. www.mumbaimobilecreches.org.
12. Maps 1 and 2, created by us, are used for illustrative purposes.
13. MMR region constitutes 6355 square kilometres of area where roughly 30 million people live. The 7.19 square kilometres of our project village setting has a population of roughly 7000 people.
14. The 2021 census was put on hold due to the pandemic and is expected to be conducted in 2027.
15. The 2020 National Education Policy (NEP) proposes several further changes regarding the medium of instruction, language subjects and their selection by states, schools, and students.
16. For instance, financial, social, local availability.
17. 'Urdu medium' schools have become controversial since 2017.
18. The mass-scale pandemic-induced migrations across hundreds of kilometers, and often on foot, from urban to rural spaces of India (as a result of the suddenly imposed strict lockdown) highlighted many of these issues that frame the lives of urban marginalized peoples.
19. An 'Aadhar card' (issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India on behalf of the Government of India) provides a unique identification number to citizens (https://uidai.gov.in/en).
20. We do not present an indepth analysis of figure 2 due to place constraints.
21. This dataset contains Sakhi members' daily dairies for 10 days across a month.
22. The e-mitras in our dataset are all male.
23. While more recent concepts like pluri/trans-lingual give recognition to the deployment of more than one named-language in peoples communication, they continue to build on both the taken-for-grantedness of naming languages, and also monolingual and monomodal stances whereby modalities (writing, embodiment, etc.) and scripts are seldom engaged with in analysis.
24. It is worth noting that language policies that frame institutional spaces focused upon in this study are increasingly shaped by north-centric hegemonic linguistic imaginations.

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