

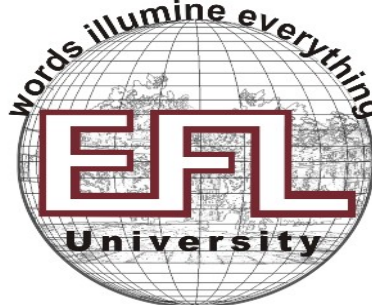
Translanguaging practices in developing primary grade school skills: Evidence from challenging Indian contexts

The inclusion, mobility, and MLE conference: Exploring the role of languages for education and development (13th LDC), Bangkok, Thailand: 24th to 26th Sep 2019

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Overview

- ▶ Primary education in India and learning outcomes: 4 year long ESRC DFiD MLE project in India
- ▶ Project rationale
- ▶ 3 language policy of India and its implementation: merits & demerits
- ▶ Educational variables of the project and tools & method of data collection from 2 sites: Hyderabad & Patna
- ▶ Findings
 - English language teachers' language profile*
 - English classes: language mixing (translanguaging) & classroom processes*
- ▶ Challenges and work ahead



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Multilingualism and Multiliteracy: Raising learning outcomes in challenging contexts in primary schools across India



The trigger

Problem:

Causes of low learning outcomes of primary school children from low SES in multilingual India



Context:

Advantages to being bilingual or multilingual in attention and learning skills



Research question:

Why do some children in India not benefit from being bilingual or multilingual to the same degree as children in other contexts?

Background

Bilingualism has been shown to have beneficial effects on:

Cognitive control (e.g. Bialystok et al 2007; 2010)

- a. Working memory
- b. Cognitive flexibility, allocation of attention resources and inhibition of inappropriate/incorrect response biases

Delay of dementia and cognitive decline in the elderly (Alladi et al 2013;2014)

Creativity (Kharkhurin 2012, for adults; Leikin 2012, for children)

Creativity as a measure of *divergent* thinking: subconscious process involving a broad search for information and the generation of numerous alternative answers or solutions to a problem (Guildford 1967)



Learning outcomes in Indian schools

- ▶ ASER studies conducted with 600,000 children across India: more than half of all children in Standard 5 could not read a Standard 2 level text fluently, and nearly half of them could not solve Standard 2 level subtraction task.
- ▶ Low literacy and numeracy can limit other important capabilities, e.g., critical thinking and problem solving
- ▶ Low educational achievement may lead to dropping out of school
- ▶ High dropout rate in schools affecting girls more than boys (Unesco's Education Report, 2015; Annual Status of Education Report Pratham, 2014).
- ▶ The gap between state and private schools increases every year.



Learning outcomes in Indian schools

- ▶ In a multilingual country like India with 140 million children between ages six to thirteen in need of primary education, development of school skills is expected to happen in a language that is not the home language of a large number of children from migrant communities or linguistic minority groups.
- ▶ The problem gets manifold when these children are required to learn *in* English due to national language policy measures and parental pressure of practicing equity and paving the path for socio-economic advancement.
- ▶ Imparting education in a language that is not the learners' strong language creates gaps in understanding and contributes to the low levels of academic language skills and early drop outs.

Education & the language of instruction: A global issue

- ▶ Reports from developing countries suggest that 221 million children are educated in a language they do not speak at home.
- poor education quality, drop-out rates, low literacy outcomes (Cummins 2009)

NB: Most EAL children in the UK are monoliterate in English.

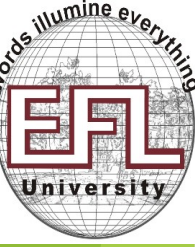
Question to ponder upon...

Can English as Mol or teaching it as a language be realistically done in a monolingual (and two solitude) manner in the vast majority of Indian primary schools that enrol learners from low SES and no/low print exposure at home?

3 language policy of India & its implementation for primary education

- (1) The **first** language to be studied must be the mother tongue or the regional language.
- (2) The **second** language
 - a. In Hindi speaking states, it has to be English or any other modern Indian language
 - b. In non-Hindi speaking states, it will be English/ Hindi
- (3) The **third** language
 - a. In Hindi speaking states, it will be English or a modern Indian language not studied as a second language
 - b. In non-Hindi speaking states, it will be English or a modern Indian language not studied as a second language

Impact of language policy on school education



National Language Policy (1967)

**National language education
policy &
planning (1968) (NCERT)**

**School Language Curriculum &
Assessment
[Central/State/Others]**

SCHOOLS
Classroom planning
Materials design
Assessment



3 language policy: Issues in implementation

Merits

- ▶ Created space to train learners use multiple languages to learn school skills.
- ▶ Ensured that primary education be imparted in mother tongue or state language as recognizing LHR for language in pedagogy.
- ▶ Paved way for transfer of academic skills from stronger to developing language (Cummins 1987, 2007).

Demerits

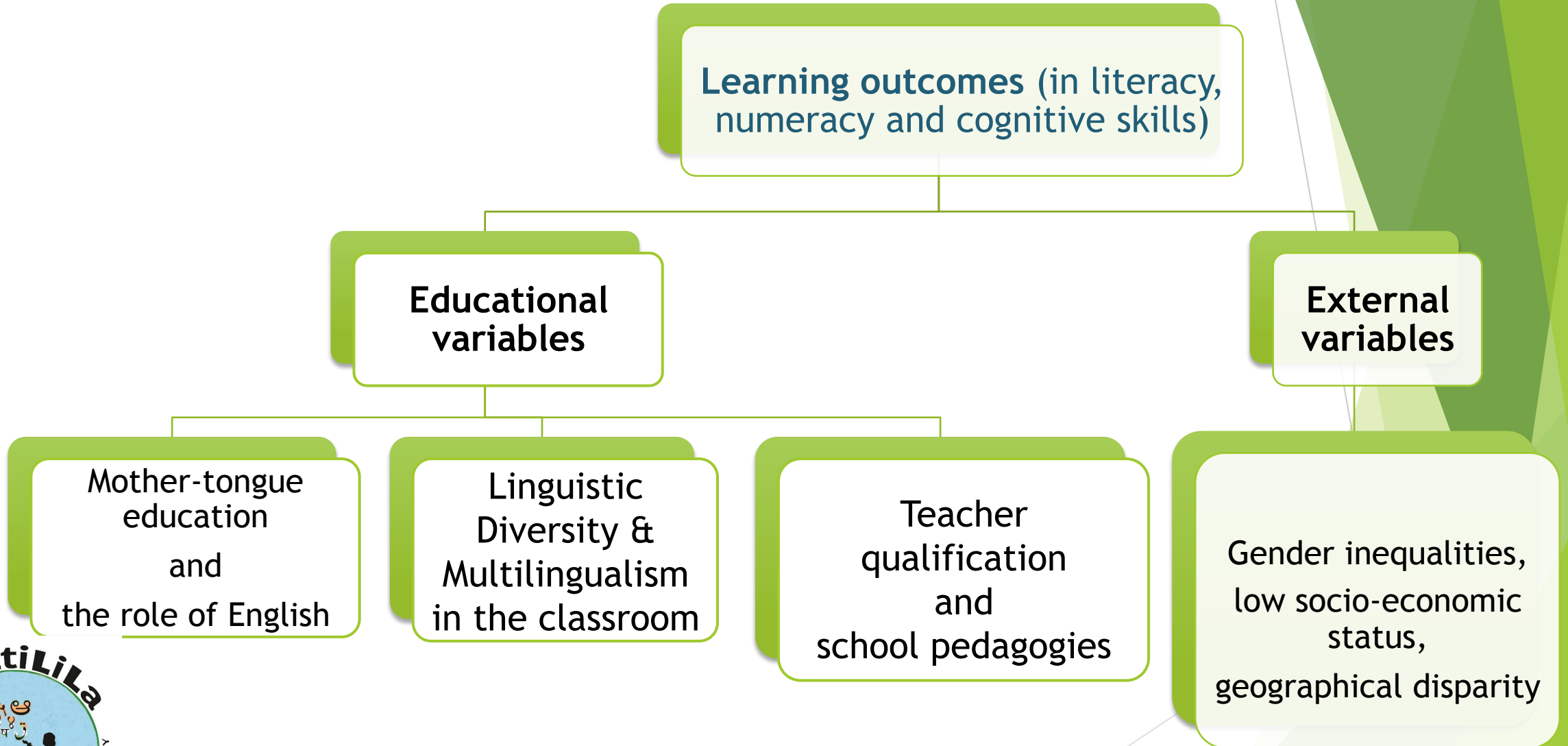
- ▶ Public demand for English Mol in primary education resulted in gaps in learning when learners were expected to study in a language they do not know well and caused early dropouts (26%).
- ▶ Mol in state language did not always incorporate child's mother tongue and this too resulted in early drop outs in children from low SES and linguistic minority groups (12%).

Where is the teacher narrative?

