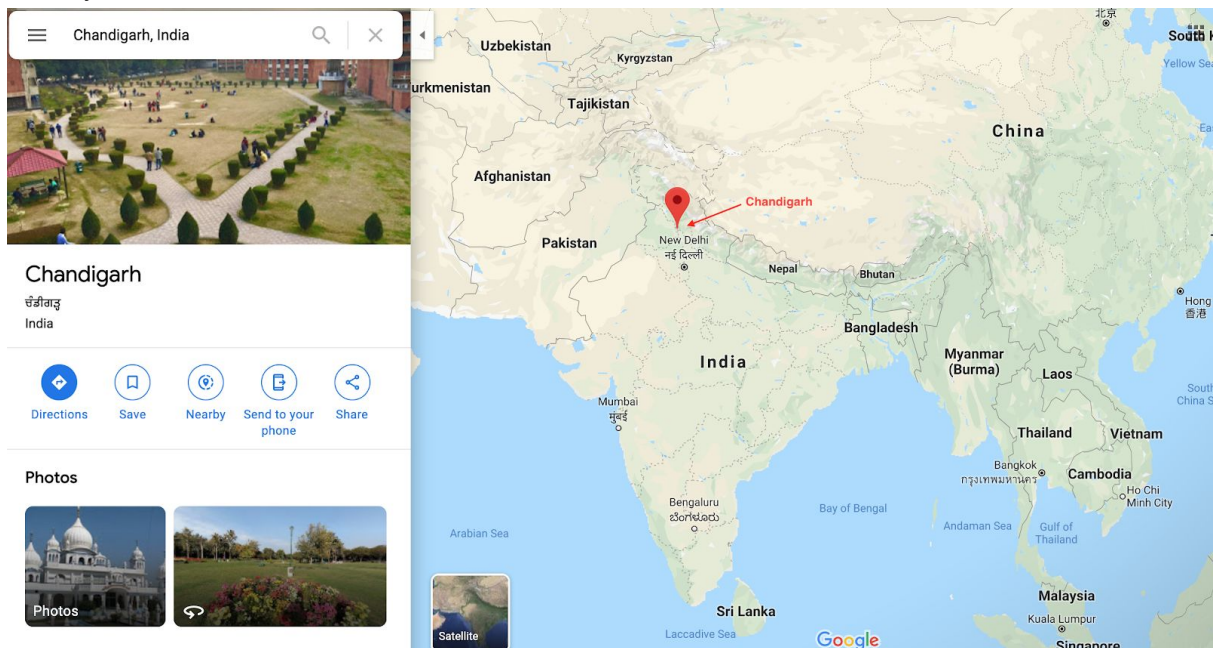
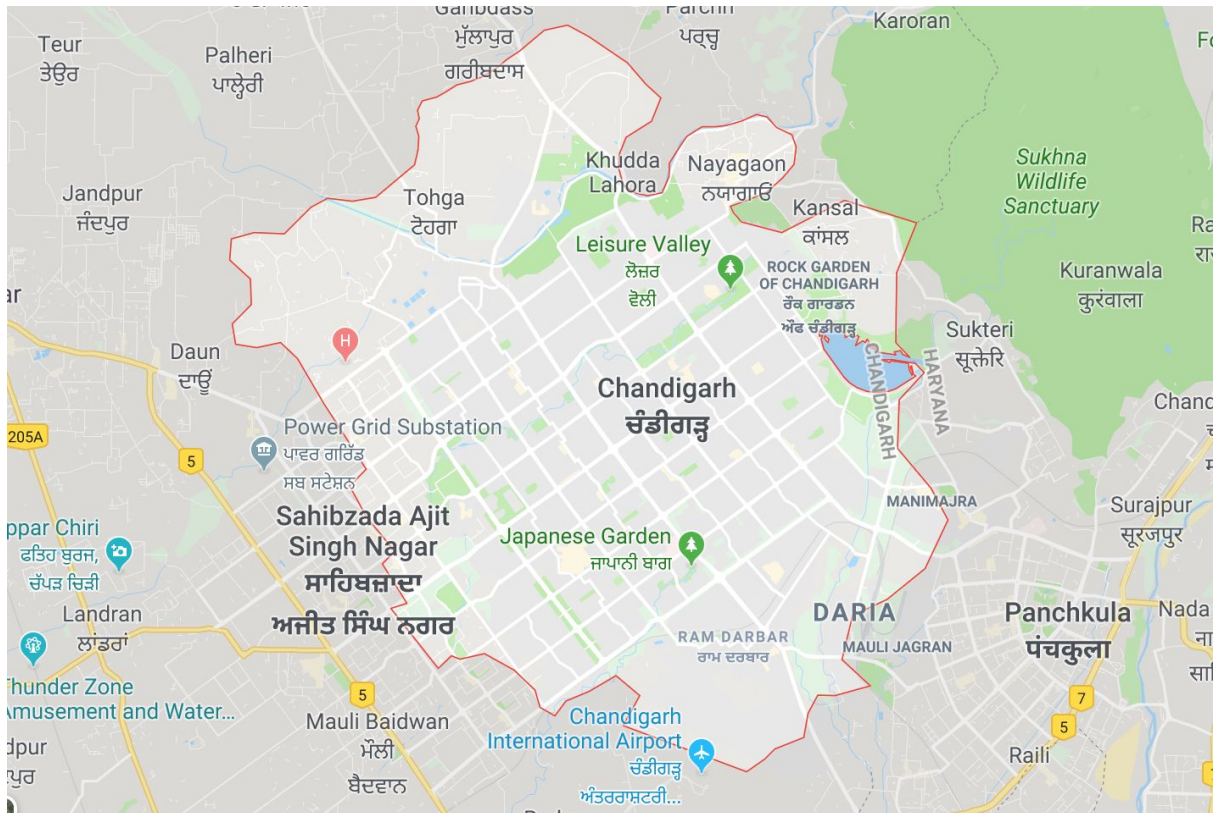


