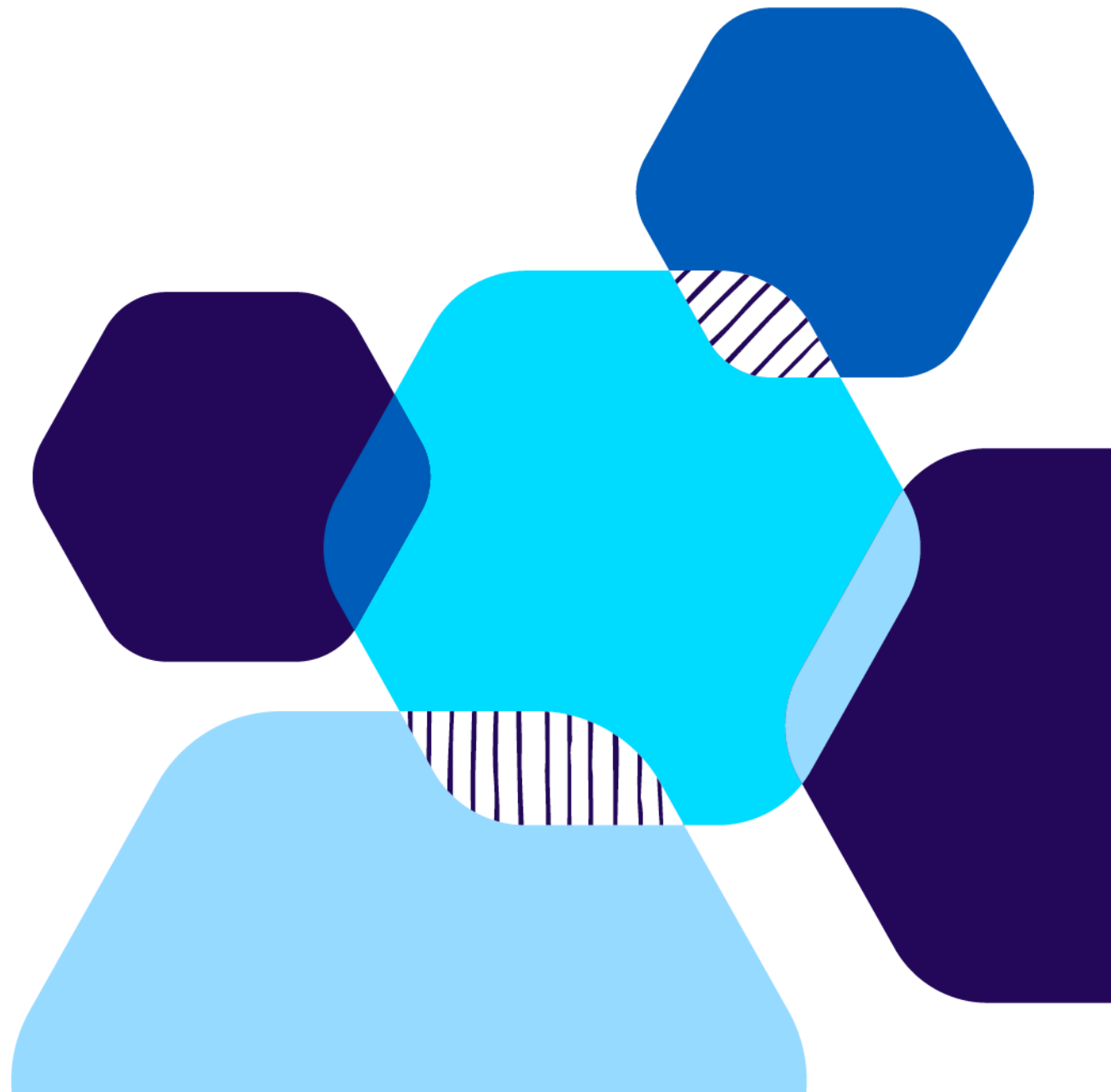


TeachingEnglish

Codeswitching and Translanguaging: Practical Classroom-Based Techniques for Scaffolding Learning

Presenter: Ezinne Chima

Saturday 19 September 2026



Pre-webinar poll*

Do you agree that multilingualism is an undeniable reality in Sub-Saharan African ELT classrooms?

