

# Building a Shared Future: Education for Cross-Cultural Communication in a Multilingual Asia

Editors

Emiko SUNAGA and Hina Jamshed

A large, stylized map of Asia, composed of many small white dots, set against a blue background with curved lines.

Asia-Japan Research Institute  
Ritsumeikan University

**AJI BOOKS**

**Building a Shared Future: Education for Cross-  
Cultural Communication in a Multilingual Asia**

Editors

Emiko SUNAGA and Hina Jamshed

**Asia-Japan Research Institute  
Ritsumeikan University**

ISBN 978-4-910550-18-3 (Online)

ISBN 978-4-910550-19-0 (Print)

# **Building a Shared Future: Education for Cross-Cultural Communication in a Multilingual Asia**

AJI Editorial Office  
OIC Research Office,  
Ritsumeikan University Osaka Ibaraki Campus (OIC)  
2-150 Iwakura-cho, Ibaraki,  
Osaka 567-8570 JAPAN  
Email: [aji-eb@st.ritsumei.ac.jp](mailto:aji-eb@st.ritsumei.ac.jp)

Copyright © 2026 Asia-Japan Research Institute, Ritsumeikan University

Note:

Authors' names in this publication are ordered according to their preference and their surnames are capitalized.

## Contents

### **Editors' Preface**

**Emiko SUNAGA and Hina Jamshed** ..... iv

**Contributors** ..... vii

**Chapter 1.** Understanding Cultural Disparities in Communication:  
Lessons Learned from Teaching Malay as a Foreign Language

**Junaini Kasdan and Anis Shahira Shamsuri** ..... 1

**Chapter 2.** Ethnic Language Education in Multilingual India:  
Community-Driven Santhali Language Education in Jharkhand

**Emiko NOZAWA** ..... 24

**Chapter 3.** Urdu: A Cultural Bridge in Asia's Multilingual Tapestry

**Hina Jamshed** ..... 60

**Chapter 4.** Between Prestige and Pragmatism: The Role of English  
in Shaping Educational Aspirations in Pakistan

**Emiko SUNAGA** ..... 87

**Chapter 5.** Japanese Language Education in Taiwan

**Tatsuo ARAKI** ..... 109

## Editors' Preface

On February 26, 2024, the 5th International Colloquium, *Asian Paths of Civilization and Development: Promoting Post-COVID International Collaboration*, opened with the session *Cross-Cultural Communication and Cohabitation among Multilingualistic Societies in Asia and the Pacific*, chaired by Professor Toshiyuki Takeda (Ritsumeikan Asia-Japan Research Organization). Researchers from six countries—Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Pakistan, and Australia—joined the session, bringing diverse specializations and backgrounds. In his opening remarks, Professor Yasushi Kosugi, Director of the Ritsumeikan Asia-Japan Research Institute, warmly welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of seeking forms of communication and cohabitation suited to a globalized world—one defined not by homogenization but by the deepening of religious and cultural diversity. The session brought together scholars from across the region to explore the challenges and possibilities of cross-cultural communication in multilingual societies.

This volume, *Building a Shared Future: Education for Cross-Cultural Communication in a Multilingual Asia*, grows out of that session. The volume comprises five chapters: three developed from presentations at the colloquium and two newly commissioned contributions. To enrich the discussion beyond the original event, we invited additional contributors to offer broader linguistic and regional perspectives. In particular, we sought to include chapters on community-based minority-language education in India and Japanese-language education in Taiwan. We are deeply grateful to the two specialists who generously agreed to contribute their expertise.

Chapter 1, “Understanding Cultural Disparities in Communication: Lessons Learned from Teaching Malay as a Foreign Language” by

Junaini Kasdan and Anis Shahira Shamsuri, examines classroom practices for teaching Malay to non-native speakers in Malaysia. Drawing on classroom observations and insights gained from mosque visits, this chapter explores how intercultural understanding is fostered through language instruction.

Chapter 2, “Ethnic Language Education in Multilingual India: Community-driven Santhali Language Education in Jharkhand” by Emiko Nozawa, focuses on minority-language education in India. Based on multiple rounds of fieldwork, it highlights how grassroots Santhali-language initiatives sustain indigenous linguistic rights and empower young learners.

Chapter 3, “Urdu: A Cultural Bridge in Asia’s Multilingual Tapestry” by Hina Jamshed, explores the cultural and literary dimensions of Urdu in South Asia. Through poetry, prose, and storytelling traditions, this chapter illustrates Urdu’s historical role as a bridge across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Chapter 4, “Between Prestige and Pragmatism: The Role of English in Shaping Educational Aspirations in Pakistan” by Emiko Sunaga, examines how English functions as both a symbol of privilege and a tool for empowerment. This chapter analyzes the complex tensions surrounding English education, including its potential to deepen social and linguistic inequalities.

Chapter 5, “Japanese Language Education in Taiwan” by Tatsuo Araki, examines the historical development and present landscape of Japanese-language education in Taiwan. Combining institutional data with personal teaching experiences, this chapter offers insights into how Taiwan’s multilingual environment shapes learners’ motivations and classroom dynamics.

Having outlined the chapters, we may turn to the broader context that informs them. The linguistic scope of this volume reflects the

remarkable diversity of Asia's language landscape. Japan, long viewed as a predominantly monolingual society, has witnessed a visible increase in the number of foreign residents and in linguistic diversity in recent years.

One example raised in Chapter 4 concerns the expansion of language access within public services in Japan. Since the colloquium in early 2024, a new system allowing taxi and bus driver certification exams to be conducted in multiple languages has come into operation, and several candidates have already been certified. Several colloquium participants noted that this development reflects Japan's ongoing transformation into a more visible multilingual society (The Japan News by The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2024).

Over the past two decades, international schools in Japan have rapidly diversified. Once limited to a few English-medium institutions, they now serve a range of linguistic communities—including Indian and Nepali communities—particularly in major urban centers. This mirrors broader trends across Asia, where multilingual and multicultural education is increasingly considered vital for fostering global citizenship.

These shifts in both policy and daily life reflect a broader transformation toward linguistic inclusion and intercultural engagement. From institutional reforms to changes in public services and education, multilingualism is increasingly recognized not only as a practical necessity but also as a foundation for building more equitable and culturally responsive societies.

By engaging with these diverse themes, the chapters in this volume demonstrate that questions of language are never merely technical, but social, political, and deeply lived. Written by specialists in language and sociocultural studies, each contribution examines multilingualism, education, intercultural communication, and multicultural coexistence across Asia. We hope this book contributes to ongoing discussions on how multilingual communication can support a more shared future in the region.

In this broader spirit and by situating these contributions within the AJI Books Series, this volume highlights a wider programmatic aim: to document how multilingual coexistence is already being practiced in concrete, situated ways—through classroom instruction, certification schemes, and community-based initiatives across Asia. By bringing together work from diverse linguistic and institutional contexts, we aim to offer comparative insights that may help researchers and educators understand how such practices can be sustained and adapted over time. The issues addressed—multilingual inclusion in public services, community-based language education, and the evolving social roles of individual languages—are shaped by demographic change and increased mobility. This volume should therefore be read not as a conclusion, but as an invitation to continued observation and collaboration.

We would like to close by expressing our heartfelt thanks to Professor Yasushi Kosugi, whose support made both the colloquium and this volume possible; Professor Toshiyuki Takeda, who generously served as Publication Committee Chair; Dr. Khashan Ammar, Mr. Tahei Okamoto, and Ms. Momoko Ito for their invaluable assistance in bringing this book to publication; and all participants in the colloquium for the thoughtful and generous discussions that shaped this work.

Editors  
Emiko Sunaga  
Hina Jamshed

## Reference

The Japan News by The Yomiuri Shimbun. (2024, October 6). Japan Expands Multilingual Support for Taxi and Bus Driver Exams to Address Labor Shortage. <<https://japannews.yomiuri.co.jp/business/companies/20241006-215108/>> (Accessed October 26, 2025)

## Contributors

### 1. Dr. Junaini Kasdan and Ms. Anis Shahira Shamsuri



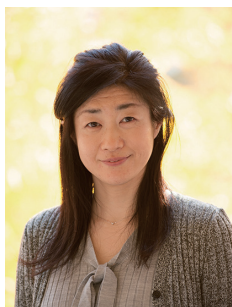
Chapter 1. Understanding Cultural Disparities in Communication: Lessons Learned from Teaching Malay as a Foreign Language

Dr. Junaini Kasdan is Deputy Director at the Institute of the Malay World and Civilization (ATMA) at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Humanities (FIB) at Universitas Airlangga (UNAIR), Surabaya, Indonesia. Her research interests include applied linguistics, semantics, terminology, lexicology, teaching Malay as a foreign language, and philology.



Anis Shahira Shamsuri is a postgraduate student at the Center for Research in Language and Linguistics, UKM. Her research interests include applied linguistics and teaching Malay as a foreign language.