Main Questions:

What role has language played in forming your identity?

- Born in India; intersectionality of language, culture, and religion
- For example, being Punjabi is part of my identity
- Two L1s: Hindi and Punjabi; can read and write both
- Punjabi name: ਕੰਵਰ ਅਨਮੋਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਿੱਲ
- Hindi Name: कंवर अनमोल सिंह गिल
- Born and brought up in a big city: Chandigarh (population of 1.026 million)
- Type of Punjabi in the city had a different dialect than small towns.
- Some Punjabi dialects: Doaba, Malwi, Puadhi
- This could be because of the influence of exceptional education and perhaps the majority upper middle class that live in the city i.e. the socioeconomic status.
- **Future Practice:** Important to consider the socioeconomic status of the students that I will be teaching. As well, to understand that dialect is just a different way of speaking the same language and to honor this and not treat it as “being substandard or deficient, just interestingly different” (Coelho, 2016, p. 180).
- **Definition:** Dialects focus on features such as pronunciation, vocabulary, among many other attributes (Solono-Flores, 2016).
- This was different than the dialect that my grandparents (both paternal and maternal) spoke.
- Geographically they came from what is now called Pakistan.
- Considered in a way to demonstrate the different social class
- Chandigarh managed by the federal government and extremely well funded and resourced
- Literacy rate is 77%