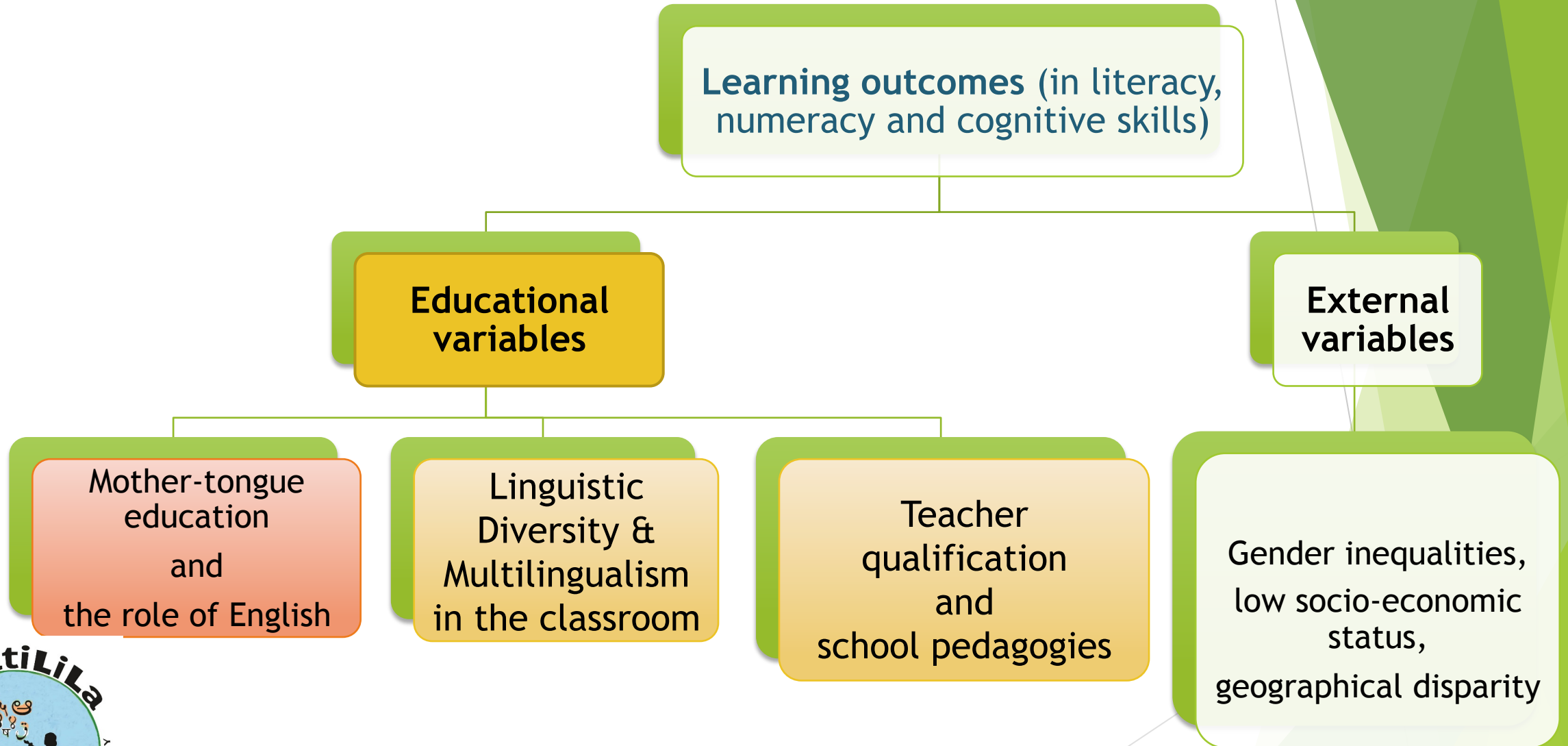


Teacher preparedness to handle multiple languages in schools where one teacher is expected to teach most subjects is hardly ever articulated; but they are expected to deliver according to government decisions and national language policies.

OUR RESEARCH FOCUS



RESEARCH FOCUS (presentation)



Geographical and social factors

- ▶ Urban (Delhi, Hyderabad) vs. Town & Rural (Bihar)
 - ▶ Bihar is one of the less developed and educationally disadvantaged areas of India (Tsujita, 2009, Unesco EFA Report).
 - ▶ Urban areas: Children living in slum vs. non-slum areas
 - ▶ Urban slums are settlements with inadequate access to safe water, sanitation and infrastructure, poor structural quality of housing, overcrowding and insecure residential status.
 - ▶ UN report 'The Challenge of Slums' (2003); "slums are a multidimensional concept involving aspects of poor housing, overcrowding, lack of services and insecure tenure; indicators relating to these can be combined in different ways to give thresholds that provide estimates of numbers of slum dwellers."
- Urban slums (where 17% of urban citizens in India live) include a large number of internal migrants who may speak other languages or varieties of the regional language.



How did we address our research questions?

- ▶ We developed a set of tools to examine directly or indirectly the children's school skills (literacy and numeracy), their cognitive skills which *support* learning and development, their **school environment** (**teachers, methods, attitudes**)
- ▶ We used the same set of tools in each of the sites: Delhi, Hyderabad, Patna.
- ▶ We visited schools where children from slum and non-slum areas, and town and non-remote rural areas. We invited all children who were willing to participate.



Tools: Surveys & Questionnaires

- ▶ *Language questionnaire* - Child (Demographic info, Language use info, socioeconomic variables)
- ▶ *Headteacher questionnaire*
- ▶ (Maths & Language) *Teacher questionnaire*
- ▶ *Classroom observation tool*