## **2. Dr. Emiko NOZAWA**



### **Chapter 2. Ethnic Language Education in Multilingual India: Community-driven Santhali Language Education in Jharkhand**

Dr. Emiko Nozawa is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law at Chuo University. Her areas of expertise include comparative education, sociolinguistics, and gender studies, with a focus on school education in rural India and the ways in which gender ideologies are shaped and transformed through education. She is also interested in the preservation and transformation of minority languages in India, and her work explores the involvement and potential of non-governmental organizations in tribal language education.

### **3. Dr. Hina Jamshed**



#### **Chapter 3. Urdu: A Cultural Bridge in Asia's Multilingual Tapestry**

Dr. Hina Jamshed is a literary scholar and critic whose work focuses on Urdu fiction, modern South Asian literature, and the relationship between literature, history, and identity. A published author, literary critic, and columnist, she examines themes such as partition, memory, and trauma through historically grounded readings of Urdu texts. She currently serves as Assistant Professor of Urdu at Government Graduate College Sahiwal, Pakistan, and is also active in public literary engagement through teaching, writing, and digital media. She is also one of the editors of this volume.

#### **4. Dr. Emiko SUNAGA**



#### **Chapter 4. Between Prestige and Pragmatism: The Role of English in Shaping Educational Aspirations in Pakistan**

Dr. Emiko Sunaga is Associate Professor in the Department of Intercultural Studies, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Kyoto Sangyo University. Her research focuses on language, education, and publishing cultures in contemporary Pakistan, with particular attention to Urdu and English as mediums of instruction, social mobility, and identity. She also works on sociolinguistic and area-studies approaches to South Asia, including textbook analysis and the politics of language in everyday educational settings. In addition, she is engaged in the digital humanities, exploring how digital methods can be used to document and analyze cultural and linguistic practices across the Islamic world and South Asia. She is also one of the editors of this volume.

## **5. Dr. Tatsuo ARAKI**



### **Chapter 5. Japanese Language Education in Taiwan**

Dr. Tatsuo Araki is a Research Fellow at the Uehiro Project for the Asian Research Library (U-PARL) of the University of Tokyo Library System and a scholar of classical Chinese literature with a particular focus on the circulation and reception of *Shuihuzhuan* (*The Water Margin*) in East Asia, including Taiwan and Japan. His research addresses popular literature, book history, and the cultural transmission of stories across regions and media. In addition to his literary scholarship, he has extensive experience teaching Japanese in Taiwan, which has given him a practical perspective on language education and multilingual classroom dynamics. He has also contributed to the digital preservation and curation of Asian studies materials at the University of Tokyo Library System.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Understanding Cultural Disparities in Communication: Lessons Learned from Teaching Malay as a Foreign Language**

Junaini Kasdan and Anis Shahira Shamsuri

### **1. Introduction**

In today's globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively in a second language or a foreign language has become increasingly important. However, there are various challenges faced by users who are considered as non-native speakers when gaining mastery of a second language or a foreign language. According to McConachy (2018), foreign language teaching raises some concerns about preparing learners to interact with people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including but not limited to native speakers of the language. Therefore, it requires a reflective and analytical engagement to understand how culture shapes the meaning-making process in interaction (Anzhelika Solodka et al. 2021). Hu Song (2014) mentions that there are three main problems in foreign language teaching and learning: first, to regard simply learning language and vocabulary as the whole of foreign language learning; second, to use a learning method that is outdated and incomplete; and third, to have a strong language comprehension ability, but poor cross-cultural comprehension. Normally, people do not appreciate the importance of cross-cultural understanding. Most people consider the ability to communicate to be just a matter of learning a foreign language.

Cultural contexts are the means of intercommunication. They represent the content of the interaction, disclose the mechanism of learners' development and insight across cultures and languages. The concept of a cultural context brings clarity to the understanding of the implementation of cross-cultural interaction. It allows learners to determine the impact of cross-cultural interaction on the process and result of gaining new cultural experiences.

Culture as a social process deals with the use of language and communication experienced by people in specific circumstances. The process of learning a foreign language, such as the Malay language, not only requires an individual to practice linguistic forms but also necessitates becoming familiar with the culture of target language in order to achieve inter-cultural communication. Therefore, in the process of learning the Malay language as a foreign language, it is crucial to incorporate a cultural approach. This approach acknowledges that language is not only a structural system but also includes communicative and social aspects. This approach is also intended to reduce cross-cultural misunderstanding.

Cross-cultural communication refers to the exchange of information between individuals who differ in terms of age, gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, and working habits. Cross-cultural communication can also refer to the use of words, gestures, and body language to exchange, negotiate, and mediate cultural differences. It is the means by which people from different cultures connect with one another. If both speakers know how to make the best use of a conversation, communication between their respective cultures will be easier and simpler. The process of second language learning involves the development of the ability to meaningfully interpret and use features of the target language (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013). Cross-cultural communication fosters trust and facilitates collaboration. The emphasis is on providing the appropriate

## *Chapter 1*

### *Understanding Cultural Disparities in Communication: Lessons Learned from Teaching Malay as a Foreign Language*

response rather than the appropriate message. However, cross-cultural misunderstandings can occur when a person from one culture acts according to their norms and values, but the other does not understand the message the way it was conveyed and might interpret it differently due to the cultural differences.

Interpretation is based on a wide range of assumptions about different cultures. One effective way of incorporating a cultural approach to learning a foreign language such as the Malay language is to domesticate the language and relate it to its particular habitat. This is achieved by selecting cultural components. This can help teachers to better embed cultural awareness into teaching and learning activities, creating a richer and more engaging learning experience. By doing so, learners will not only learn the language itself, but also gain insight into the customs, traditions, and values of the Malay-speaking communities, allowing for a more holistic and meaningful language learning experience. They will not only be able to communicate effectively in Malay but also have developed a deeper appreciation and respect for the culture and its people. Using the cultural approach in learning Malay as a second language allows learners to understand the language in its social and cultural context. This approach helps learners navigate and understand the nuances of the language, such as the appropriate language to use in different situations and how to interpret cultural references. Furthermore, incorporating cultural aspects into language learning fosters cross-cultural understanding and empathy. By learning about the culture of Malay-speaking communities, learners can develop a sense of empathy and respect for different ways of life. They can also develop the ability to adapt their language use and behavior in cross-cultural interaction, which is crucial in today's globalized world.

## **2. Malay Language**

The Malay language originates from the Austronesian region and has a long history of development and adaptation. By the 16th century, it had emerged as a prominent language of knowledge, religion, law, diplomacy, and trade (Gani and Talib 2009; Ostler 2005). Historically, it was one of the most politically influential languages in the Malay Archipelago. Its written forms have evolved from early Pallava/Kawi scripts to the Jawi script, widely used in classical literature, religious texts, and official documents, and eventually to the Rumi script (Latin alphabet), which is standard in modern usage. Standardized varieties of Malay are now the official languages of Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia, while in Singapore, Malay is recognized as one of the four official languages.

In Malaysia, Malay has held national and official language status since 1957, underpinning the social contract between the Malays and other ethnic groups as formalized in the National Language Act 1963/1967 (Article 152), which mandates its use for official purposes (Watson 1980). Meanwhile, Indonesia adopted a form of Malay as its official language upon independence, naming it Bahasa Indonesia, which has recently become the 10th language recognized as an official language of the UNESCO General Conference, alongside the six official languages of the United Nations. Malay encompasses several regional dialects, including those of Peninsular Malaysia, Brunei, Sumatra, and Indonesia, differing slightly in pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax. The language has absorbed influences from Sanskrit, Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch, English, and Chinese, enriching its lexicon. Today, Malay is widely taught as a foreign language to international students, supported by digitalization efforts and language corpora development, reflecting its ongoing relevance in education, research, and global

communication.

Those who have studied or are acquainted with Indonesian frequently ask what sets Malay apart from Indonesian. Essentially, Malay and Indonesian are mutually intelligible, yet they display differences in their phonologies, lexicons, and, to some extent, their grammar. These divergences arise more from different linguistic choices than from the presence of entirely distinct systems. The primary phonological differences are observed in the pronunciation of particular sounds as well as in intonation. Notably, the letters *a* and *r* in word-final position demonstrate clear divergence. In Indonesian, the final *a* is pronounced as a low front vowel [a], and the final *r* is distinctly rolled. In Malay, however, the final *a* is realized as a schwa [ə], while the final *r* ranges from a light flap to complete elision. These differences contribute to the distinct auditory identities of both languages despite their shared structural foundation.

Lexical differences are among the most immediately noticeable to learners. Although both languages share a substantial common vocabulary due to their shared historical roots, they have developed distinct lexical preferences shaped by different colonial and sociocultural influences. Indonesian has absorbed a large number of loanwords from Dutch, while Malay spoken in Malaysia has incorporated more English-derived terms. As a result, everyday vocabulary often differs even when referring to the same concept, for example, *kereta* (car) in Malay corresponds to *mobil* in Indonesia, *kereta api* (train) in Malay to *kereta* in Indonesia, and *cuti* (holiday) in Malay corresponds to *libur* in Indonesia. Nevertheless, such variations seldom hinder mutual comprehension, as contextual cues usually allow meaning to be inferred easily.