- **True 98%**
- **False 1%**

On a scale of **1–5**, rate your **level of proficiency** in the language(s) commonly used by the learners in your teaching environment.

- 1 – **29%**
- 2 – **8%**
- 3 – **21%**
- 4 – **27%**
- 5 – **15%**

*Across Telegram and WhatsApp

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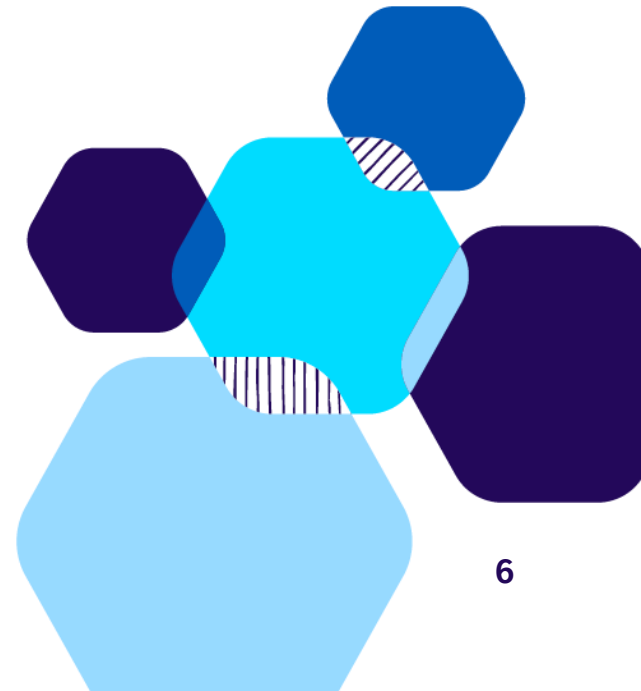
About the speaker

Ezinne Chima is a passionate language educator and teacher educator from Nigeria with over ten years of experience. She holds a Master's Degree in English. She is a member of ELTAN and currently, the coordinator of ELTAN, Ebonyi State Chapter. Her flare for supporting teacher professional development has spurred her into inspiring and mentoring teachers, guiding them through identifying professional development action plans to meet the 21st century ELT needs. She has facilitated teacher training programmes both physically and virtually for teachers in her context and English Connects Sub-Saharan Africa Telegram group.



Objectives

- 1. Understanding Codeswitching and Translanguaging**
- 2. Importance of these approaches**
- 3. Lesson stages where these approaches are most effective**
- 4. Techniques for applying these approaches for scaffolding learning**