Examining school environment & quality of instructional input

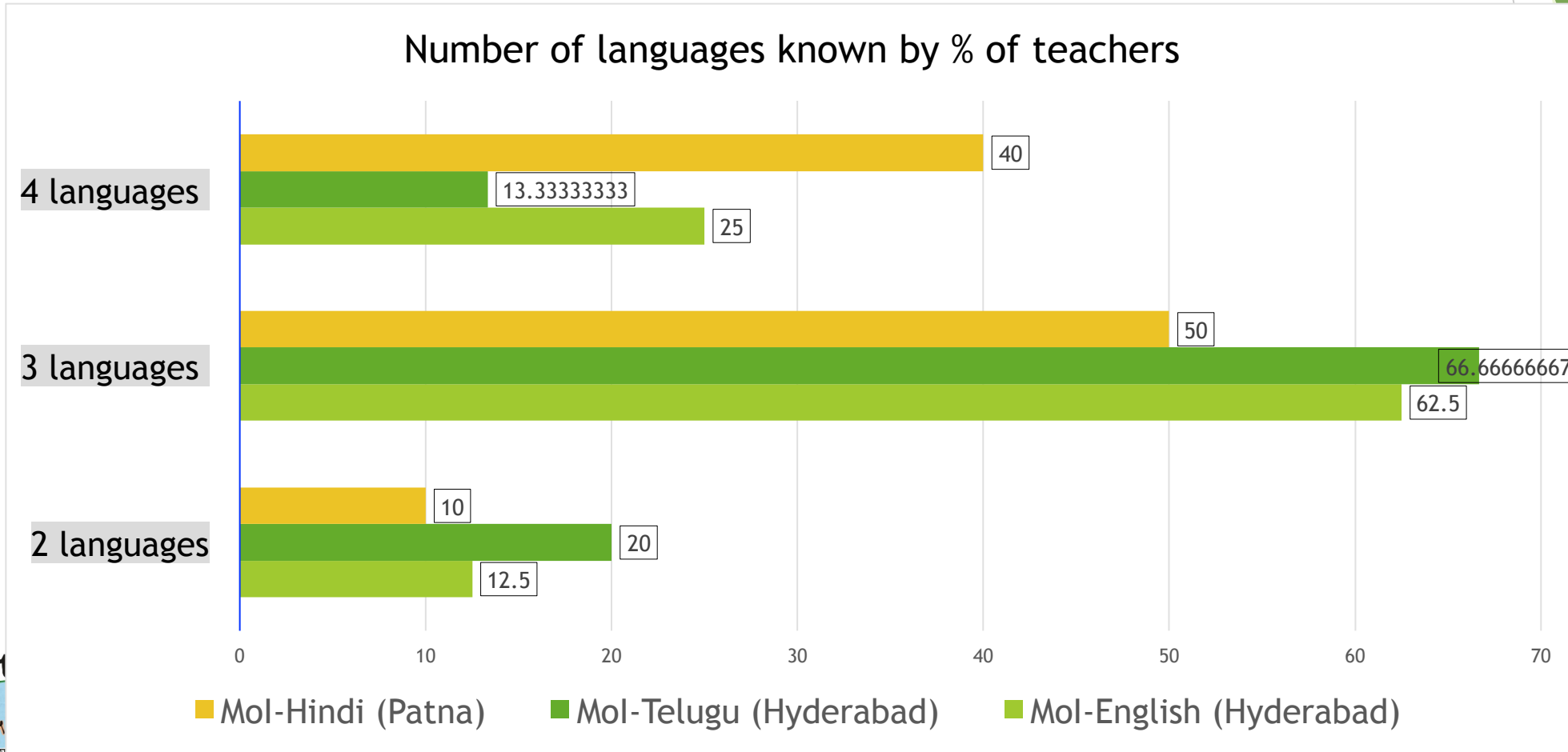


Teacher Demographics

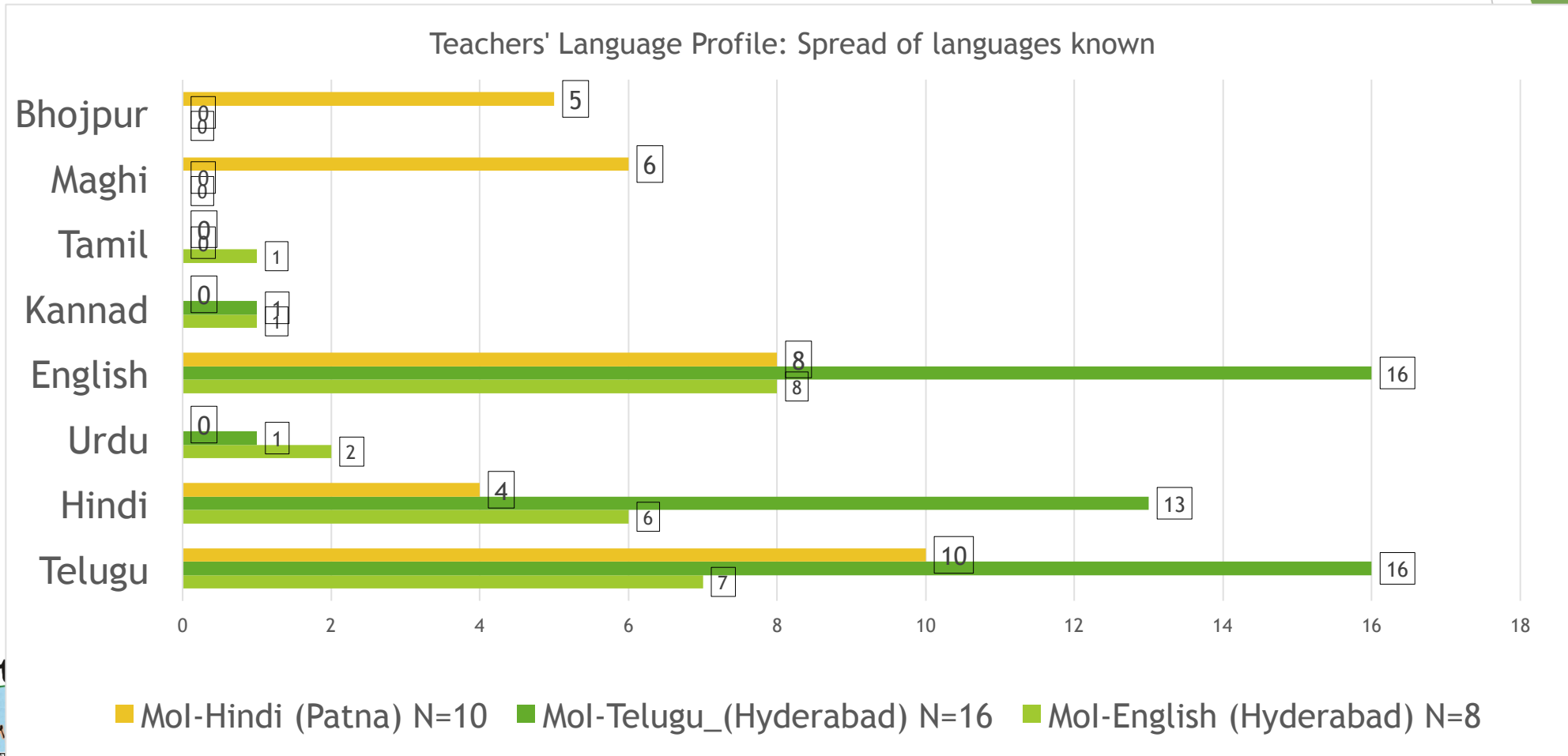
Medium of Instruction	City (State)	Teachers (N)	Teaching Years (Mean; SD)	General Education (post graduate)	General education (graduate)	Teacher education (Certification)	Teacher education (Degree)
English	Hyderabad (Capital, Telengana)	8 Female	10.63 (7.67)	50%	50%	25%	75%
Telugu	Hyderabad (Capital, Telengana)	11 Female; 5 Male =16	13.43 (6.06)	36%	64%	7%	93%
Hindi	Patna (Capital, Bihar)	9 Female 1 Male =10	12.10 (6.40)	80%	20%	70%	30%

Children who participated in the project & taught by these teachers: 600

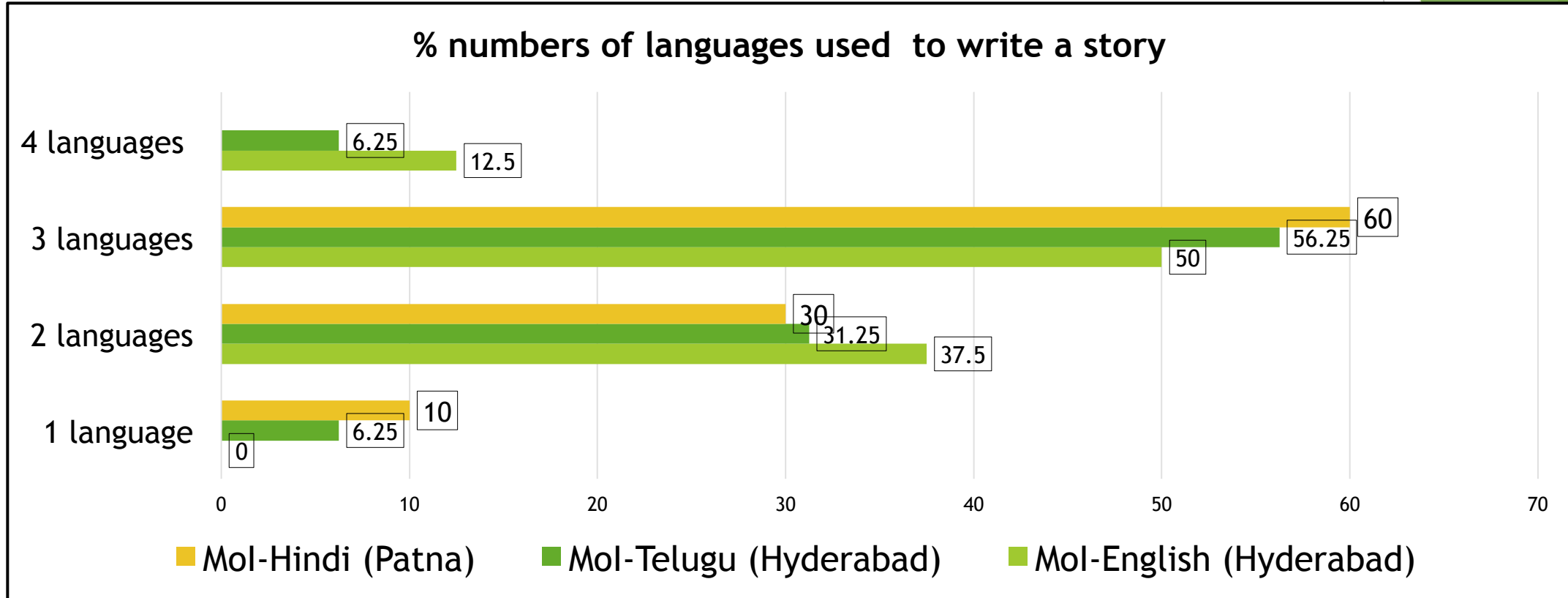
Multilingual profile of English teachers across sites



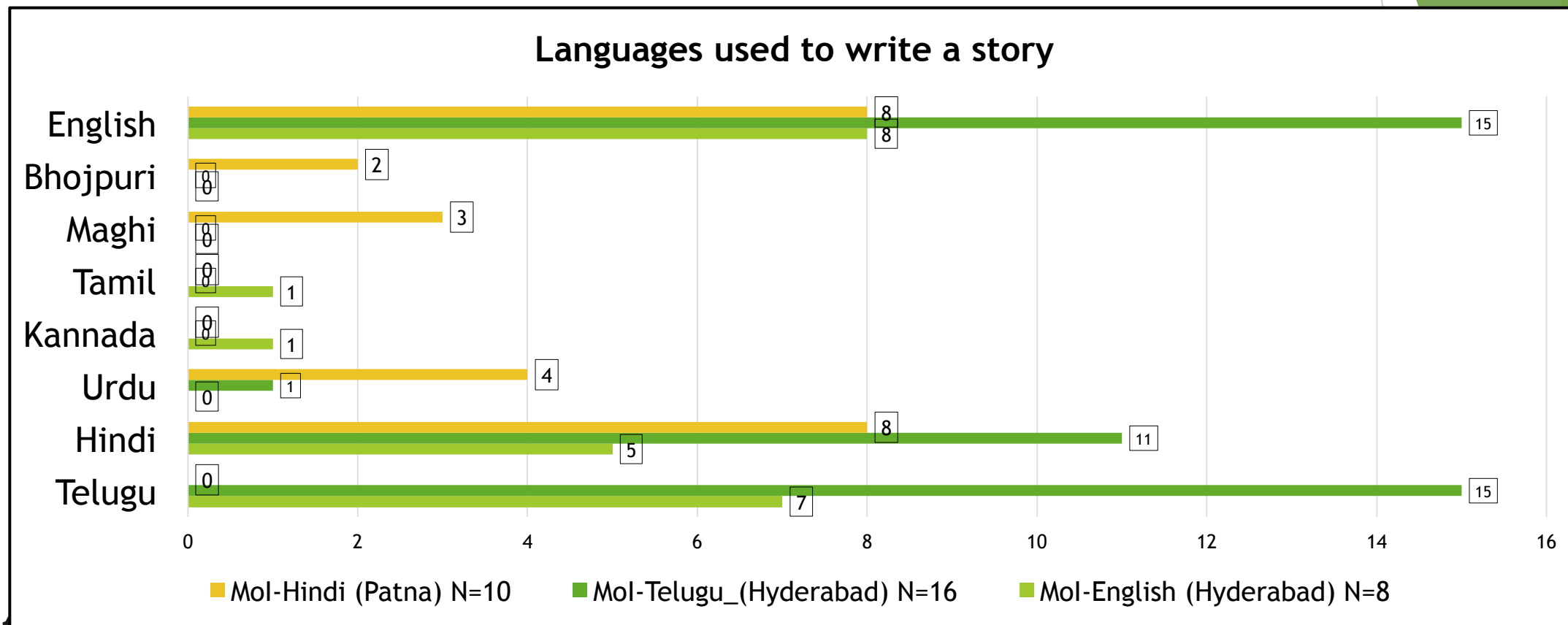
Oral multilinguality of English teachers