Grammatical differences, while less extensive, are still observable. Malay tends to preserve forms more closely aligned with classical

Malay structures, whereas Indonesian exhibits a somewhat wider degree of morphological and syntactic flexibility. Indonesian frequently employs a broader range of affixation patterns, as seen in forms such as *memperhatikan*, which corresponds to *memerhati* or *memberi perhatian* in Malay. Prefixes such as *pe-* and *per-* also appear more productively in Indonesian than in Malay. Despite these distinctions, the core grammatical systems remain fundamentally parallel, allowing speakers of one language to understand the other with minimal difficulty. Taken together, the phonological, lexical, and grammatical divergences illustrate how Malay and Indonesian have evolved into distinct standard varieties shaped by historical, political, and cultural developments. Yet, they continue to remain mutually intelligible and interconnected, reflecting their shared linguistic heritage.

Today, Malay continues to expand its role globally, taught widely as a foreign language to international learners. For foreign students in Malaysia, learning Malay is compulsory, not only to fulfil academic requirements but also to foster good relations with the local community. To support this goal, students can enroll in KIKBM — the Intensive Malay Language Proficiency Course.

### **3. Intensive Malay Language Proficiency Course (KIKBM)**

KIKBM was established in 1999 through the Consortium of Teaching Indonesia–Malaysia (COTIM) and offered by the Institute of the Malay World and Civilization (ATMA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Conducted by native instructors, KIKBM is a six-level non-degree program designed for international learners, offering an intensive four-to-five-week instructional structure that can be tailored to learners' needs. It is also available online to accommodate diverse educational

## *Chapter 1*

### *Understanding Cultural Disparities in Communication: Lessons Learned from Teaching Malay as a Foreign Language*

contexts, with Level 1 and Level 2 being the most frequently selected by participants.

The program aims to cultivate comprehensive linguistic competence among non-native speakers through a structured yet immersive learning framework. Each level consists of 100 hours of instruction focusing on grammar, cultural knowledge, and communication skills. The syllabus is sequenced in a cumulative manner, allowing linguistic input to be gradually expanded as learning progresses. It incorporates fundamental principles of behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanism to ensure that language learning is an active, meaningful, and non-threatening process supported by stimulus, response, and reinforcement. In line with Krashen's (1981) distinction between language learning and language acquisition, the course is designed to integrate both processes so that formal instruction and natural acquisition complement one another.

Through this integrated approach, learners develop linguistic abilities from foundational to advanced levels, enabling them to construct accurate sentences, comprehend increasingly complex texts, and produce coherent written discourse for both formal and informal contexts. Oral communication skills are also strengthened, particularly in terms of spoken fluency, pronunciation, and pragmatic awareness. Politeness strategies and pragmatic competence are emphasized in accordance with communicative purposes and social settings.

A distinctive feature of KIKBM is its strong sociocultural orientation. The program incorporates extensive exposure to cultural norms, communicative conventions, and everyday practices that shape language use in Malaysia. Through authentic interactions embedded in classroom activities and experiential components, including field visits, community engagement sessions, and cultural programs, learners gain opportunities to apply their linguistic knowledge in real communicative environments. This experiential dimension not only enhances

communicative confidence but also fosters intercultural awareness, enabling learners to navigate social interactions more effectively and respectfully.

The development of functional and survival language skills further equips learners to handle essential communicative tasks, such as asking for information, conducting transactions, interpreting public messages, and managing routine interpersonal exchanges. Typical thematic coverage includes the Malay sound system, greetings, numbers, time, money, self-introduction, classifiers, family vocabulary, daily activities, directions, modes of transport, and descriptions of food, weather, and countries.

For learners pursuing academic or professional pathways in Malaysia, the program provides a foundation in academic Malay, including exposure to formal registers, discipline-specific terminology, and conventions of academic discourse. This preparation supports smoother integration into academic institutions or organizational settings that utilize Malay as a medium of communication.

## **4. Problem Statement**

Effective communication is a vital skill in any language, but it is particularly challenging when cultural disparities are involved. Language does not exist in a vacuum; it is shaped by the cultural, historical, and social contexts in which it is used. In the case of Malay, a language deeply intertwined with cultural values and traditions of the Malay people, communication involves not just words, but also gestures, body language, and social norms that may be unfamiliar or even unintelligible to foreign learners (Hall 1976).

Cultural disparities in communication refer to the differences in communication styles, practices, and social behavior that exist between

people from different cultural backgrounds (Gudykunst and Kim 2003). These differences can range from the ways in which people express politeness to the role of body language and non-verbal cues to the manner in which individuals address one another. In a cross-cultural context, these disparities often lead to misunderstandings or discomfort, especially when one is unfamiliar with the social codes that govern communication (Piller 2011). For example, in many Western cultures, communication is often direct and to the point (Gudykunst and Kim 2003). In contrast, Malay communication tends to be more indirect and nuanced, with a greater emphasis on politeness, respect and preserving harmony in social interactions (Mat Hassan et al. 2020). These differences are often rooted in broader cultural values, such as collectivism, respect for authority, and the importance of maintaining face (i.e., avoiding situations where a person might feel embarrassed or lose their dignity) (Brown and Levinson 1987).

## **5. Objectives**

Through teaching a learning process during conducting KIKBM, the goal of this paper is to show the nature of the interpretative engagement of learners with aspects of cross-cultural pragmatics. This article aims to explore the role that cultural disparities play in communication, particularly in the context of teaching Malay as a foreign language. By drawing from personal experiences and scholarly research, this article will discuss the challenges and insights gained from teaching Malay to non-native speakers. Cultural differences, such as varying communication styles, non-verbal cues, and social hierarchies, often pose significant hurdles for learners of Malay, yet they also provide valuable learning opportunities for both learners and teachers alike.

## **6. Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to examine the experiences, perceptions, and linguistic observations of foreign learners participating in a Malay language immersion program. This approach was selected as it allows for an in-depth exploration of how learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds engage with Malay language structures, phonological features, and cultural contexts in an authentic learning environment. The study involved 25 participants from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Nine undergraduate students from Russia (aged 19–22) formed the largest group, followed by two students from Japan (aged 20–24), two students from Australia (aged 25–26), and five participants from China (aged 22–23). The sample also included two professors from the United Kingdom (aged 45–55) who joined the program for academic and cultural familiarization, as well as two participants from the United States (aged 23) enrolled for a short-term study. In addition, one learner each from South Korea (aged 25), Taiwan (aged 23), and Turkey (aged 27) participated in the classes as part of their cultural immersion and language acquisition goals. The data for this study were collected over a two-year period, from 2023 to 2024.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and cultural immersion activities, such as homestay (*inap desa*) programs, and an educational visit to Masjid Putra in Putrajaya. These activities provided opportunities to observe learners' spontaneous language use, interactional patterns, and cultural interpretations in naturalistic contexts. Participants were observed both during structured lessons and during the off-class cultural activities mentioned. Interviews were conducted at two stages: mid-program and at completion. The study was situated within the Intensive Malay Language Proficiency Program (KIKBM) at the Institute of the Malay

World and Civilization (ATMA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. By combining linguistic instruction with rich cultural exposure, including homestay engagement and mosque visits, the program offered an ideal setting for observing how foreign learners interact with and internalize the Malay language in both formal and informal contexts.

## **7. Findings and Discussion**

In the Malay-speaking world, communication is strongly influenced by values such as *adat* (custom), respect for hierarchy, and a deep connection to religious practices (Abdullah 2008). These values shape not only the words spoken but also the tone, body language, and even the choice of greeting. It is undeniable that language and culture are closely interconnected. The process of learning a language involves more than just vocabulary and grammar; it involves an understanding of the cultural norms that govern how people communicate. Language is used to reflect social dynamics, such as respect for elders, authority, and community. The relationship between language and culture is evident in various ways, such as naming conventions, the use of pronouns, and traditional greetings.

Observations show that some learners face difficulties in comprehending Malaysian culture. Foreign learners, as well as participants in the KIKBM program, often struggle with cultural disparities in communication when learning Malay. These challenges can create barriers to effective communication, with one of the most common being understanding the role of honorifics and politeness.

### **(1) Hierarchy and Address**

One key aspect of teaching Malay as a foreign language is

greetings, which begins with addressing people by name. Malay society places great importance on social hierarchy and respect for elders and superiors. The use of the first pronouns in Malay, *aku* (me, I), is intended to be informal and used with peers. For example, *anda* (you) is used in polite contexts, while *kau*, *kamu*, and *awak* (you) are used in informal or close relationships. This study found that participants generally understood how to use both formal and informal forms of address. However, they sometimes used informal terms such as *kamu* or *awak* when speaking with lecturers or older individuals. For example:

Lecturer: *Hai Kent, apa khabar?* (Kent, how are you?)

Kent: *Khabar baik. Awak apa khabar?* (I am good. How are you?)

In the other situation, Sarah met a stranger and had a conversation:

Stranger: *Hai, awak pelajar KIKBM?* (Hi, are you KIKBM student?)

Sarah: *Hai. Ya saya pelajar baru. Bagaimana kamu tahu?* (Hi. Yes, I'm new student. How do you know?)

