

EXPLORING THE ATTITUDE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TOWARDS THEIR MOTHER TONGUE IN GOA

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Abstract:

The significance of the study explores the attitude of undergraduate students towards their mother tongue in Goa, lies in its potential to elaborate on the language attitudes of young people in the state. As Goa is a multilingual and multicultural region, comprehending undergraduate students' attitudes about their mother tongue might reveal insight into the role of language in education, identity development, and interpersonal interactions.

This study can contribute to language policy and planning by providing data on undergraduate students' perceptions towards their mother tongue, which can inform the implementation of language programmes and curriculum. Moreover, this study's findings have implications for language teaching and learning in Goa and beyond, notably in multilingual environments where language attitude and preferences play a key role in language usage and survival.

Key words: Mother Tongue, Language Attitude, Education

1. Introduction

Goa's official language is Konkani, and the state is noted for its linguistic diversity, with speakers of Marathi, Hindi, and English, among several others. Besides this diversity, Konkani is an integral part of Goan cultural identity, and efforts have been taken to encourage its incorporation and study in educational institutions.

In recent years, the government of Goa has declared Konkani as an essential subject in many colleges. This initiative aims to encourage the use and study of Konkani among the younger generation and to preserve its cultural heritage. Recognizing the significance of these languages in the state, various colleges have initiated to offer courses in Marathi and Hindi, among other mother tongues.

It is considered that becoming fluent in one's native language would perhaps aid in the acquisition of knowledge and enhance assimilation. Students who are tutored in their native language are more likely to engage in and participate in the learning process, leading to better academic performance. Also, learning in one's mother tongue can help preserve and promote the language and cultural legacy.

Yet, the accessibility of English as the medium of instruction in Goa's higher education can have an impact on the role of mother tongue in learning. Many students and parents depict English as a fundamental language for success in the job markets and may attribute a greater value on its proficiency than in mother tongue.

1.1 Mother Tongue in Education

Mother tongue, frequently known to as first language (L1), is the language that a person acquires initially and uses most frequently in daily life. The symbolic value of mother tongue diminishes with the upgrading of literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. When students are instructed in the mother tongue in which they are most proficient, they are able to express themselves more clearly, particularly during classroom discussions, and absorb new concepts more efficiently. This boosts to their overall academic achievement.

Language of homeland has a crucial part in the formation of identity, culture, and legacy. Students who are instructed in their native language are able to build a greater sense of self and cultural identity, which can strengthen their sense of belonging and connection to the community. Moreover, mother tongue aids in preserving cultural history and fostering linguistic diversity.

The use of one's native language can help the acquisition of additional languages. When students have a solid foundation in their native language, they are more likely to learn additional languages

efficiently. They have a firm basis in language acquisition methodologies, cognitive processes, and metalinguistic awareness.

1.2 Language attitudes on learning of mother tongue

In Goa, language attitudes can have a tremendous effect on language acquisition. Individuals' language attitudes consist of their beliefs, emotions, and perceptions regarding a particular language or linguistic variant. These attitudes can be positive or negative and can impair motivation, learning strategies, and the overall success of language acquisition.

Linguistic attitudes can influence the motivation of language learners. If learners have favorable opinions regarding a language, they are more likely to be driven to acquire it and to commit time and effort to the procedure. In contrast, if learners have unfavourable opinions towards a language, they may lack motivation to study it and be less invested in their education.

Linguistic attitudes can impact the learning strategies of students. Learners with favourable attitudes towards a language are more likely to employ successful learning strategies, such as exploring out opportunities to use the language, consistently practising, and requesting feedback. In contrast, language learners with negative attitudes may not be as committed to their studies and may not employ effective learning practices.

Linguistic attitudes can enhance achievement of language learners. Learners with good attitudes about a language are more likely to attain higher levels of proficiency, whereas those with negative attitudes may struggle to get the same level of proficiency.

2. Literature Review

A few studies have been undertaken on language attitudes in Goa, specifically on attitudes towards the state's official language, Konkani. Following are some of these research' most important findings:

According to a survey done by Gokhale and Rodrigues (1998), students and parents perceived Konkani positively, with many reflecting it as an integral component of their cultural identity. Yet, the study also revealed a limitation of learning and usage alternatives for Konkani, particularly in the educational sector.

Carvalho (2002) observed in a second survey that there was a preference for English as the language of education institutions, with many parents and students believing that it would bring better future employment chances. Several students considered Konkani as a less significant language than English, according to the results of the study.

In a more recent study done by Sardesai (2013), the authors admit a growing interest in Konkani among young people, especially those active in cultural and literary pursuits. Many young people recognized Konkani as an integral part of their cultural identity and were interested.

3. Methodology

An online random sampling survey is a research method that involves collecting data from a sample of individuals through the use of a questionnaire. Surveys are often used to collect data on attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and behaviors.

In this study, the random sampling survey questionnaire consisted of a series of questions related to the students' attitudes towards their mother tongue. The questions have asked about the students' perceptions of the importance of their mother tongue, their use of the language in daily life, their attitudes towards the use of the language in education, and their motivations for learning or not learning the language

4. Analysis

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Gender	Religion	
	Hindu	Christian
Female	14	40
Male	7	14
Total	21	54

Table 4.1.1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

From the table 4.1.1, we can see that there are more Christians (54) than Hindus (21) in the sample. Among Christians, there are more females (40) than males (14), while among Hindus, the number of females (14) is the same as the number of males (7).