Teachers' preferred languages used to write a story: multilingual profile (written)



Languages used to write a story: Teachers' multilingual profile



Teachers' multilinguality

- Hyderabad site: Languages known

Telugu

Tamil

Kannada

Hindi

Urdu

English

Most teachers know 3 languages
(oral & written): **60%**

17% teachers know 4 languages (oral & written)

- Patna site: Languages known

Bhojpuri

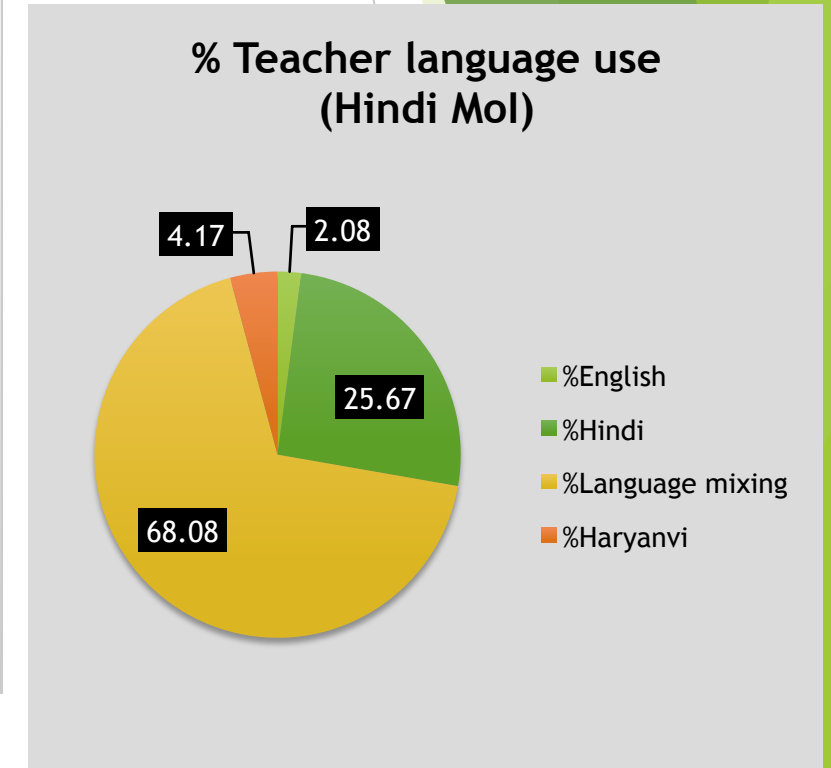
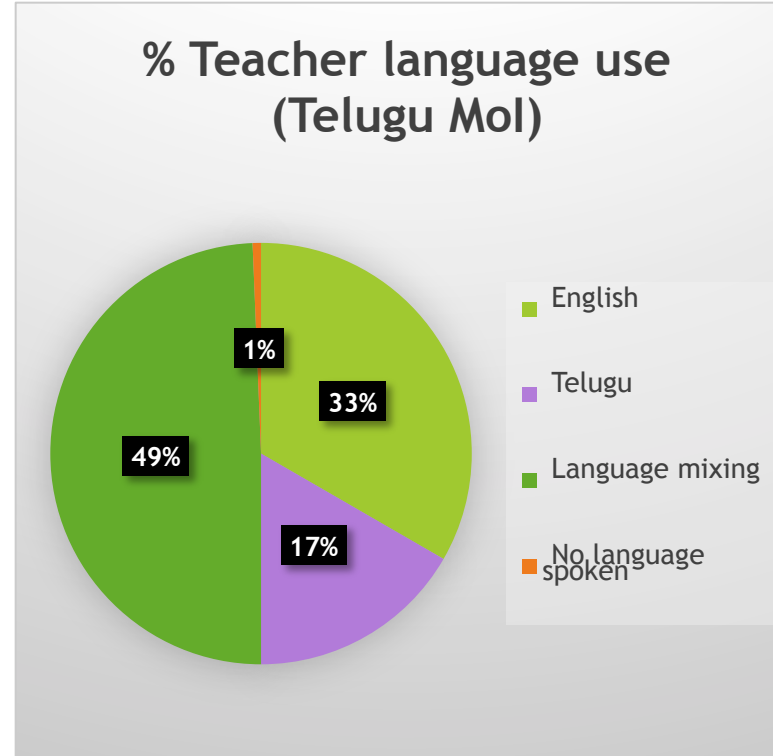
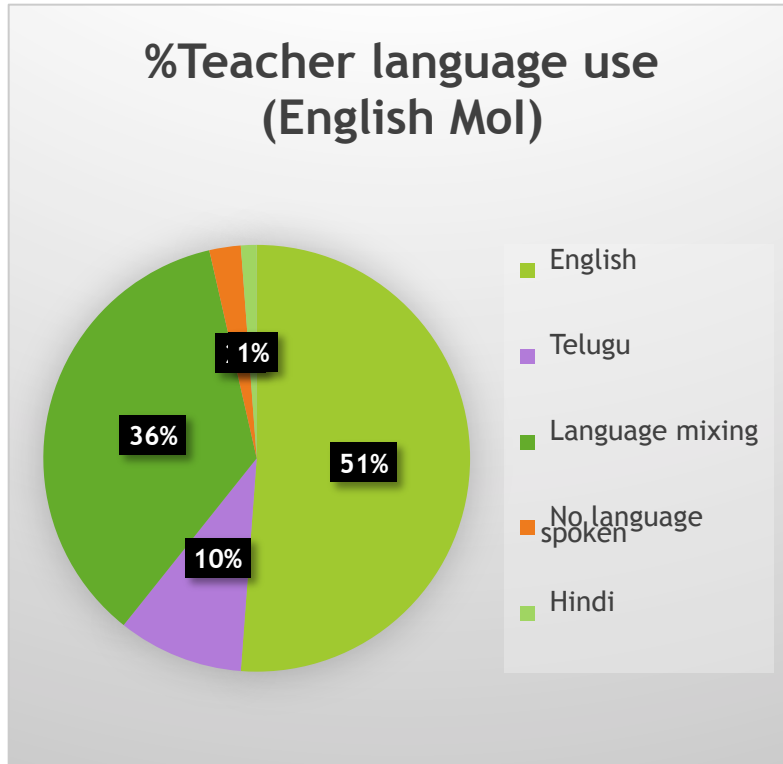
Maghi

Hindi

English

Is this multilinguality reflected in classroom interactions?