From the conversation, it is clear that Kent uses the word *awak* (you) to address his lecturer, while Sarah uses *kamu* (you) when speaking to someone she has just met. This can be understood because, for foreign learners, it is often difficult to distinguish the appropriate greetings to use. Some foreign speakers tend to use *awak* or *kamu* as the translation for “you” and *aku* for “I” with anyone they meet. This is because they understand that *aku* and *awak* or *engkau* are used for individuals who are very close to them. Therefore, in an effort to feel close to someone, they use the words *aku* and *awak*.

In terms of practicing the language, although in English there are

terms such as “sir” and “madam,” which can be appropriately translated as *tuan* and *puan* in Malay, some students feel more comfortable using the pronoun “you,” which in Malay is translated as *awak* or *kamu*. The use of *awak* and *kamu* can be considered polite when addressing peers or younger individuals. However, when addressing older individuals of higher status or in formal settings, these terms are considered less polite or inappropriate.

## **(2) Naming and Honorific Title**

Another fundamental aspect of teaching Malay as a foreign language is helping learners understand the intricacies of naming conventions. In Malay culture, names carry deep cultural significance and reflect social hierarchies and familial relationships. Politeness is embedded in the language, with specific honorifics and formalities used based on age, social status, and relationships. In Western traditions, family names are commonly used. Thus, in the first session or class, students typically address me as “Kasdan.” As an academic staff member, I understand and accept this. However, I must then teach them that the structure of Malay naming conventions can be a little tricky. For example:

- (a) Junaini binti Kasdan (female)
- (b) Shamsuri bin Daud (male)

These naming conventions can lead to confusion among non-Malay speakers, especially English-speaking students who might mistake *bin* and *binti* for a middle name. It is important to clarify that the structure of Malay names typically follows the order: [Given name(s)] [Patronymic noun] [Father’s given name]. Thus, using a person’s last name alone is seen as disrespectful in Malay culture, as it refers to the

father's personal name. It can be more difficult when the given name consists of multiple words, as in the following examples:

- (c) Nur Anis Natasya Amirah binti Abdul Karim (female)
- (d) Muhammad Nur Arfan bin Mohd Sallehuddin (male)

Referring to examples (c) and (d), it is essential for students to understand that the given name is the first name(s) before the patronymic noun (e.g., *Nur Anis Natasya Amirah* or *Muhammad Nur Arfan*). While it is common for individuals to shorten their names (e.g., *Anis*, *Natasya* or *Amirah*), students must avoid confusion and learn the proper structure.

In Malaysia's multicultural society, the use of terms like *anak lelaki* (son of) and *anak perempuan* (daughter of) is also common. For example:

- (a) *Ramachandran anak lelaki (a/l) Ramasamy*
- (b) *Letchumy anak perempuan (a/p) Mutusamy*

These terms are primarily used by the Indian and other non-Muslim communities. It is essential to note that *bin* and *binti* are used only for Muslims, and the system is often recorded on identity cards, although patronymic nouns are being gradually abandoned in daily conversation.

In addition to naming conventions, understanding the appropriate use of pronouns and greetings is crucial in teaching Malay. In Malay culture, respect is often communicated through the use of titles and pronouns, reflecting social status, age, and relationship. According to Amat Juhari (2001), language use needs to be suited to different audiences and levels as well as the context and tone. Respect for others is often associated with the use of titles and pronouns. For example, in

## Chapter 1

### *Understanding Cultural Disparities in Communication: Lessons Learned from Teaching Malay as a Foreign Language*

a formal setting, using titles such as *Professor*, *Datuk Seri*, or *tuan* is customary, reflecting the individual's social standing. To illustrate this, a prominent individual might be addressed as:

*Professor Emeritus Datuk Seri Ts. Ar. Dr. Tengku Syarifah Aminah  
Ibni Tengku Omar.*

While in other languages, titles like “Sir” in English or *Bapak* in Indonesian might suffice, Malay culture places great importance on using the highest title available, such as *Professor Datuk Seri*. Failing to do so can be seen as disrespectful or unethical. For foreign students, this can create confusion and discomfort, as they may feel hesitant or unsure about how to properly address someone. Observations have shown that foreign students tend to avoid engaging with individuals who hold high status because they are uncertain about the correct form of address.

Apart from honorific titles, there are also forms of respectful address without titles, such as *mak cik* (aunt) and *pak cik* (uncle). In Malay, *mak cik* and *pak cik* are terms of address used to refer to middle-aged or older adults, typically those who are not very close to the speaker or are acquaintances. Both *mak cik* and *pak cik* are informal, yet respectful, terms. They are not reserved only for family members but are used in everyday situations to refer to older individuals with warmth and respect. Do note that *mak cik* and *pak cik* are often used in informal contexts. In formal situations, or when addressing someone with a higher status, we might use titles such as *puan* (Mrs.), *tuan* (Mr.), *encik* (Mr.), or *cik* (Miss) instead. For example,

Sakura:     *Terima kasih mak cik. Jumpa lagi.* (Thank you, Aunt.  
See you again.)

Mak cik:    *Sama-sama. Selamat jalan.* (You are welcome. Goodbye.)

In this conversation, Sakura (a student) uses the term *mak cik* (aunt) to address the homestay owner during a cultural activity. The student understands that the term *mak cik* (aunt) is exclusively used in informal circumstances in Malaysian society and is typically reserved for elderly women. However, when she arrives at the campus and meets another lady, Sakura also greets her as *mak cik*. But the lady she addressed as *mak cik* might be a lecturer or a professor. This is surprising, as the lady should not be referred to as *mak cik*. In formal situations or environments, Sakura should have addressed the lady as *puan* (Mrs.).

### **(3) Indirectness and Politeness**

Another area where foreign students often struggle is with the use of an indirect style of communication. Malay speakers frequently employ a highly indirect form of communication. As a result, learners often find it difficult to interpret the subtle and indirect nature of Malay communication. It is uncommon for speakers to say “no.” For instance, during cultural activities, one participant heard someone ask her friend whether she wanted to join her jogging:

A: *Awak nak ikut saya jogging?* (Do you want to join me for a jog?)

B: *Mungkin lain kali.* (May be next time.)

In this situation, this study found that participants were unable to understand why the answer is “*Mungkin lain kali.*” (Maybe next time). Hence, it has to be explained that she might be busy or have other plans. To reply to the question, she just says “*Mungkin lain kali.*” (May be next time.) or “*Nanti saya cuba.*” (I will try.). Sometimes the answer

can be “*saya tak pasti*.” (I am not sure.). In this case, the Malay speaker hasn’t said “no” outright, but has signaled that they are unlikely to join, without causing discomfort or a feeling of rejection for the invitation. This directness is designed to avoid confrontation and maintain harmony in relationships, or it can be seen as rude, instead. For Malay learners, this can be confusing, especially if they come from cultures where directness is valued. Learners often find it hard to interpret the indirect and subtle nature of Malay communication. Learners might misinterpret the phrase “ *mungkin lain kali*.” or “*Saya tidak pasti*.” as a definite answer, not realizing that it is a polite way of saying “no” or avoiding a direct refusal.

Whilst the phrase “*Nanti saya cuba*,” implies that the person may not be able to fulfil the request, but they are open to trying. It is a way of keeping the door open while not committing to anything definitive. It also softens the potential negative response, as it suggests willingness, even if some doubt remains. The phrase implies that the speaker is not saying “no” but simply deferring the decision. In contrast, a few of them were able to understand, most likely because they had lived in Malaysia and adapted to the local community.

Malays generally prefer a more subtle approach to navigating social dynamics, ensuring that no one feels embarrassed, disrespected, or openly criticized. This helps maintain positive relationships and a sense of collective harmony.

#### **(4) Religion and Cultural Sensitivity**

Religion plays a central role in the daily lives of many Malaysians, shaping spiritual practices, social interactions, cultural expressions, and language. For foreign students learning Malay, understanding the influence of religion is crucial for fully immersing themselves in the

language's cultural context. One key example of this intersection is the mosque, which functions not only as a place of worship but also as a community hub. Within the Malay community, mosques serve multiple roles: sites for prayer, social events, education, community outreach, and conflict resolution. For non-Muslim students, visiting a mosque offers an opportunity to observe Islamic rituals and practices firsthand and also to gain insight into their broader social and cultural significance. These visits often challenge misconceptions, revealing that mosques are inclusive spaces where diverse community members gather for worship, lectures, charity, and other activities.

Experiential visits allow students to engage in discussions about Islamic beliefs, rituals, and values, and to compare them with their own religious traditions. Such exchanges highlight common themes such as charity, community support, and ritual significance, fostering mutual understanding and respect among people of different faiths. Through these experiences, students develop cultural competence and a deeper appreciation of Malaysia's diversity, enhancing both their language learning and their ability to navigate cross-cultural interactions.