Why this topic matters for language teachers across Sub-Saharan Africa

**Linguistic
diversity in
Sub-Saharan
Africa ELT
Classrooms**

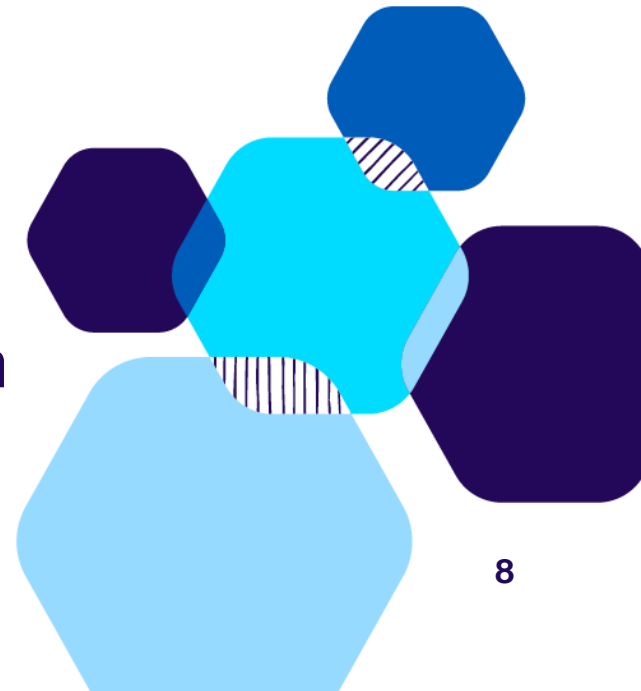
**Common
classroom
challenges**

**Moving from
'language
problem' to
'language
resource'**

Understanding Codeswitching and Translanguaging

Codeswitching is moving between languages during conversation while translanguaging is the deployment of one's entire linguistic repertoire flexibly in a conversation. Scholars argue that code-switching and translanguaging are powerful, student-centred scaffolding tools. Heugh et al. (2019) emphasise the importance of learners' home languages in the learning process. They note that:

- **Students can only learn through the languages that they know and understand.**
- **Most students cannot achieve high-level proficiency in English unless they develop high-level proficiency in their home language.**



Importance of these Approaches

They help learners:

**Reduce
cognitive
overload**

**Activate
prior
knowledge**

**Increase
participation**

**Build
confidence**

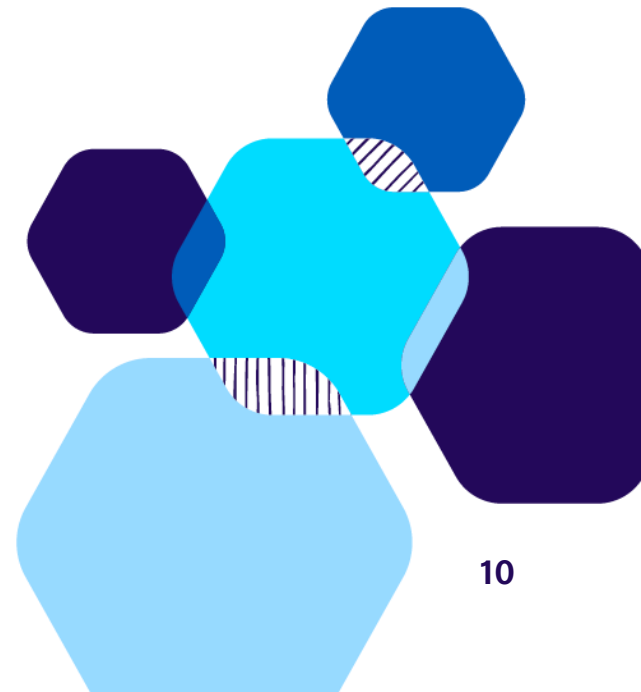
**Support
comprehension**

At What Stage of a Lesson are these Approaches most Effective?

They can support learning at every stage of the lesson.

1. Beginning of the lesson
2. During instruction
3. Guided Practice
4. Independent Practice
5. Assessment
6. Reflection

Question: At what stage of the lesson would you try these approaches in your next lesson? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6?

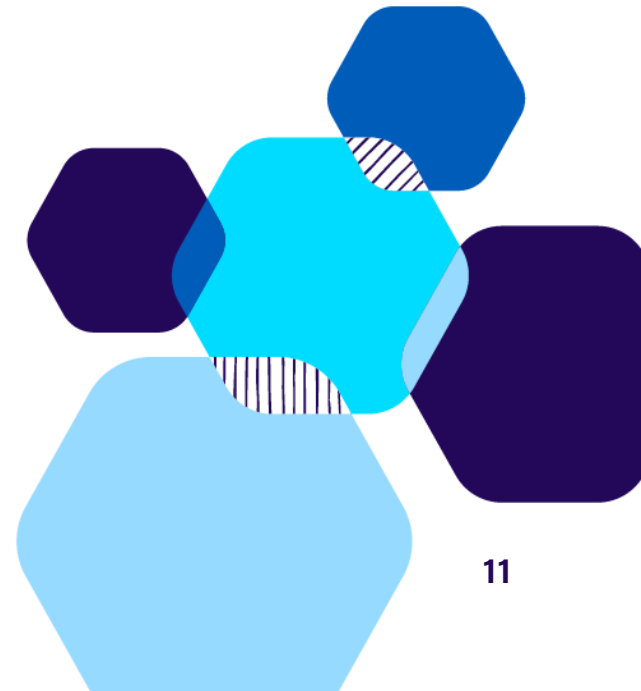


Technique 1: Create an Asset-Based Learning Environment

Teachers must understand that every language in the classroom is an asset.