Translanguaging in English class across 3 Sites

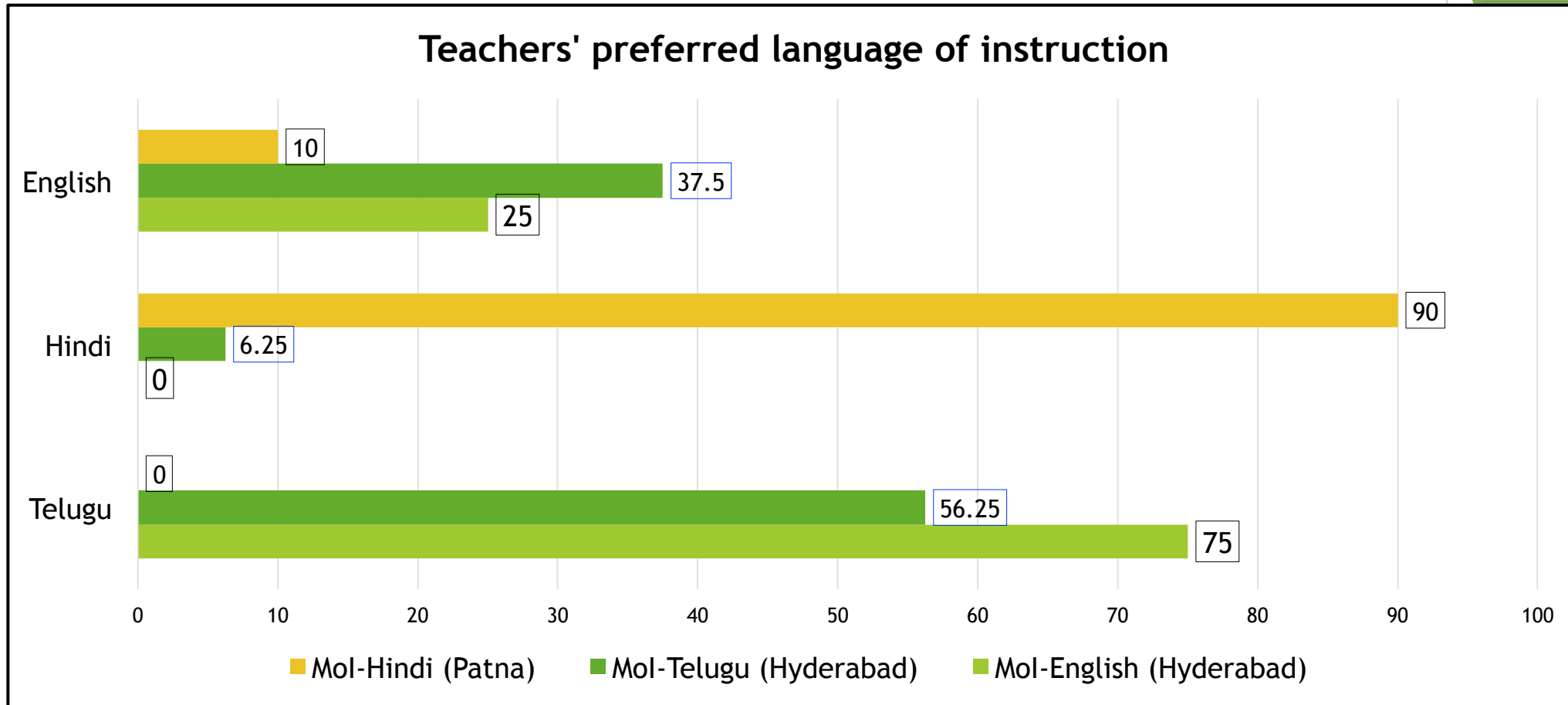


TEACHERS

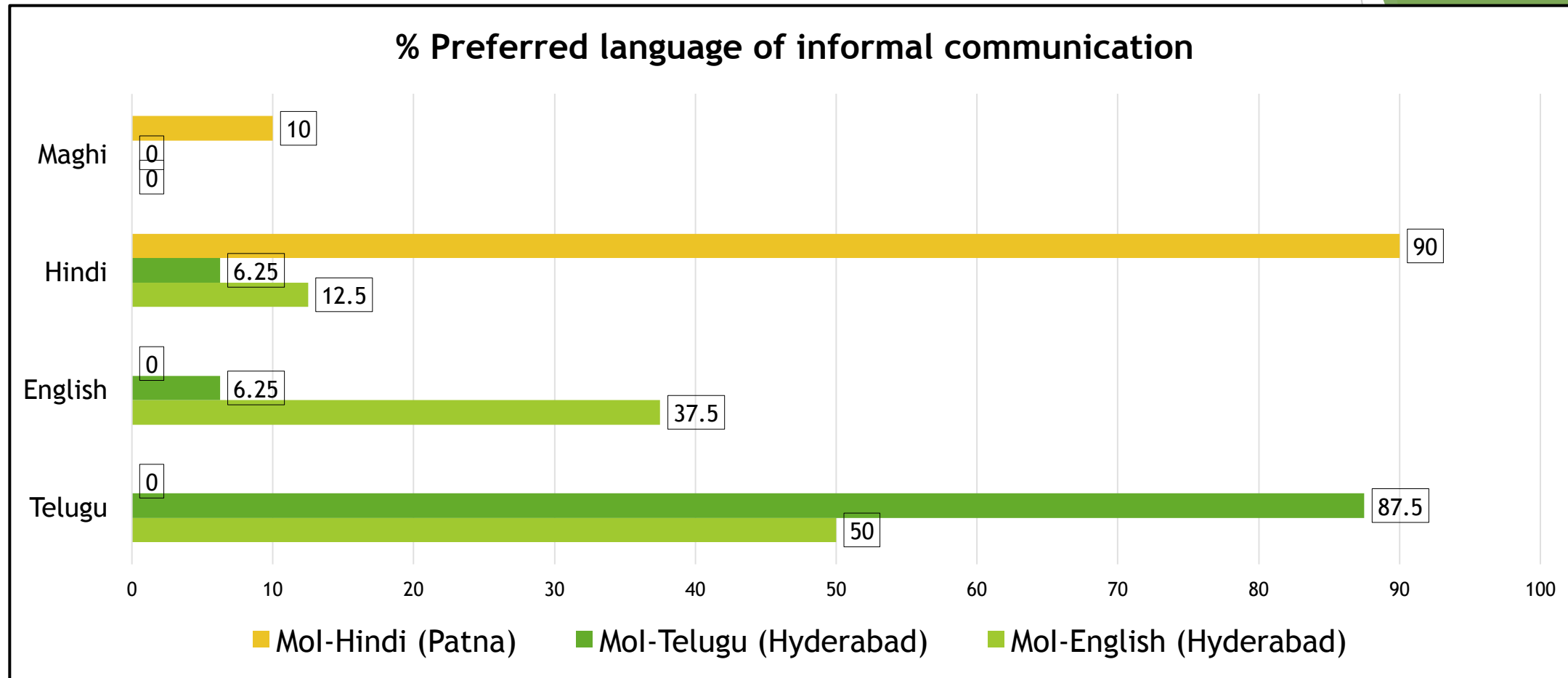


- English is mostly used in the manner of language mixing across the three Mol.
- Monolingualism of English varies: Hyderabad>Patna

English Teachers' preferred language of instruction

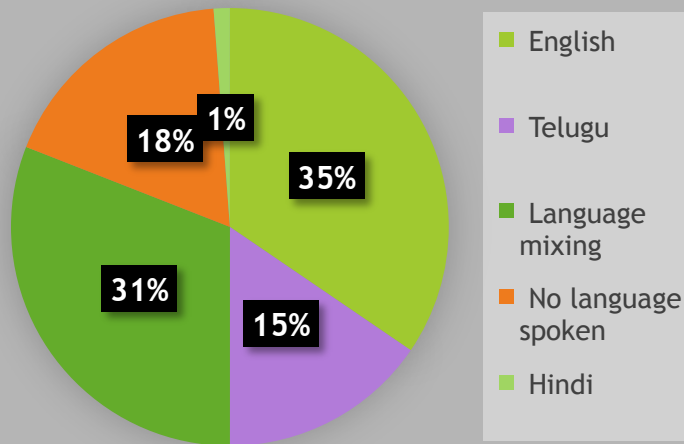


English Teachers' preferred language of informal communication

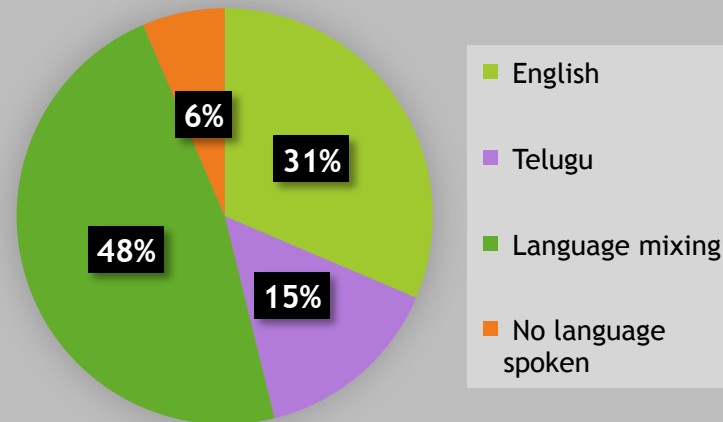


Translanguaging in English class across 3 Sites

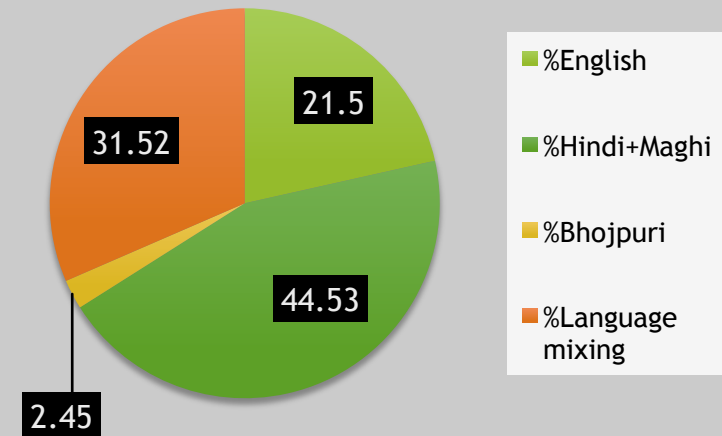
% Learner language use
(English Moi)



% Learner language use
(Telugu Moi)



% Learner language use
(Hindi Moi)



LEARNERS

- They attempt to use English/target language.
- They use the stronger language (L1 or state language) more frequently to express understanding.
- They also use the strategy of language mixing .