A visit to the Putrajaya Mosque, which is located in Malaysia's administrative capital, exemplifies this approach. Chosen for its architectural and cultural significance, the mosque features pink domes reflecting Malay, Persian, and Middle Eastern influences. The program includes orientation on mosque etiquette, guided tours, and informal interactions led by mosque guides. Firstly, participants are briefed on mosque etiquette, dress code, and the objectives of the visit. Visitors, regardless of their background, are required to wear robes provided by the mosque as part of the standard modesty guidelines observed in Islamic sacred spaces. Because visitors may arrive in clothing that does not meet the expected level of modesty, the robes serve as a practical way to maintain decorum and sensitivity toward worshippers. This

## Chapter 1

### *Understanding Cultural Disparities in Communication: Lessons Learned from Teaching Malay as a Foreign Language*

practice reflects cultural etiquette and respect for the sanctity of the mosque, rather than any expectation of religious conformity.

This session also provided a brief overview of Islamic worship and cultural practices. Then, participants were led through the main prayer hall, courtyard, and ancillary facilities. The explanations focused on the functions of different spaces, the symbolism of the architectural features, and the role of mosques as centers for education and community service. Participants engaged in informal dialogue with mosque volunteers and staff, clarifying their misconceptions and fostering intercultural empathy.

Post-visit reflections revealed that students gained new perspectives on Islamic practices and values, often replacing misconceptions shaped by media narratives. For example, the reflections of Russian participants illustrated this transformation:

*“Mula-mula saya takut nak masuk masjid. Sebab saya non-muslim. Tapi bila datang sini, rasa seronok. Saya tau orang pergi masjid bukan hanya untuk sembahyang, tapi untuk belajar juga.”* (I used to feel afraid to enter a mosque because I am not a Muslim. But when I came here, I felt happy. I realized that people come to the mosque not only for prayer, but also to learn.)

A participant from Taiwan said:

*“Saya fikir masjid hanya untuk orang Islam, rupanya semua orang boleh... dan banyak yang saya boleh belajar.”* (I thought the mosque was only for Muslims, but it turns out that everyone is welcome... and there is so much I can learn.)

Reflections of a participant from Australia:

*“Saya nampak kanak-kanak melukis... kaligrafi... bagus. I thought... masjid is only for pray [sic].” (I saw many children drawing calligraphy... it was nice. I thought the mosque was only for praying.)*

Another remarked on the explanation of gender separation in prayer, understanding it as a matter of focus and respect rather than inequality. Such visits demonstrate the potential of integrating cultural and religious learning into language education. By combining observation, dialogue, and reflection, foreign students develop not only linguistic proficiency but also intercultural sensitivity, a nuanced understanding of Malaysian society, and an appreciation of the ways religion shapes communication, behavior, and social norms.

## **8. Conclusion**

Teaching Malay as a foreign language offers a unique opportunity not only to impart linguistic knowledge but also to immerse students in the rich cultural landscape of Malaysia. Over the years, instructors have gained valuable insights from their teaching experiences, highlighting both the successes and challenges encountered in helping students learn the language. These experiences often go beyond vocabulary and grammar, extending to the nuanced cultural aspects that shape communication in the Malay-speaking world. This chapter has reflected on some key insights from teaching Malay as a foreign language, with a focus on the role of culturally specific materials, cultural immersion, and the impact of language learning on students’ understanding of Malay culture and communication.

Language acquisition extends beyond the classroom; exposure to

real-life situations, interactions with native speakers, and participation in cultural activities significantly enhance the learning experience. Through the use of culturally specific materials, cultural immersion, and an emphasis on understanding communication styles, students of Malay language gain a deeper appreciation for Malay culture and its influence on social interactions. Moreover, the lessons learned in the classroom extend far beyond language acquisition, shaping students' ability to communicate effectively in real-world, cross-cultural environments. As the demand for intercultural communication continues to grow, the ability to navigate these complexities will be an essential skill for future global citizens.

## References

- Abdullah Hassan. 2008. *Pedagogi Bahasa Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: PTS Sdn. Bhd.
- Ahmad Fuad Mat Hassan, Khairul Faiz Alimi, Hishamudin Isam, and Mashetoh Abd Mutalib. 2020. Amalan Kesantunan Berbahasa dalam Komunikasi Formal dan Tidak Formal dalam Kalangan Pelajar Universiti, Universiti Utara Malaysia. *Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 36(4), 410–427
- Amat Juhari Moain. 2001. Nilai rasa dalam bahasa Melayu. *Monograf bahasa, sastera dan budaya Melayu*, 6, 11–18.
- Anzhelika Solodka, Svitlana Zaskaleta, Tetiana Moroz, and Olha Demianenko. 2021. Sheltered Instructional Observational Protocol Model in Digital Teaching EFL Students in Ukraine. *Arab World English Journal*, Special Issue on Covid 19 Challenges April 2021, 21–36. <<https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/covid.2>>
- Awang Sariyan. 2007. *Santun Berbahasa*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

- Brown, P. and C. S. Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gani, M. P. and M. J. A. Talib. 2009. *Evolution of the Malay Language*. Singapore: Asas '50 Press.
- Gudykunst, W. B. and Y. Y. Kim. 2003. *Communicating with Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication*. 4th Edition, Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Gustavsson, I. 2008. *The Benefits of Second Language Teaching Methods in Secondary School: A Gendered Perspective*. Sweden: Mid Sweden University.
- Hall, Edward T. 1976. *Beyond Culture*. <<https://slredglobalhealth.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/beyond-culture.pdf>> (accessed on October 15, 2024).
- Hu, Song. 2014. Cross-cultural Communication and Foreign Language Teaching. *Proceedings of the 2014 International Conference on Education Technology and Social Science, January 2014*. <10.2991/icetss-14.2014.54>.
- Krashen, S. D. 1981. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press Inc.
- Liddicoat, Anthony J. and Angela Scarino. 2013. *Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lightbown, P. M. and N. Spada. 2006. *How Languages are Learned* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McConachy, Troy. 2018. *Developing Intercultural Perspectives on Language Use: Exploring Pragmatics and Culture in Foreign Language Learning*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Morgan, C. and P. Neil. 2001. *Teaching Modern Foreign Languages: A Handbook for Teachers*. London: Kogan Page Ltd.
- Ostler, N. 2005. *Empires of the Word: A Language History of the World*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

*Chapter 1*

*Understanding Cultural Disparities in Communication: Lessons Learned from Teaching Malay as a Foreign Language*

- Piller, I. 2011. *Intercultural Communication: A Critical Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.
- Richards, J. C. and T. S. Rodgers. 2001. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Watson, J. K. P. 1980. Cultural Pluralism, Nation-Building and Educational Policies in Peninsular Malaysia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1(2), 155–174.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Ethnic Language Education in Multilingual India: Community-Driven Santhali Language Education in Jharkhand**

Emiko NOZAWA

### **1. Introduction**

The designation of 1993 as the International Year for the World's Indigenous People signified a pivotal inflection point in the advancement of Indigenous language rights across the global stage. During this period, global attention was directed towards the challenges faced by Indigenous groups. These include the deprivation of their rights to land and natural resources, as well as their ongoing marginalization in sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural contexts. This heightened awareness contributed to a broader recognition of the asymmetrical power relations between dominant and Indigenous groups, which in turn led to a shift towards social and political dynamics that are more conducive to achieving justice.

One of the key challenges in these struggles has been the protection and promotion of Indigenous languages and the associated rights. In numerous regions, Indigenous languages have been excluded from public domains, including formal educational settings. This has resulted in the risk of language decline and the obstruction of speakers from full social participation and self-determination. Linguistic decline also entails the loss of culture, as the language embodies a community's unique worldview and cultural practices. Once a language becomes

extinct, its associated perspectives, values, and traditions are often irretrievably lost. Scholars such as Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1994) have been highly critical of these exclusions, arguing that such language policies and practices are discriminatory and violate the linguistic human rights of marginalized populations.

In response to this situation, indigenous activism has emerged, advocating for the implementation of Indigenous-medium or bilingual education for better achievement and to reclaim control over the medium and content of education (McCarty and Nicholas 2015). In certain places, measures have been introduced, including the implementation of Quechua-medium education in Bolivia and Peru, as well as the establishment of the Language Nest Program (*Te Kōhanga Reo*) in New Zealand. This program teaches preschool children in their ancestral language, with the objective of safeguarding their linguistic rights and preserving their cultural heritage.

In the Indian context, despite constitutional endorsement of mother-tongue or local-language education, formal education is predominantly conducted in state official languages or regional dominant languages. While there are cases where Indigenous languages are implemented in some primary schools, the majority of Indigenous languages remain excluded from formal education. This dearth of linguistic support has been condemned for exacerbating the phenomenon of lower educational attainment, social exclusion, and the undermining of ethnic identity and languages (Mohanty 2009; Rao 2019). In response to these challenges, some Indigenous communities have established grassroots language education initiatives with the objective of preserving and promoting their languages, cultures, and ethnic identity.

This research project focuses on initiatives pertaining to the Santhali language, spoken by one of India's Scheduled Tribes, who are predominantly engaged in agricultural production. It examines

educational programs in civil society and language behaviors and attitudes among the young generation in Jharkhand. This is done through the lenses of the Linguistic Human Rights and Linguistic Citizenship frameworks. The Linguistic Human Rights framework provides a benchmark for evaluating the extent to which the Santhali language is officially recognized and institutionalized, as well as the achievements and challenges of the ethnic language movement. In contrast, the Linguistic Citizenship approach allows for the investigation of grassroots Santhali language education initiatives and the examination of language usage and attitudes among the younger generation in relation to these endeavors.