Who has ever thrown away an asset? What do you do with an asset? You value it.

Lin (2013) opines that **‘Code-switching can be seen as a valuable communicative and pedagogical resource rather than a deficiency.’**



Technique 2: The Preview–View–Review Strategy

Preview

Activate prior knowledge using familiar language.



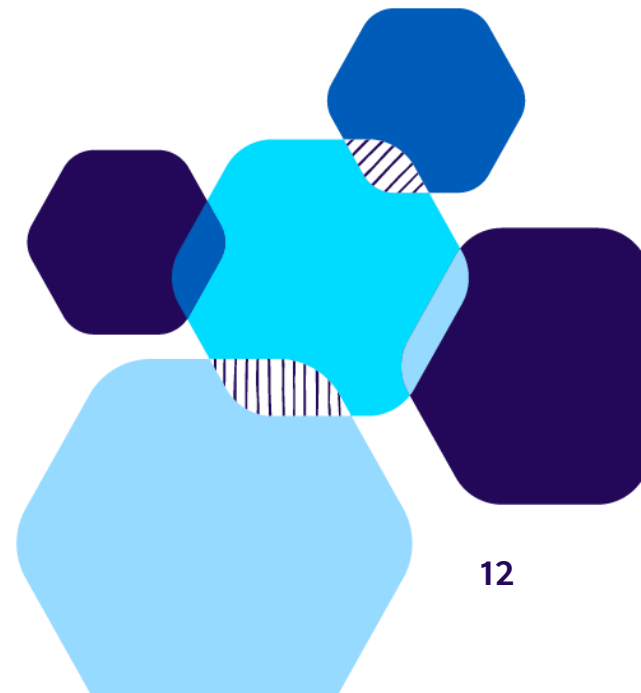
View

Teach the lesson mainly in English.



Review

Consolidate learning using English and, where helpful, brief discussion in familiar languages.



Technique 3: Brainstorming and Drafting

A simple four-step process:



Brainstorm ideas freely



Organise ideas



Discuss with a partner



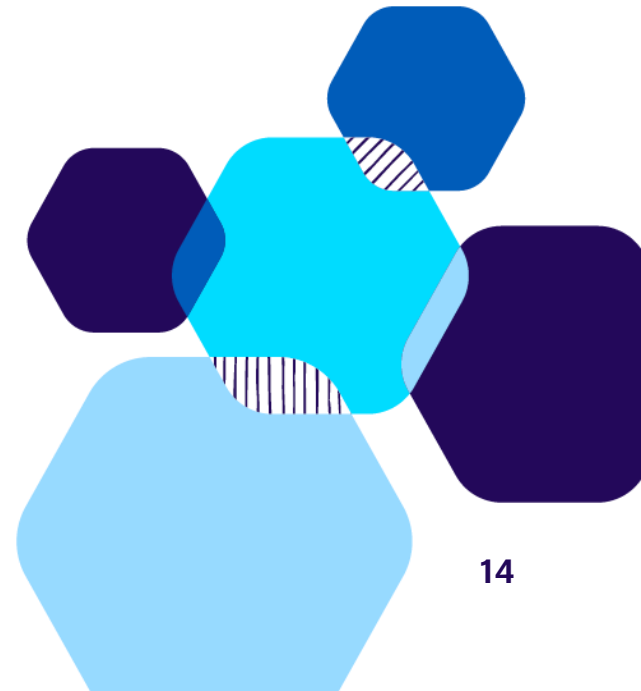
Produce the final work in English

My Favourite Festival

My favourite festival is the New Yam Festival.