Translanguaging in English classes

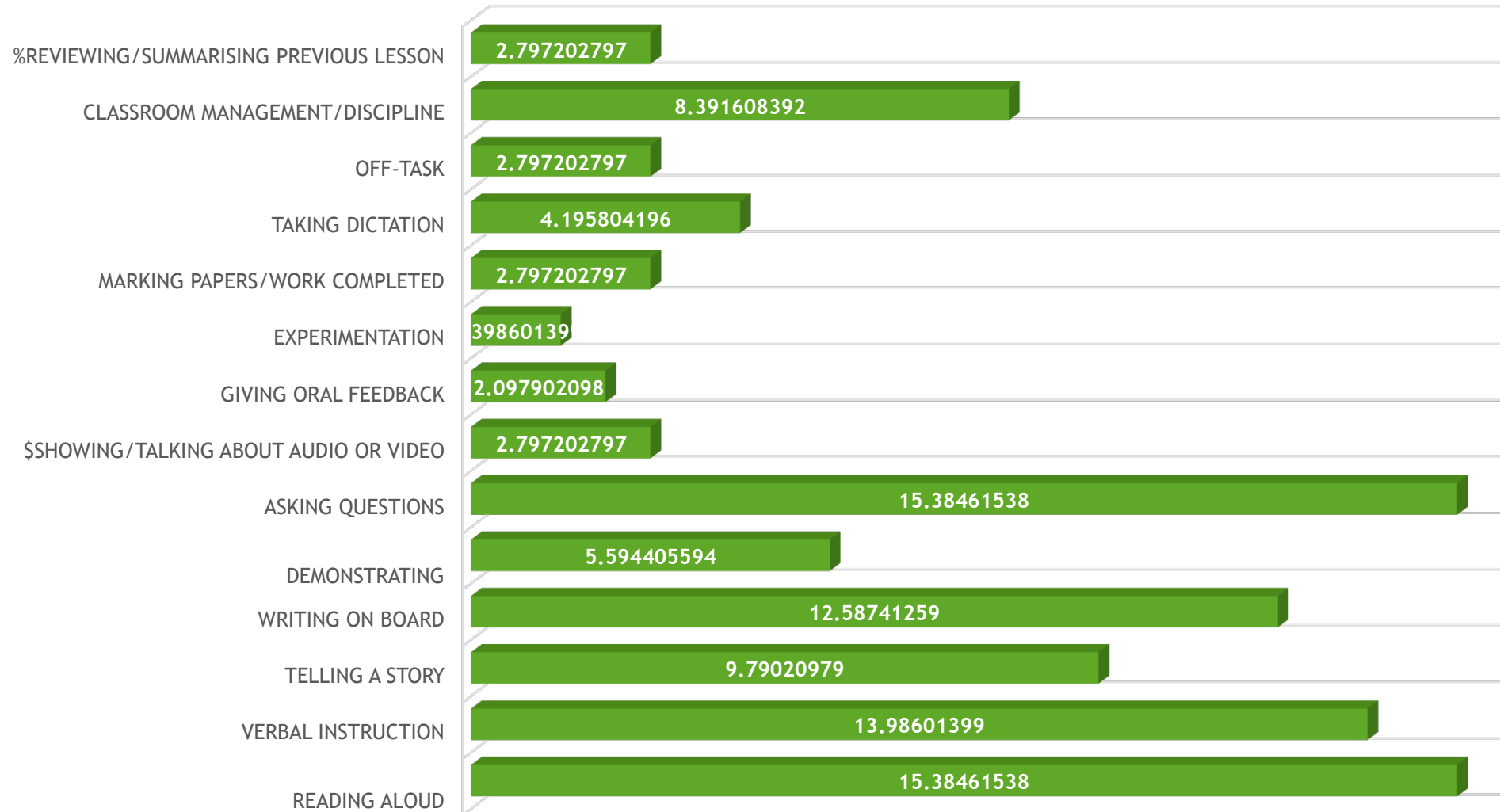
- ▶ **77%** Teachers have access to three or four languages in each site.
- ▶ This is reflected in the high proportion of language mixing across the three Mols (**51%** by teachers; **42%** by learners)
- ▶ English as one language is also attempted (**29%** by teachers; by learners **30%**)
 - * Interestingly, in Patna site, teachers use **2%** monolingual English but learners use **21.5%**
- ▶ Teachers prefer to use state language (**90%-75%**) over English for instructional purposes.

Translanguaging is practiced in the English classrooms rather than the monolingual 'two solitude' practice. This is encouraging!

But, *for what purposes do teachers use translanguaging?*

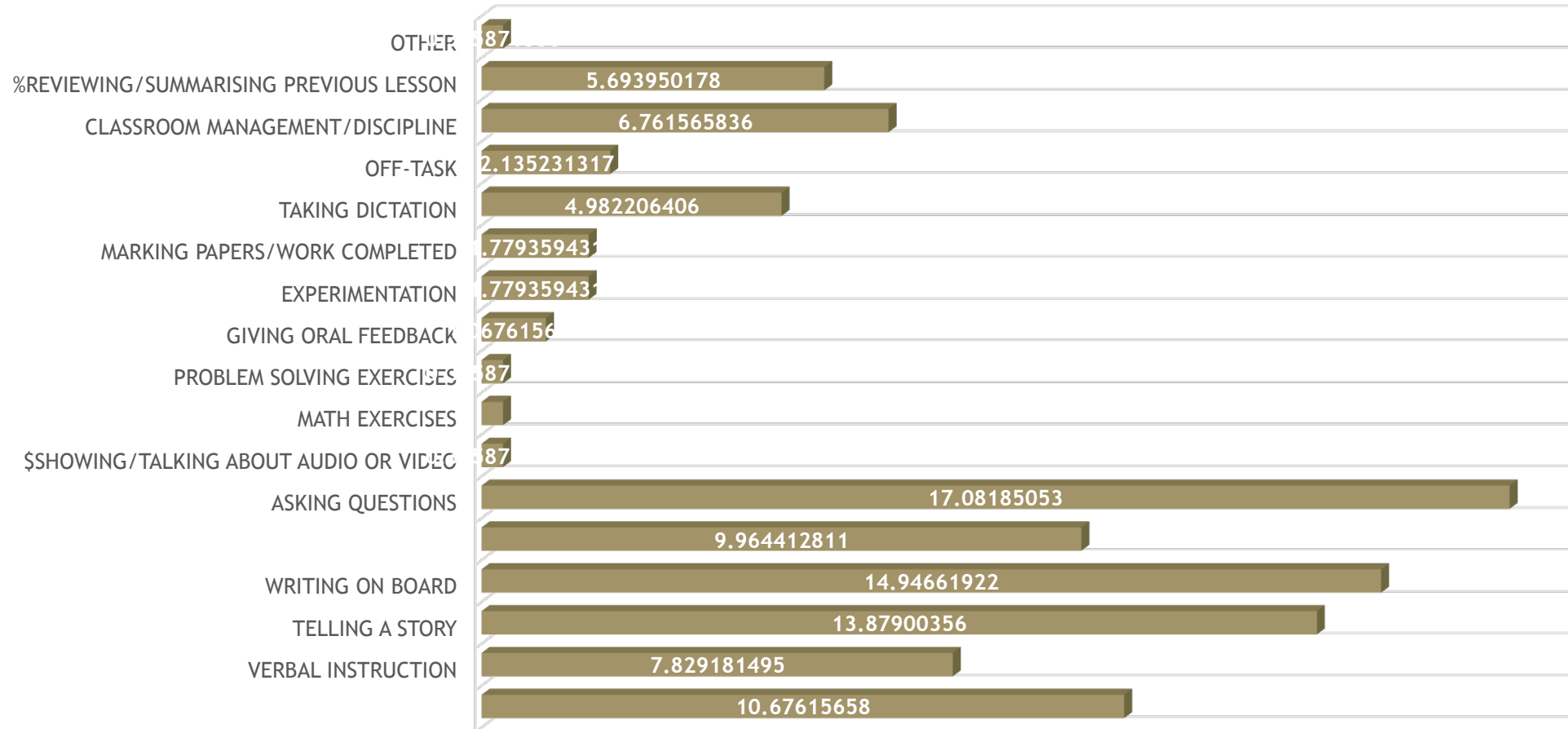
CLASSROOM PROCESSES: Teacher Activities

% TEACHER ACTIVITY(ENGLISH MEDIUM)