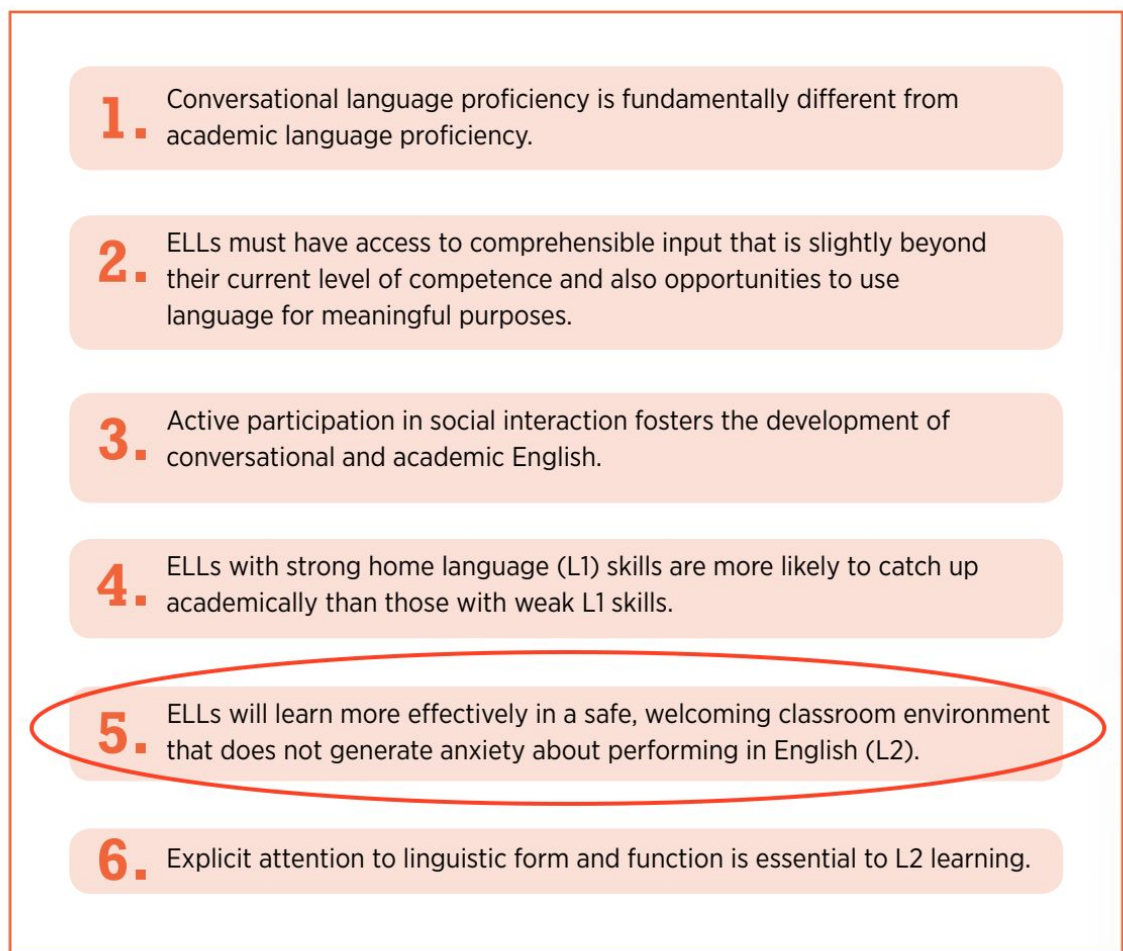
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- Main L2: English
- Went to an English medium school
- It was easier to get better in English since I learned it from KG

How did you learn the language(s) and dialect(s) you speak, and what experiences have you had using them?

- Learned Punjabi and Hindi primarily through *imitation and habit formation*, and *social interaction* (Coelho, 2016)
- *Imitation and habit formation* theory says that children “imitate the sounds that are reinforced in their language environment”. For example, saying *mama* or *papa*.
- I learned a lot at home. My mom would even sit down with me and teach me the Punjabi alphabet. At school however, I did not have a Punjabi subject until I was in grade 6 and it only lasted until grade 8.
- **Future practice:** Research shows that students who learn L2 after puberty will develop an accent and that is okay. As well, trying to learn L2 using the same sound system as their L1 can be difficult. For example, it is hard for me to distinguish between the sound of words that begin with *v* and *w*. Also, personally I had to learn through imitation how to pronounce words that begin with *th* (like theory, third, etc.). Understanding my own personal struggles will help me more empathetic towards my students who find themselves in the same shoes.
- *Social interaction* theory says that one can learn language from the “interaction between the learner and the language environment. For example, listening to a story or learning how to play a game.
- This theory relies on Vygotsky’s concept of the **zone of proximal development**.
- I remember distinctly how the negative social interaction with my classroom teachers made it difficult for me to learn English. It even ended up being something I wasn’t interested in or found boring.

