

My name is Dr Lina Adinolfi, and I am a Lecturer in English Language Teaching. My audio blog explores the process of enabling local ownership of a mass-scale international teacher education programme, TESS-India. Traditional teacher education initiatives have either been undertaken on small scale, or a mass, often top-down, one-size-fits-all scale. TESS-India is underpinned by seven subject-related sets of multi-format, multimedia teacher education Open Educational Resources (OER), the product of a collaborative co-writing process by The Open University and Indian pedagogues. The programme is not an intervention, but is intended to fit into existing structures and initiatives.

Much has been written about the role of OER in improving access to digital educational material, much less about how such resources may be re-versioned, in order to be made meaningful to their end users in different contexts. The challenge, therefore, was how to support the appropriation and local ownership of the suite of 125 TESS-India OER, while also preserving their pedagogic integrity. This involved a process of localisation, the re-versioning of the approved English version of the open educational resources, in line with the different linguistic, geographical and cultural contexts of the project states. It should be mentioned that among the seven participating states, four used distinct languages and the other three used three variants of Hindi.

The industrial scale localisation process involved the establishment of state-based teams of subject specialists, and consisted of two elements; translation and adaptation. Among these were names of people, places, plants, festivals, artefacts, images and curriculum features. The process began with an initial state-based Open University facilitated workshop with the localising team in each state. The teams were then left to decide how to proceed themselves. This involved allocating tasks, agreeing procedures, on a glossary of agreed terms and agreeing which geographical and cultural elements to adapt. Finally, the teams agreed a quality assurance protocol as a means of reviewing and refining the localised versions. On completion the seven state-specific localised versions were uploaded on to the TESS-India website alongside the English one.

The Director of the Programme and I subsequently examined the documentation and interview data associated with the localisation process. We noted for example the importance of enabling ownership of the process itself, by being open to the different approaches that each state adopted. This involved various approaches to translation and adaptation. Sometimes they were done separately, other times they were done simultaneously. Physical working environments differed, with some participants dispersed, and other participants working in the same room. Some teams worked on hard copy, other teams worked online. Teams also used social media differently to support communication. We recognised the important role of translation in local versioning. Very few geographical and cultural adaptations were made. Possible explanations for such reluctance to adapt the materials beyond the translation were participant perceptions of the collaborative UK-Indian regional materials made them sufficiently generically appropriate to the wider India context without requiring additional local changes for each state. Participants may also have lacked experience and confidence in making changes of this kind. Another possibility is the grids supplied to assist with the process of localisation were actually overly constraining. A more likely explanation however is the fact that the exercise involved a disconnect between a paper exercise and actually using the materials in situ with the end users. Such observations notwithstanding, a number of benefits were identified as a result of the localisation process. New forms of collaboration communication were employed, new skills were developed, more importantly, the process involved a deeper engagement with the open educational resources and a greater understanding of the pedagogic principles underlying them. The contribution of personal and collective professional agency resulted thus in a genuine sense of ownership. In reflecting in the localisation exercise, I

would like to conclude by saying how much I was struck by the extraordinary levels of commitment and dedication by all the state-based teams in achieving localisation, on such a mass scale and within such tight timeframes. This had the effect of making the materials their own regardless of the relatively minimal differences between the state sets. Ultimately, full linguistic geographical and cultural localisation and appropriation of the OER can only really take place when deploying them with their end users, be these teachers or teacher educators. This opens up possibilities for subsequent more localised reversioning of the OER as they become embedded in increasingly specific, state teacher education programmes.