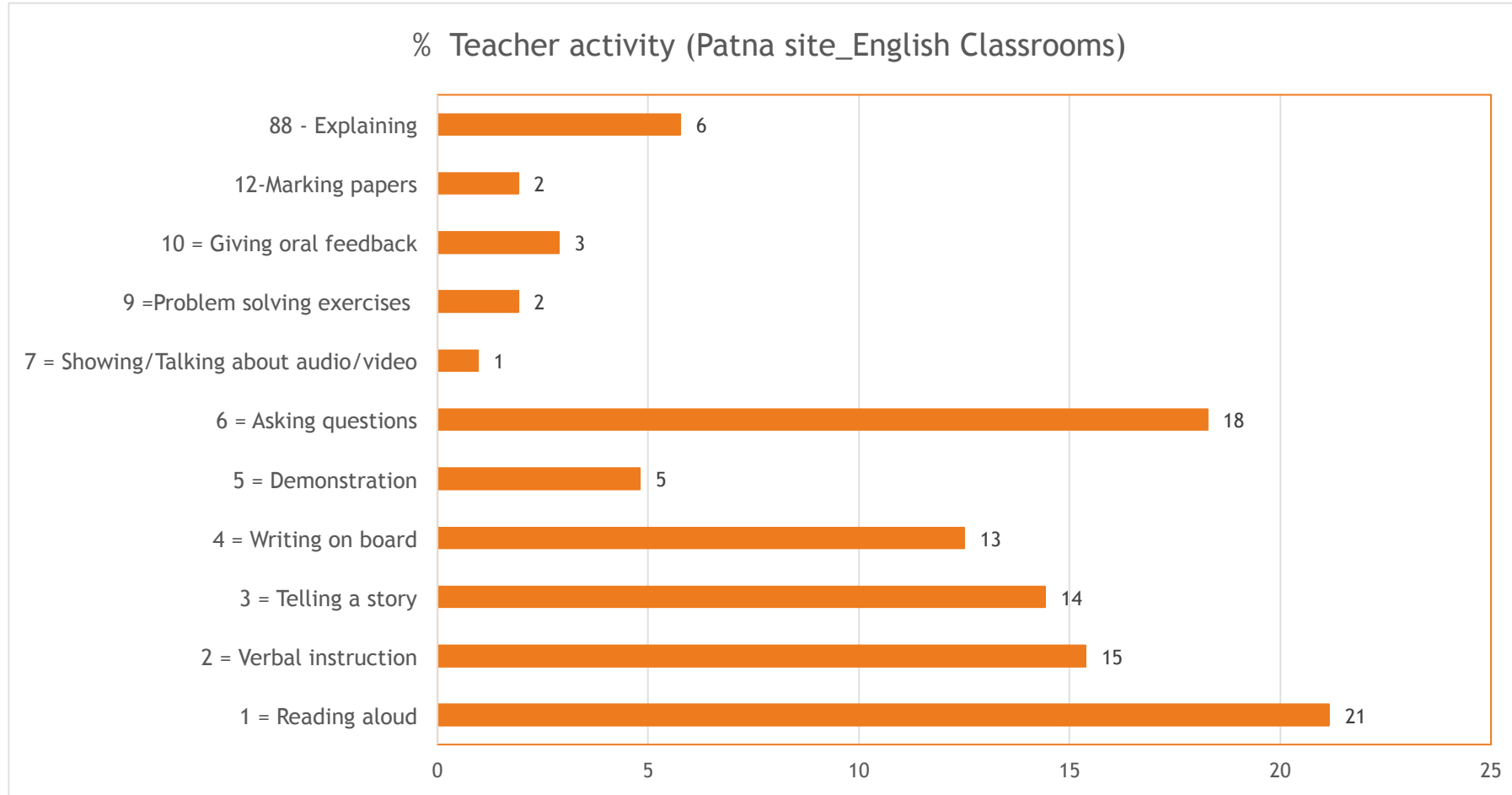


CLASSROOM PROCESSES: Teacher Activities

% TEACHER ACTIVITY(TELUGU MEDIUM)



CLASSROOM PROCESSES: Teacher Activities



CLASSROOM PROCESSES: Teacher Activities

► Activities attempted more frequently across Mol/Sites

Reading aloud:

Asking questions:

Writing on board:

Telling a story:

Classroom management:

► Activities attempted less frequently across Mol/Sites

Giving feedback:

Summarising from previous lesson:

Problem solving exercises:

Explaining:

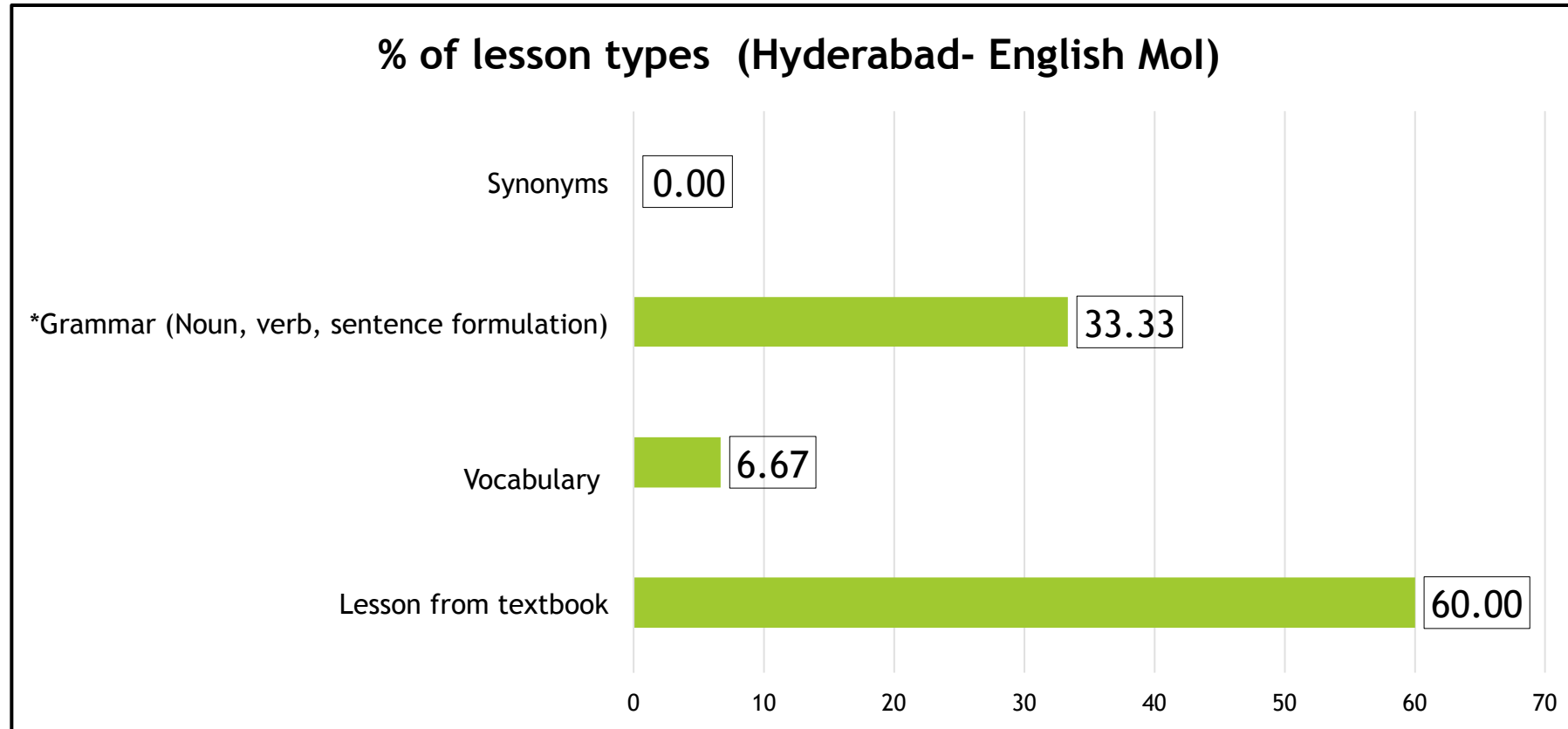
Demonstrating:

Conclusions:

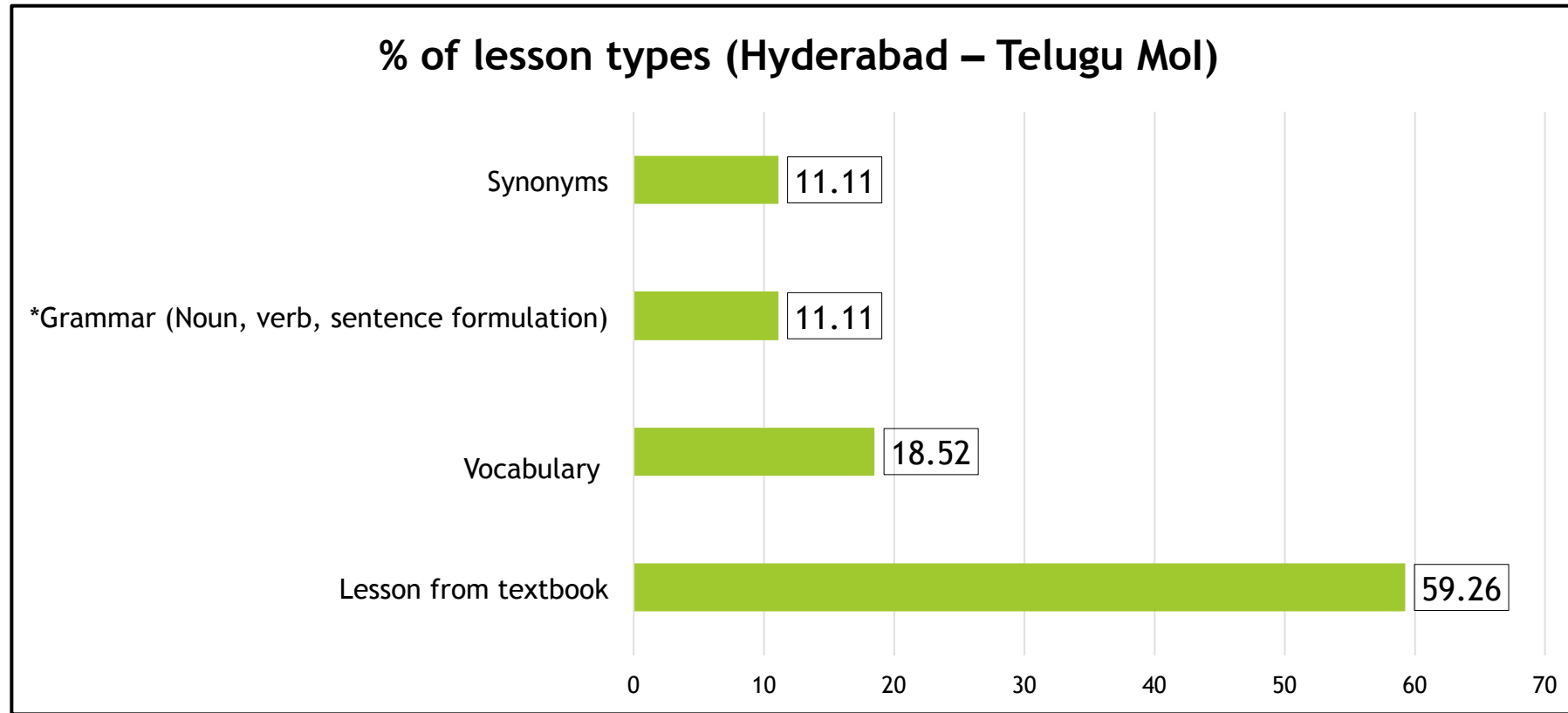
- Reading aloud in the target language is a common practice that shows learners are attending to reading for **decoding** rather than comprehension.
- Teacher fronted activities are **more frequent**
- Activities to enable learners engage in their learning processes by getting feedback or solving problems or getting explanations about concepts are less frequent

Translanguaging is not used for higher level concept learning or feedback but perhaps for meaning translation & classroom management.