4.2 Mother Tongue

Mother Tongue	Used in Daily Life				
	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Konkani	59	08	03	00	02
English	00	00	00	00	00
Hindi	01	00	00	01	00
Marathi	01	00	00	00	00
Other	00	00	00	00	00

Table 4.2.1: Participant's Use of Mother Tongue

The table 4.2.1 presents data on the frequency of use of different languages in daily life, specifically for the languages Konkani, English, Hindi, Marathi, and Other. The data are presented in terms of the frequency of respondents who reported using each language very often, often, sometimes, rarely, or never.

According to the table, Konkani is the most frequently used language in daily life, with 59 of respondents reporting that they use it very often. This suggests that Konkani is likely the mother tongue or primary language of a majority of the respondents. Another 8 of the respondents reported using Konkani often, indicating that it is a common language used in their community.

English, on the other hand, was not reported to be used at all in daily life by any of the respondents. This could suggest that the survey was conducted in a region where English is not commonly used or that the respondents were not proficient in English.

Hindi and Marathi were both reported to be used rarely, with only 1 of respondents in each reporting that they use either language very often. This suggests that the respondents may not be native of Goa, or that they live in a region of Goa where these languages are commonly used.

Finally, the category "Other" did not have any responses, so it is unclear which languages or dialects would fall under this category.

4.3 Attitude towards Mother Language

Be proud of Mother Language		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	74	98.7
No	01	01.3%

Table 4.3.1: Attitude of Towards Mother Language

The table 4.3.1 represents the responses to a statement "Be proud of Mother Language". The total number of responses was 75. Out of these, 74 (or 98.7%) respondents answered "Yes", indicating that they be proud of their mother language. The remaining respondent (1.3%) answered "No", indicating that they do not be proud of their mother language.

Discrimination or Prejudice faced due to Mother Language		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	13.3%
No	65	86.7%

Table 4.3.2: Discrimination or Prejudice faced due to Mother Language

The table 4.3.2 represents the responses to a question about whether the respondents have faced discrimination or prejudice due to their mother language. The total number of responses was 75. Out of these, 10 respondents (or 13.3%) answered "Yes", indicating that they have faced discrimination or prejudice due to their mother language. 65 respondents (or 86.7%) answered "No", indicating that they have not faced discrimination or prejudice due to their mother language.

This data suggests that while some individuals have faced discrimination or prejudice due to their mother language, the majority of the respondents have not. Discrimination or prejudice based on language can have a significant impact on an individual's sense of identity and their opportunities in various aspects of life, such as education and employment.

4.4 Support towards Mother Language by Educational Institutions and the Media

Representation of Mother Language by Educational Institute's and Media		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	59	78.7%
No	16	21.3%

Table 4.4.1 Representation of Mother Language by Educational Institutions and Media

The table presents the responses of 75 undergraduate students to a survey question regarding the representation of their mother language by educational institutions and media. Of the total respondents, 78.7% (59) answered "Yes," indicating that they believe that their mother tongue is adequately represented in educational institutions and media. In contrast, 21.3% (16) answered "No," indicating that they do not believe that their mother tongue is adequately represented.

4.5 Steps Taken to learn more about Mother Language and its cultural significance by the student.

Steps Taken to learn more about Mother Language and its cultural significance		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	29	38.7%
No	46	61.3%

Table 4.5.1 Representation of Mother Language by State Government

The data suggests that there is a need for more efforts to promote language and cultural education among the population. The fact that over 60% of the respondents have not taken steps to learn more about their mother language and its cultural significance could be due to a lack of awareness, access to resources, or interest.

It is essential to recognize the importance of language and cultural education in preserving and promoting cultural heritage and identity. Therefore, there should be more initiatives to encourage individuals to explore and learn more about their mother tongue and cultural practices. These

initiatives could include providing access to language learning resources, promoting cultural events and celebrations, and integrating cultural education into formal education systems.

4.6 Sense of Goan Identity

Lose sense of Goan identity if you speak in English.		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	16	21.3%
No	59	78.7%

Table 4.6.1 Representation of Sense of Goan Identity

The provided data in table 4.6.1 suggests that there is a significant percentage of individuals in the state of Goa who believe that speaking in English can lead to a loss of Goan identity. Out of the total respondents, 21.3% (16 individuals) agreed with this statement, while the majority, 78.7% (59 individuals), disagreed.

Language is closely tied to cultural identity, and Goa being a region where Konkani is widely spoken as the mother language, it's not uncommon to find people who hold strong beliefs about preserving their cultural heritage. While a sizable portion associates the use of English with a potential loss of Goan identity, the majority of respondents do not share this sentiment.

5. Conclusion

The importance of mother tongue in education is significant as it provides a strong foundation for language development, contributes to the formation of identity and culture. It is essential for language policy and planning to recognize and promote the use of mother tongue in education to support the academic success and cultural identity.

The impact of undergraduate students' attitudes towards the mother tongue in Goa is significant. Positive attitudes of the students can enhance motivation, learning strategies, and overall success, while negative attitudes can have the opposite effect. It is important for language educators to recognize the impact of student's attitudes towards their mother tongue and to promote positive attitudes that is being taught.

6. Recommendation

As a result of the findings from the above study, it is recommended that the undergraduate students of Goa should use their mother tongue more often than any other language. To facilitate its wider usage beyond domestic settings, the mother tongue should also be made mandatory in the education system and in extracurricular activities.

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