The purpose of this research is to gain insights into the functioning of community-driven Santhali language education initiatives and to examine the interconnections between young people's language behaviors and attitudes, their ethnic identity, and educational and career prospects, particularly in relation to their use of Santhali, Hindi, and English. This will be achieved through the use of participatory observation and surveys. As this study is part of a larger research project, and the latest survey was conducted in February and March 2024, the findings and analysis presented here are still preliminary. Nevertheless, this paper offers initial insights into the operation and impact of community-driven Santhali language education initiatives, suggesting that such efforts provide valuable spaces for fostering ethnic identity through the promotion of their culture and language. The findings also indicate the potential for a future language shift, underscoring the growing significance of Indigenous language activism, although further analysis is necessary to substantiate these trends.

## 2. Indian Context

India is a multiethnic and multilingual nation, home to a vast array of cultural heritages. The Indian Constitution recognizes 22 significant languages, including Hindi, the official language of the nation, alongside various state official and regional languages. However, some tribal languages, such as Santhali and Bodo, are also constitutionally recognized. India's states are largely defined by linguistic boundaries, yet the country is also inhabited by hundreds of smaller ethnic and Indigenous groups, each with its own unique language. According to Ethnologue (2024), there are 424 languages currently in use across India. Furthermore, the 2011 Census of India classifies 1,369 language variants as “rationalized mother tongues,” which are subcategories of recognized languages. Meanwhile, the government has recognized more than 700 ethnic groups as Scheduled Tribes,<sup>1</sup> collectively comprising 104.5 million individuals, or 8.6% of the total population, speaking 159 languages (GOI 2024; Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner 2011; Mohanty 2009). However, it is suggested that the actual number of marginalized ethnic and tribal groups and mother tongues is larger than official estimates, as many more remain unrecognized by the government (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2023). This undeniably contributes to linguistic richness and complexity in India.

In this intricate multilingual setting, the selection of the medium of

---

<sup>1</sup> Scheduled Tribe is an administrative term the Indian government uses to designate Indigenous groups as defined by the Constitution. Indigenous activists often use the term *Adivasi*, meaning “Indigenous” in Hindi, to describe themselves, reflecting their political consciousness. While these terms—Scheduled Tribe, Indigenous, and Adivasi—carry different connotations regarding political awareness and administrative control, this paper uses them interchangeably, following the language usage of local Indigenous communities.

instruction in academic institutions, particularly at the preschool and primary levels, presents considerable challenges. In the majority of cases, government-run schools utilize the official language of the state or Union Territory in question for the delivery of instruction. This creates a problematic situation in areas where students from diverse linguistic communities share the same classroom. Such circumstances may result in the creation of language barriers for students whose native languages differ from the language of instruction, which could ultimately lead to a decline in academic achievement and an increased dropout rate among minority-language speakers. Consequently, these children may be excluded from the education system, which is widely considered to be one of the primary causes of the higher illiteracy rate (26.4%; 6.7 percentage points higher than the national average in 2022–2023) and the poverty rate (45.3% in rural area in 2011) among the Scheduled Tribe population (GOI 2021; 2024). In addition, there has been a lack of understanding among teachers and researchers, who sometimes mistakenly attribute the lower educational attainment of Indigenous children to presumed deficits in their cognitive abilities, unique cultural beliefs, or a lack of parental appreciation and support for education (Pattanayak 2023; Pramanik and Bag 2012; Rao 2019).

Article 350A of the Indian Constitution underscores that education, especially during the early years of primary education, should be provided in the child’s home language. “Every State and every local authority within the State” is responsible for ensuring home language education. In alignment with the Constitutional mandate, a series of Education Policies—including the National Curriculum Framework (NCERT 2005), the Right to Education Act (GOI 2009), National Policy on Education Report (GOI 2016)—highlight multiculturalism as a key source of educational equality, and reiterate the administrative responsibility for native language instruction at least at the primary

level. The most recent National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) (GOI 2020) extends the concept and makes local language instruction one of the central pillars of its policy framework.

Despite these mandates, implementation has been ineffective in many government schools, where the medium of instruction remains the state's official language. This exclusion of minority languages has been linked to higher dropout rates, lower academic achievement, and the erosion of identity and self-esteem among Indigenous children (Pattanayak 2023; Rao 2019). Additionally, the emphasis on “the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language” in NEP 2020 has caused heated debates among experts and citizens. Some view it as mere lip service or even as an attempt by the Hindu nationalist right-wing government to promote Saffronization—or Indianization—in education by replacing “English-centric elitism with a Sanskrit-centric one” rather than a genuine effort to support linguistic diversity and equal educational rights across ethnic and linguistic groups (Pandey and Ozarkar 2024, 2).

Jharkhand, where this research project is conducted, is a “tribal state,” with a significant Scheduled Tribe population—33 Indigenous communities speaking around 20 distinct languages, who constitute 26% of its 33 million people (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner 2011; Pattanayak 2023). It is also one of the richest regions in natural resources, with extensive mining and manufacturing industries. Large-scale mining and industrial development projects have caused massive displacement, relocation, and loss of land among Indigenous populations, leading to intense *Adivasi* (Hindi word for Indigenous) resistance and protests. Previously part of Bihar, Jharkhand achieved statehood in 2000 after prolonged and often violent struggles. The movement for Jharkhand's independence was driven by identity politics, with the goal of creating a “tribal state,” free from the

dominance of the northern Bihari government and securing their land and resources, as well as political and economic autonomy (Sen 2019; Shah 2011). The community-driven language education described in this paper needs to be understood within these complex political contexts.

### **3. Theoretical Framework - Language Rights and Linguistic Citizenship**

The term “language rights” is used to describe the principle of ensuring that individuals have access to information and the ability to express themselves in their native language, both in public and private domains. Phillipson, Rannut, and Skutnabb-Kangas (1994) emphasize the necessity of linguistic human rights, which they define as fundamental human rights that every person is entitled to enjoy. Furthermore, they maintain that governments and legislation bear the responsibility to safeguard these rights for all citizens.

However, complex power structures frequently exert influence over the choice of a nation’s official language and the medium of instruction in its school system, reflecting underlying social and political dynamics. Phillipson (1992) presents a critique of the manner in which European languages, including English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, have become dominant in formerly colonized regions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This domination has been achieved through the imperialistic economic, administrative, and academic systems. It is important to note, however, that the marginalization of Indigenous languages is not exclusive to European languages. In numerous instances, the dominant vernacular language has been designated as the official language of the nation-state, thereby displacing marginalized languages in public domains, including law, administration, media, and education. This has contributed to the further decline of these

marginalized languages. Monolingual education has become the standard practice, with instruction conducted exclusively in the official language, even when the majority of children do not speak it at home. This practice results in the deterioration of Indigenous languages and considerable educational disadvantages for Indigenous children (Phillipson, Rannut, and Skutnabb-Kangas 1994; Skutnabb-Kangas 2009; McCarty and Nicholas 2015; Rao 2019). For example, the Ainu language, which was once widely spoken in Hokkaido, Japan, was excluded from official domains in the 19th century as part of Japan's modern nation-building efforts. The Meiji government justified its policies of assimilation by invoking the concept of a modern nation-state, wherein citizens were presumed to share a common origin, tradition, and language. This notion has been critically reviewed in the context of Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" (1983; 2016). Ainu society was portrayed as "savage" and thus in need of modernization, including learning Japanese at schools. This resulted in a precipitous decline in the number of Ainu speakers from 15,000 in the late 18th century to only 304 by 2006. A 2017 survey revealed that only five out of 671 Ainu residents in Hokkaido were able to converse in their Indigenous language (Tanaka 2019; Muto 2024). In addition to linguistic marginalization, the Ainu people endured profound discrimination, which contributed to a disproportionately low level of educational attainment compared to the national average.

In response to this trend, numerous Indigenous groups have successfully engaged in resistance and initiated activism with the objective of preserving their distinct cultures and languages on a global scale. To illustrate this, as a consequence of indigenous activism, Quechua, a widely spoken Indigenous language in the Andean countries, has been officially recognized and integrated into the educational systems of Bolivia and Peru. Since the 1990s, there have been

governmental initiatives to implement intercultural bilingual education (Hornberger and Coronel-Molina 2004). In terms of the benefits of this bilingual approach, Hynsjö and Damon (2016) have demonstrated that Indigenous children who receive their education in Quechua in Peru outperform their peers who attend Spanish-medium schools.