It is celebrated every August in my community. During the festival, people wear beautiful traditional clothes and take part in dancing, coronation ceremonies, masquerade displays, colourful processions, cooking, and feasting.

Families, friends, and visitors come together to celebrate the occasion. I enjoy the New Yam Festival because it is a time of reunion, entertainment, and fun.



Technique 4: Peer Discussions

Think → **Pair** → **Share**

**Think
individually**

**Discuss with a
partner using
available
linguistic
resources**

**Share
ideas in
English**

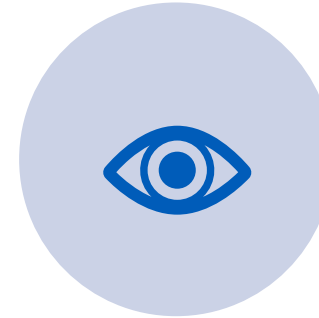
Technique 5: Integrating Multilingual Resources



**Human
resources**



**Print
resources**



**Visual
resources**



**Audio-visual
resources**

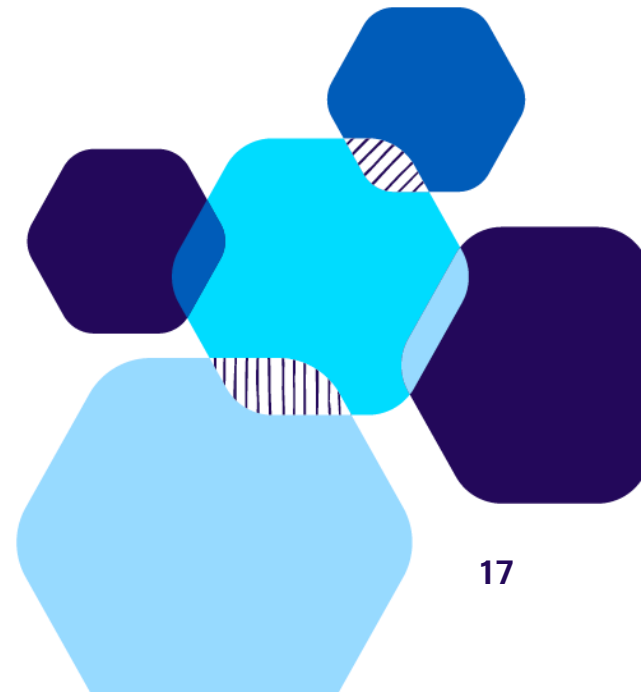


**Digital
resources**

Technique 6: Vocabulary and Metalinguistic Comparisons

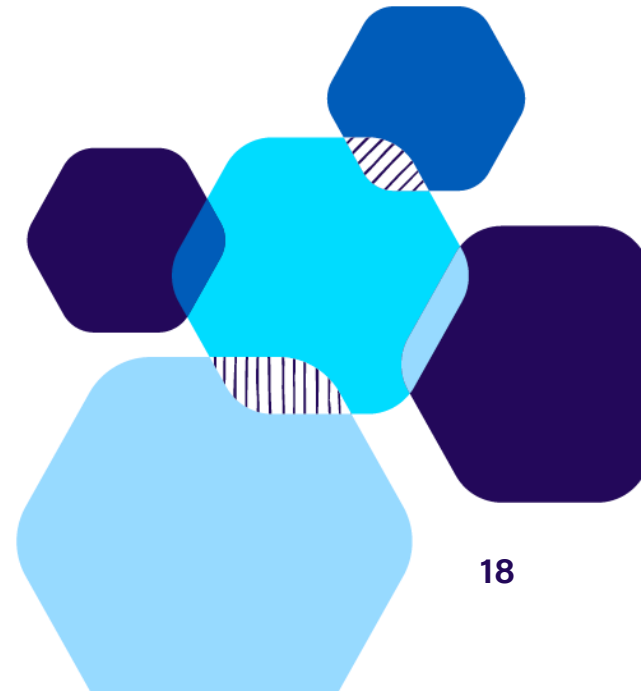
Encourage learners to contrast their home languages and English languages looking at:

- vocabulary
- pronunciation
- sentence structure
- grammar
- idioms and expressions



Which of these techniques would you adopt in your next lesson?