- **Future practice:** Important for me to provide ELLs the opportunities where they can engage in a purposeful interaction with their peers using English. An opportunity to lead a club in an activity that they enjoy (for example, football) could be used following an asset-based model and make them empowered in the learning process. Also, crucial to keep in mind that as they learn a new language I should be mindful on how I provide meaningful feedback. Coelho points out that criticizing language errors or correcting their speech are barriers to create an inclusive environment that facilitates language learning.
- Learning English made use of all the three language theories (*imitation and habit formation, innate cognitive process, and social interaction*).
- Had a lot of hiccups when learning how to read and write. For example, when I began to write it was not easy to read which is normal considering that you're only beginning to write. However, I was put in a different class where I had to learn how to write properly and that too using cursive writing.
- **Future practice:** Looking back at that experience, I would never do that to a student who is struggling to write. You don't know their struggles or their background and should not make any judgments based on how well they can read or write. One of the key principles of teaching ELLs in the classroom (see Figure 1.2 below) is that "ELLs will learn more effectively in a safe, welcoming classroom environment that does not generate anxiety about performing in English (L2)" (Cummins, 2015, p. 13).


Figure 1.2 Six Principles of Teaching ELLs in Mainstream Classrooms



On the contrary, if a student picks up quickly how to speak the language efficiently, then that does not mean they don't need any further support. Cummins (as cited in Coelho 2016, p.

166) states that students develop everyday language proficiency quickly, within 2-3 years. However, the academic language proficiency takes much longer, at least 5 years, to develop. Also important to keep in mind, that while it can take them more than 5 years to develop academic proficiency, the native English speakers are improving their own language development during this time. Therefore, this means that the ELLs may never catch up to the native speakers.

- My English competency helped me as I came to Canada. However, my academic language competence was lacking. This was also affected because of the adjustment to the new environment. I was in Stage 1 of the Adjustment Period where I was observing more than participating. I also had to ask for academic writing support from the University and that helped. Keeping this perspective in mind will help me provide the support to the students as they transition into secondary school and eventually to post-secondary school.



Adjustment Period

Stage 1: Arrival & First Impressions	Stage 2: Culture Shock	Stage 3: Recovery & Optimism	Stage 4: Acculturation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adventure, optimism, euphoria ● Anxious about new situation ● Observe, rather than participate in, classroom situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discomfort, dislocation, alienation ● Fluctuate between curiosity, adventure, optimism, and sadness, loss and despair ● Sense of identity threatened. May withdraw or act out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Renewed sense of optimism & autonomy ● Develop coping skills and confidence ● Can communicate for most day-to-day purposes ● Form friendships outside own cultural & linguistic groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resolve internal conflicts + re-create identities ● Integrate → adopting some new values & practices, maintaining aspects of own culture ● Move comfortably between languages and cultures; become bilingual & bicultural ● Flexibility in interactions

(Source: Adding English by Elizabeth Coelho, 2016)

- **Future practice:** Coelho mentions (reference p. 164) adolescents who enter a new language environment have to work with a “moving target” as they have to catch up to the language. This disadvantage may cause them to graduate a year or two later from secondary school and may continue in the post-secondary education unless they’re provided appropriate support from the university/college.
- Apart from English L2 experiences, I have also had little experience with Spanish as I traveled recently to Costa Rica. I made heavy use of social interaction model to learn the basic phrases as I interacted with peers who knew the language. This helped me speak to convey a message, however, it was still difficult to understand the response.

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