While Linguistic Human Rights have been instrumental in establishing formal language rights, some scholars contend that this framework does not adequately encompass the dynamic social processes involved in language use within communities. Many activists aligned with Linguistic Human Rights typically seek the officialization and institutionalization of Indigenous languages. Nevertheless, some scholars have challenged this perspective, asserting that it is unduly static and formalized, frequently concentrating on the negative aspects, such as the absence of official status and the exclusion of certain languages from official domains. Such an approach, it is argued, fails to take account of the agency and the complex social dynamics of language users. Furthermore, the pursuit of linguistic human rights may result in the essentialization of the relationship between a language and the identity of its speakers. Moreover, the standardization of efforts to achieve official status may result in the marginalization of dialects and varieties other than the standard variety within the given group. This is where Linguistic Citizenship offers a different perspective. Lim, Stroud, and Wee (2018) introduce a Linguistic Citizenship perspective, which they assert is essential for grasping the evolution of identity, beliefs, and ownership among language users within intricate and dynamic power structures. Consequently, scholars should not focus solely on the formal status of a language; rather, they should provide comprehensive descriptions of how languages are used in everyday life to gain a more nuanced understanding. The Linguistic Citizenship approach allows researchers to examine popular culture,

performative arts, and interactions within civil society, analyzing emerging voices and subjects of rights through their engagement. To illustrate, Stroud (2018) delineates how the theatrical production *Afrikaaps*, featured in the documentary film *Afrikaaps* (2010), enables performers to reclaim the Afrikaans—a language shaped by colonial contact and domination—through which they express a multiplicity of voices and challenge colonial history in post-apartheid South Africa.

McCarty and Nicholas (2015) provide a critical perspective on educational practices, underscoring the crucial role of grassroots educational efforts, albeit without a direct alignment with the Linguistic Citizenship perspective. They critique the dichotomous notion of formal versus informal education, arguing that this Western-based conceptualization undermines the transmission of Indigenous knowledge, which often occurs in more informal settings. Among various grassroots language learning initiatives, the Language Nest Program (*Te Kōhanga Reo*), launched in 1982, stands out as one of the most well-known community-based language revitalization efforts, now implemented in many parts of the world. The objective of the Language Nest Program is to revitalize and ensure the transgenerational transmission of ancestral languages and cultures. This is achieved by elder members of the linguistic community creating an immersive environment for preschool second-language speakers whose parents may not speak the language fluently. As a result of this initiative, Māori-medium schooling was established, along with the development of official curricula at higher levels of education. In light of the success of the Language Nest Program for the Māori language in New Zealand, similar programs have been adapted in Hawai‘i and other regions where ancestral languages were on the brink of extinction.

### **(1) Applicability to Santhali Language Education**

In the Indian context, the Adivasi populations have experienced significant challenges in their efforts to achieve official language status at the state and national levels. Furthermore, they have advocated for the establishment of autonomous states to ensure their land and resources, along with their political, economic, and cultural autonomy (Sen 2019; Shah 2011). Jharkhand, which was formed as a result of the Adivasi movement and separated from Bihar in 2000, serves as an illustrative example. Among the various Indigenous groups, the Santhali community, with 6.5 million members, has placed a particular emphasis on language issues as a central aspect of their cultural and political identity. In accordance with the tenets of Linguistic Human Rights, the Santhali community has pursued a persistent campaign to advance the status of their language. This effort was ultimately successful in 2003, when the Santhali language was officially recognized as one of the 22 significant languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Despite the constitutional recognition accorded to Santhali, there is considerable variation in the implementation of this language in the public education systems across different states. In West Bengal and Odisha, Santhali, along with other Indigenous and regional languages, serves as the primary or supplementary medium of instruction. Nevertheless, in Jharkhand, where approximately half of the Santhali population resides, the introduction of Santhali at the primary education level has been a gradual process. In collaboration with M-TALL *Akhra*, a center for research and innovation in children's languages, the state government developed and piloted teaching materials in several tribal languages for Anganwadi, a pre-school institution. From 2016 onward, the state and M-TALL *Akhra* also published textbooks in tribal

languages for primary school (Pattanayak 2023). However, according to local contacts of the researcher, even in instances where textbooks were provided, effective instruction was often lacking due to a shortage of teachers proficient in the language. This situation places Indigenous children in a doubly vulnerable position: they struggle to understand subjects taught in an unfamiliar language, and the lack of empathy and understanding of Indigenous children's needs on the part of the teacher further inhibits their ability to build self-confidence and develop a strong ethnic identity. Consequently, Indigenous children are more likely to drop out of school at an earlier age, even at the primary level.

While Pattanayak's research offers valuable insights into Indigenous language education and contributes notably to the development of Indigenous language textbooks, it somewhat understates the critical role Indigenous communities play in asserting and promoting their linguistic and cultural heritage. In fact, in the absence of comprehensive state-run language programs, community-based initiatives have played a pivotal role in expanding Santhali education within civil society. These efforts, spearheaded by Indigenous individuals, demonstrate a strong commitment to advancing their language and culture. The involvement of these communities can be examined through the framework of Linguistic Citizenship, which emphasizes individual agency and the sustained pursuit of long-term goals, even when fully realized outcomes remain elusive.

## **4. Methods**

This study encompasses both quantitative and qualitative research conducted in 2016, 2018, and 2024. The researcher observed two Santhali language classes: one in a secondary school setting and one run by the Tribal Cultural Society (TCS) in the East Singhbhum District,

Jharkhand. Three Santhali writing teachers, two program managers—one from the Adivasi Socio-Educational and Cultural Association (ASECA) and one from TCS—and a Santhali professor involved in both higher education and language teaching within civil society were interviewed. Following consent, the interviews were audio-recorded and focused on their teaching experiences and the motivations for continuing to be involved on a voluntary basis. However, a teacher and a program manager declined to be audio-recorded, a dynamic that may reflect the historical complexities inherent to the relationship between Indigenous and dominant communities. The transcribed interviews underwent content analysis, with several relevant codes applied, including those pertaining to teacher training, motivations, demands on the government, and future perspectives.

To gain deeper insight into the language attitudes among learners and their responses to the program, two surveys were conducted in 2018 and 2024, each comprising over 100 respondents aged 15-30. The questionnaire was developed in Hindi, the most widely taught language through public education. The survey data were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis to identify general trends in language use and attitudes among Santhali youth. In addition to examining general language attitudes, the survey also inquired about respondents' motivation for learning the Santhali script and their support for grassroots educational efforts within communities. While the analysis does not incorporate advanced quantitative techniques, it provides valuable insights into the language usage and attitudes of young people within the Santhali-speaking community. While the analysis of the 2024 survey is still in its preliminary stages, a comparison of the responses between the two surveys has begun to yield some insights.

## **5. Civil Society Language Education**

In the period preceding its separation from Bihar, various Adivasi groups sought the recognition of their linguistic rights as part of a broader ethnic movement aimed at securing greater ethnic autonomy. The Santhal group, in particular, placed significant emphasis on language-related issues within its overarching strategy. Despite the richness of their oral traditions, many Indigenous languages were devoid of a writing form, rendering the documentation of their folktales and historical events challenging. In the 1920s, Raghunath Murmu developed a phonetic script for the Santhali language, known as Ol Chiki, with the aim of introducing Santhali as a medium of instruction in schools, addressing the exclusion of the language from formal schooling. Notwithstanding these initial efforts, Indigenous rights—including those pertaining to language—remained largely unacknowledged in the political domain even after India’s independence. This was, in part, due to nationalist leaders focusing primarily on creating a unified, secular India, which often overshadowed the country’s vast cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity.

As a state with a rich cultural heritage, Jharkhand recognizes the linguistic diversity of its population, with tribal languages coexisting alongside Hindi, the official state language. However, the state’s language policy, particularly in the context of education, remains inconsistent with its broader goals of promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. Postgraduate courses in tribal languages are offered with the objective of training professionals in the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. Additionally, several secondary schools provide classes in these languages within the three-language formula, which requires secondary schools to teach three language courses, including Hindi, English, and a modern Indian language (or their state’s official

language), with the aim of enhancing mutual understanding among diverse linguistic groups. In a recent development, the Jharkhand Public Service Commission has incorporated several tribal languages into its civil service examinations.

While the incorporation of tribal languages into secondary and higher education and the state-level examinations is a laudable initiative, local educators have expressed discontent over the delayed integration of tribal language instruction in primary schools, citing the linguistic rights discourse and its constitutional endorsement. It is widely accepted that teaching children in their home language significantly enhances their comprehension of subjects. Furthermore, reliance on the official state language from an early stage can hinder their cognitive and academic development. Despite these benefits, tribal languages have yet to be adequately incorporated into primary education (Nozawa 2021). In 2015, it was reported that, in collaboration with UNICEF, language and mathematics textbooks for Classes I and II in five tribal languages—Santhali, Mundari, Ho, Kudukh and Khadia—would be printed and distributed in state-run schools from 2016 onwards. This initiative was designed to target areas where the majority of children speak one of the designated tribal languages (Pandey 2016; The Telegraph 2015). Subsequently, the Jharkhand state government, in alignment with the language principles in NEP 2020, announced the provision of primary education up to Class III through eight tribal and regional languages: Mundari, Khadia, Kudukh, Santhali, Nagpuri Panchpargania, Kurmali, and Khortha. This initiative was designed for communities where these languages are predominantly spoken (Ranjan 2022). However, even in schools where the textbooks were available, effective instruction remained lacking.