1. Create an Asset-Based Learning Environment
2. The Preview-View-Review Strategy
3. Brainstorming and Drafting
4. Peer Discussions
5. Integrating Multilingual Resources
6. Vocabulary and Metalinguistic Comparisons



Matching Activity: Match each challenge in Column A with the most appropriate solution in Column B.

A – Challenges

1. Target language reduction
2. Delayed fluency
3. Policy conflict
4. Less practice
5. Teacher limitation
6. Assessment difficulty

B – Possible Solutions

- A. Engage in CPD/join teacher associations and ELT CoP
- B. Assess in English
- C. Explain the pedagogical benefit of learners' L1
- D. Balance language use
- E. L1 only for scaffolding
- F. Increase opportunities for target language practice

Answer key: 1 – E ; 2 – F ; 3 – C ; 4 – D ; 5 – A ; 6 – B

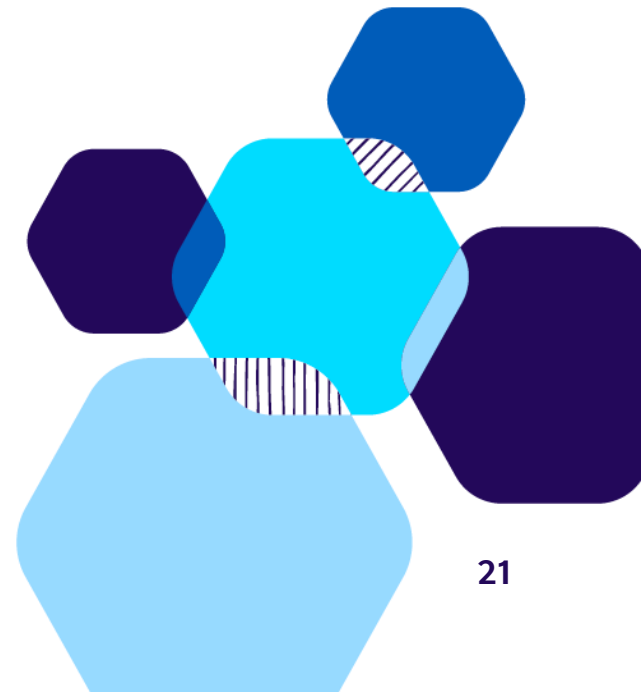
Challenges and possible solutions

Challenge	Solution
Target language reduction	L1 only for scaffolding
Delayed fluency	Increase opportunities for target language practice
Policy conflict	Explain the pedagogical benefit of learners L1
Less practice	Balance language use
Teacher limitation	Engage in CPD/join teacher associations and ELT CoP
Assessment difficulty	Assess in English

Key Takeaways

Remember:

- Learner's L1 is an asset, not a barrier
- Codeswitching and translanguaging are scaffolding tools, not replacements for English.
- Strategic use improves learning, confidence, and participation.
- Small classroom changes can make a significant difference.



References

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Next Webinar

Topic: Designing SDG-informed Assessment for Equity, Critical thinking, and Learner Agency

Presenter: Dr Kefyalew Woreta Haile from Ethiopia

Date: Saturday 17 October 2026
from **3PM GMT**

Registration link:

[https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/
events/designing-sdg-informed-
assessment](https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/events/designing-sdg-informed-assessment)

www.britishcouncil.org



**Designing SDG-informed
Assessment for Equity, Critical
thinking, and Learner Agency –
webinar**

with Dr Kefyalew Woreta Haile
Saturday 17 October 2026
From 15:00 GMT