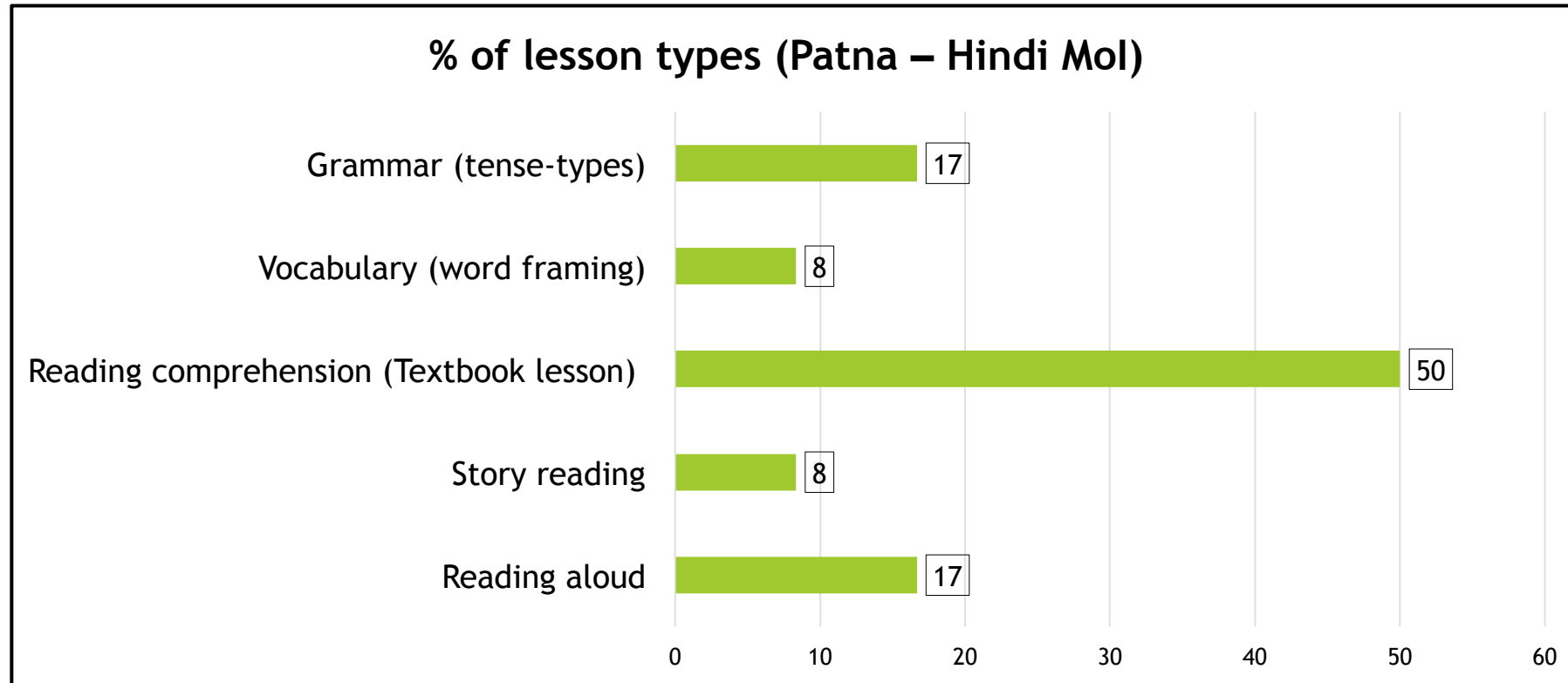
Focus of language lessons – English medium schools



Focus of language lessons – Telugu medium schools



Focus of language lessons – Hindi medium schools



Focus of language lessons and ELT

A few conclusions across the three sites -

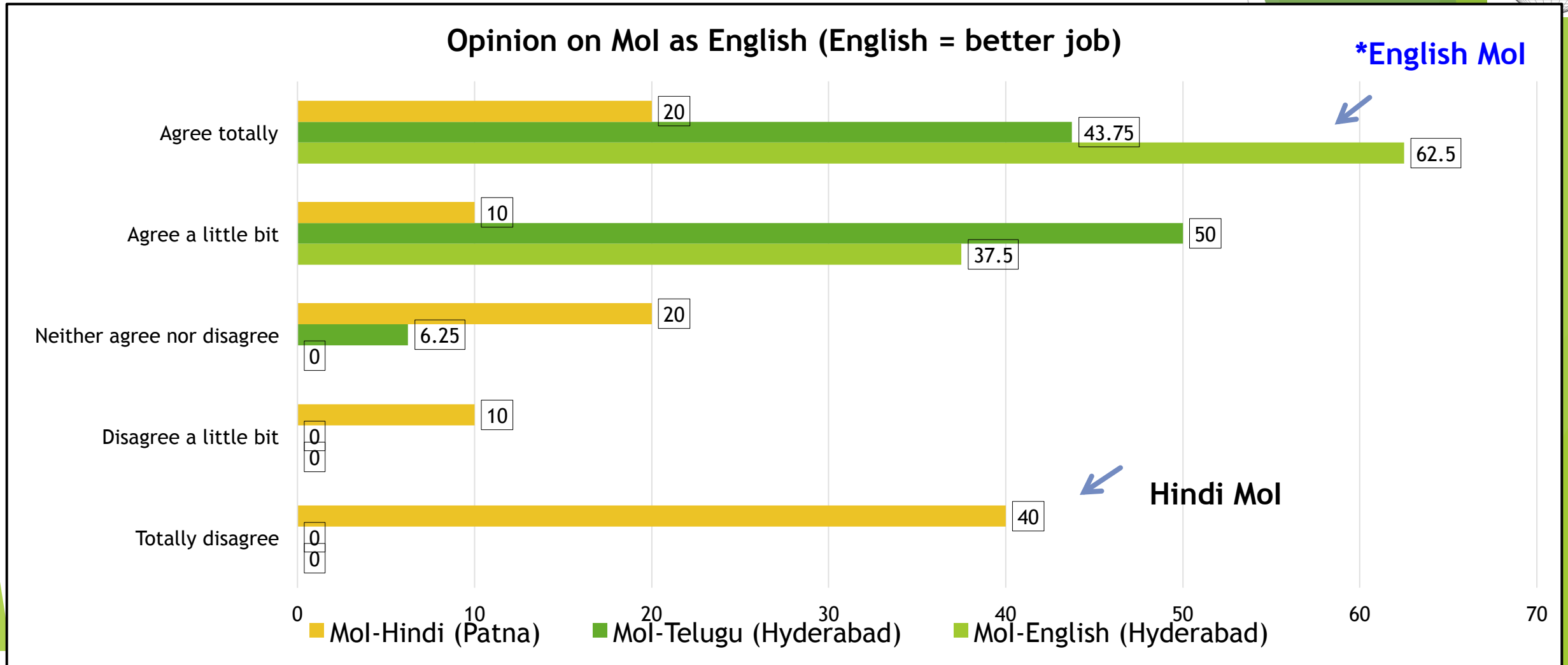
- ▶ English language teaching is heavily dependent on the textbook as the primary source of input: studying lessons from text book are at **55%**.
- ▶ Some attempts are made to take up aspects of language skills (reading as read aloud: simple view of reading) (**17%**, only Patna) and elements - grammar (**20%**) and vocabulary (**11%**).
- ▶ English is mostly taught as a subject for purposes of textbook syllabus completion; its communicative usage is not the focus of the English classes.

A reflection point:



Though translanguaging is used in the ELT classrooms in challenging contexts, the activities and lesson topics are textbook dependent and reading aloud rather than reading for comprehension is practiced. What could be reasons for such limited focus of the language lessons?

Teacher opinion on use of English as Mol



**Favorable attitudes towards English as Mol is higher in Hyderabad than Patna.*

Final comments...

Teachers' educational background and multilinguality of teachers & learners are present.

Classes are spaces to practice translanguageing.



Prerequisites for CALP transfer and development (Cummins 2007)

► What is challenging?

1. Low SES?
2. Lack of parental support and less print exposure at home?
3. Teacher proficiency and attitude towards the target language?
4. Simple view of reading to decode rather than reading for comprehension?
5. Lack of teacher training to 'enable' learners to transfer multilingual resources from stronger language(s) to other developing languages?
6. Not using translanguageing for a variety of pedagogic purposes to enable communicative & academic use of the MI?

Work ahead...

Classroom Processes: Possible uses of translanguaging to be encouraged

- ▶ to explain content or concepts
- ▶ to give feedback
- ▶ to encourage students
- ▶ to give instructions
- ▶ to refer to specific things/ objects

Wide scale teacher training to help teachers practice translanguaging for a variety of pedagogic purposes to enable learners transfer school skills and concept learning from stronger to the developing language.

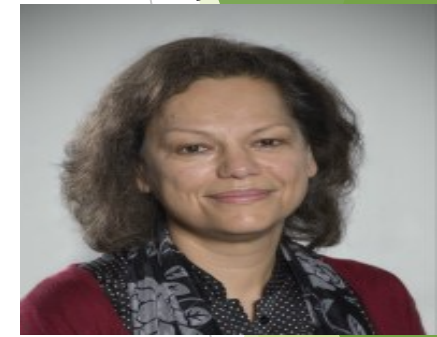
Parental push for monolingualism in the form of English Mol or English classrooms right from primary grades are not likely to yield positive outcomes.

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Thank you for your attention!!!

