From global to local: learning from TESS-India’s approach to OER localisation across seven Indian states

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From global to local: learning from TESS-India’s approach to OER localisation across multiple Indian states

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The power of OER and the removal of ‘unfreedoms’

• ‘Unfreedoms’: e.g. poverty, limited economic opportunity, inadequate education and access to knowledge, deficient health care, and oppression

• ‘Increasing the freedoms that men and women enjoy is a definition of development, and greater freedom empowers people to be more effective agents of development.’ (CoL 3 yr Plan)

• OER: more teachers; better teachers; more engaged learners; improved learner retention; better access to knowledge.
The need for OER localisation

“What is the future of open education? Where is it going? I think there is only one answer: localisation” (David Wiley)

“Localization must involve locals; ...effective localization is directly proportional to understanding local contexts.” (Tiffany Ivins)

“Localization unlocks the power of OER.” (Tiffany Ivins)
Our research focus

- The **challenges** to localising OER for use in development education
- The impact of **context** and localiser **perceptions**
- How best to **support** OER localisers
- The **relationship** between institutional quality **control**, localiser **freedom**, and the **spirit of open**.

Photo: Leigh-Anne Perryman CC-BY
Quantity and quality

- India: needs 1.33 million teachers
- Bihar: 75% of teacher ed. colleges did no training between 2007-2010
- India - Bihar: 45% of teachers don’t have minimum qualification.
- India: some states, only 1% pass Teacher Eligibility Test
- India – ASER: “A ritual exercise bringing the same disturbing but worsening news” (Deccan Herald, 2013)
**TESS-India - Teacher Education through School based Support in India**

**Focus States:**
Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal

**Subject areas:**
English, Math Science, Leadership, Language & Literacy

**Content:**
- 125 Pan Indian study units
- Collaborative development
- Stand alone, self directed
- Supporting teachers in changing their practice
- Suggests and inspires rather than being prescriptive and exhaustive

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Production

I was worried about making mistakes, and I was also worried that my students wouldn’t understand me. I spoke to a sister-in-law, who is also an English teacher. She told me about a colleague at her school who uses quite a lot of English in the classroom.

Oh, let me tell you about Mr. Kumar at school. He uses English to do all sorts of things: give instructions, praise the students, even sometimes to explain things from the book. He doesn’t worry too much about making mistakes or his pronunciation – he thinks it is much more important for students to listen to English so that they get used to it.
Localisation process

- State based orientation workshops.
- Content Translation
- Third party NGO
- State Localisation Managers
- Subject Localisation Experts
- 2 State based Localisation workshops (1 combined)
- No direct control of adaptation
The challenges of localising OER

- Managing translation
- Use of Hindi keyboard
- Navigating localiser perceptions & experience as educators in India
- Navigating localiser unfamiliarity with OER, openness & online learning
- The relationship between institutional control, quality, localiser freedom and openness
The challenges of translation

- Localisers don’t have translation skills + translation agency doesn’t have context/educational knowledge;
- = Distortion of meaning.
- Localisers have to correct this, but have to look at English version to do so.
- Little use of Hindi keyboard so annotated hard copies used - time consuming.

Photo: Leigh-Anne Perryman CC-BY-SA
Navigating perceptions and experience

- SLEs’ background as textbook writers
- Focus on subject over method
- Preference for formal, rather than conversational writing style
- Unfamiliarity with activity-based pedagogy

“Many of the localisers had PhDs and really wanted to engage more with the topic than the technique... they thought that the teacher should have all subject knowledge in one place.”
Development & OER

Neocolonialism → Knowledge partnership
“We need to allow time for reflection and working on the materials.”

“We need to sit as a group again to deliberate on matters of localisation as now our understanding of the matter has increased.”

Context

- Hierarchical view of knowledge ownership
- No understanding of OER
Conclusion: Creating a knowledge partnership

- Respect for individual perceptions & experience
- Institutional (quality) control & guidance
- Sensitivity to context (e.g. status of knowledge ownership)

Knowledge partnership

Openness & ‘embedded’ engagement with OER
Conclusion: Quality, control, freedom and openness

“I would like to see more from the State people… like if they want to see more assessment done in the classroom or if they want more attention paid to low achievers that sort of thing… Really, I’d like more radical localisation rather than safe localisation but there’s a reluctance, a deference that gets in the way.”

(TESS-India Academic Manager, 2014)
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