In view of these shortcomings of formal schooling, ethnic organizations have assumed the responsibility of addressing the need for

Indigenous language promotion. As previously discussed by Nozawa (2021), these community-driven efforts have played a crucial role in the promotion of Indigenous languages and the fostering of ethnic identity. To illustrate this, the contributions of two key organizations in Jharkhand—ASECA and TCS—will be examined.

ASECA, an autonomous ethnic organization, has thrived for nearly four decades without external assistance. Founded in 1965 under the leadership of Raghunath Murmu and his followers, ASECA focuses primarily on teaching Ol Chiki, the unique script of the Santhali language, in communities across Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha. With approximately 6.5 million speakers across state borders, the Santhali language remains vibrant. ASECA's instructional activities take place on weekends and are designed to help individuals proficient in Santhali acquire the script. Local Santhali intellectuals volunteer as instructors, motivated by their passion for promoting their language and culture. By 2016–2017, approximately 600 classes were in operation, serving 2,000–3,000 learners, most of whom were children and youth attending regular schools or colleges during the week and learning Ol Chiki on weekends. An annual examination is administered, and those who demonstrate proficiency are awarded certificates.

In contrast to ASECA's volunteer-driven model, TCS benefits from the support of a corporation, which allows for the implementation of more structured programs and the acquisition of additional resources. TCS operates as part of TATA Steel's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, with a particular focus on improving the welfare of tribal communities. In 2011, TCS launched a language-teaching program, offering instruction in six languages, including Santhali, Ho, Oraon, and Munda, at the community level. Although the headquarters are located in Jamshedpur, East Singhbhum District, the program operates across district borders and has expanded into neighboring

Odisha. TCS has formed a collaborative partnership with the Guru Gomkey Pandit Raghunath Murmu Academy (GGPRMA), through which it provides textbooks. With the financial support of TATA Steel, these textbooks are distributed free of charge to approximately 7,000 learners. TCS facilitates various cultural and sporting events that actively engage young learners. TCS members acknowledge the pivotal role these activities play in sustaining the viability of their language program, though this may inadvertently limit or slow down ASECA's operations.

Moreover, TCS offers a five-day training session for educators on an annual basis, aimed at enhancing their pedagogical skills. In contrast to ASECA volunteer teachers, TCS instructors receive a modest honorarium, which provides a financial incentive for their work. Their choice of organization between ASECA and TCS depends on the proximity of the teaching site to their residences, and their participation is motivated by a commitment to their ethnic community. While some instructors are unemployed, many from both ASECA and TCS are professional educators employed in government and private schools. The educational backgrounds and professional competence of these instructors significantly contribute to the quality of teaching in these community-based language classes.

TCS provides instruction at three distinct levels: Primary, Basic, and Advanced. Each level is accompanied by a textbook published by GGPRMA. The textbook for the Primary level begins with an introduction to the Santhali alphabet and progresses to cover the writing of the names of animals and everyday objects, along with short stories and poems. The textbooks for the Basic and Advanced Courses contain longer and more complex texts. Notably, each textbook introduces lessons in subjects beyond language, including mathematics and geography. To illustrate, the Primary Course introduces fundamental

mathematical operations, whereas the Basic Course progresses to more complex mathematical concepts, such as three-digit multiplication. The Advanced Course introduces students to abstract concepts, such as percentages and square roots. Overall, the textbooks reflect the typical progression observed in conventional educational institutions.

The content of the textbooks aligns with the concerns of Santhali educators regarding the dearth of tribal language instruction in government schools and the educational challenges faced by Indigenous children. Interviews with educators indicate a long-standing frustration with the repeated delays in integrating tribal languages into primary education. These concerns stem from the ongoing language barriers experienced by children who are deprived of the right to receive an education in their native language. As previously outlined in Nozawa (2021), the lack of state interest and financial support has been identified as a significant barrier to the appointment of tribal teachers. Concurrently, their disquiet may be intensified by the unmet anticipation that the appointment of tribal teachers would enhance the stability of employment prospects for educated Indigenous youth.

In conclusion, civil society organizations such as ASECA and TCS are paramount in facilitating the advancement of Indigenous language education in Jharkhand. They fill the gap left by the inadequate state support for integrating tribal languages into primary education. TCS's incorporation of a wide range of subjects in its textbooks demonstrates a commitment to addressing the educational needs of the Adivasi community. Both ASECA and TCS play vital roles in the promotion of the Santhali language and the advancement of future generations' educational development. Their dedicated efforts, along with the involvement of volunteer instructors, contribute to the community's cultural and intellectual growth.

## **6. Survey Results: Language Use, Language Attitudes, and Support for Santhali Education**

Building on the discussion of Indigenous language education initiatives within civil society, this section explores the linguistic landscape in Jharkhand by presenting preliminary findings from the survey research. Although part of a broader research project, this analysis specifically examines the prevalence of the Santhali language among young people and their attitudes towards different languages.

The survey was conducted in the East Singhbhum District of Jharkhand in two phases: 2018 with 131 respondents and again in 2024 with 281 respondents.<sup>2</sup> The majority of participants are between the ages of 15 and 30. Respondents were recruited through a network of Santhali teachers who teach either in community language classes or in secondary schools. This suggests that most respondents have some experience with the Santhali writing system and, presumably, an interest in promoting their ethnic language. The survey has slightly different sample sizes for certain questions because some respondents left them blank. Preliminary data suggests that the Santhali language is widely used among young people, although there may be a slight shift in usage patterns. In addition, respondents show varied values associated with Santhali, Hindi, and English. Notably, there is general support for community-led Santhali education and optimism about the future of language preservation and promotion.

### **(1) The Language Use among Santhali Youth**

The survey data suggests a high degree of multilingualism in the

---

<sup>2</sup> Out of 281, 10 responses were excluded from the analysis due to incomplete survey participation. They did not answer beyond the initial questions.

study area, where people regularly use Santhali, Hindi, other tribal and regional languages, and occasionally English. As shown in Table 1, young people continue to speak Santhali daily, particularly within their households. In 2024, 94% of respondents reported using Santhali to communicate with their mothers. Conversations with fathers were slightly different: 86% spoke exclusively in Santhali, while 11% used both Santhali and Hindi. Compared to 2018, the high use of Santhali with mothers (97%) remained consistent, but exclusive use with fathers decreased by 10 percentage points, while bilingualism (Santhali and Hindi) increased from 3% to 11%. These trends may reflect gender differences in social mobility, as men tend to have more social opportunities to engage with communities outside their own.

Table 1. Comparison of Language Use (2018 vs. 2024)

| Language Use                             | Year     |          |
|------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
|                                          | 2018 (%) | 2024 (%) |
| Santhali with Mother                     | 97%      | 94%      |
| Santhali with Father                     | 96%      | 86%      |
| Bilingual (Santhali & Hindi) with Father | 3%       | 11%      |
| Santhali with Siblings                   | 59%      | 42%      |
| Bilingual with Siblings                  | 38%      | 51%      |
| Hindi Only with Siblings                 | 1.7%     | 3.3%     |
| Santhali with Friends                    | 13%      | 11%      |
| Bilingual with Friends                   | 75%      | 73%      |
| Hindi Only with Friends                  | 6.3%     | 13%      |
| Santhali Only at Work                    | 15%      | 13%      |
| Bilingual at Work                        | 37%      | 32%      |
| Hindi Only at Work                       | 35%      | 51%      |

Communication with siblings, however, reveals a more distinct pattern that may signal a language shift. While most respondents still primarily use Santhali with their parents, more than half now speak

both Santhali and Hindi with their siblings, with 42% using Santhali exclusively. This marks a significant shift from 2018, when bilingualism was at 38% and exclusive use of Santhali was at 59%. There has also been a slight increase in respondents using Hindi exclusively, from 1.7% to 3.3%. A similar trend is evident in communication with school friends. While the exclusive use of Santhali and bilingualism remained consistent between 2018 and 2024, the exclusive use of Hindi among friends more than doubled, increasing from 6.3% to 13%.

The increase in bilingualism and exclusive Hindi use with siblings and friends may indicate a broader language shift among younger Santhali speakers. The greater use of Hindi with school friends could reflect higher school enrollment rates among Indigenous youth, particularly at more advanced levels where the student body is more diverse. Between 2018-19 and 2021-22, the nationwide gross enrolment rates for Scheduled Tribe students rose from 93.7% to 98.0% in upper-primary (Class 6–8), from 73.0% to 78.1% in secondary (Class 9–10), from 39.4% to 52.0% in senior-secondary (Class 11–12), and from 15.9% to 21.2% in higher education (GOI 2024). The growing use of Hindi among siblings may reflect these educational trends and signal a shift in language preferences. While Santhali is prevalent, particularly in family communication, the rise in bilingualism and reliance on Hindi in peer interactions suggests potential future shifts in language use.

## **(2) Language Attitudes towards Santhali, Hindi, and English**

Mirroring their linguistic behaviors, the survey results suggest that young Santhali respondents tend to associate varied values with different languages. In the 2024 survey, as shown in Table 2, about two-thirds of respondents reported that their knowledge of Santhali helped them form close family ties, while 17% felt that Santhali contributed to forming

friendships. In contrast, 57% of respondents felt that knowing Hindi strengthened their friendship. Notably, half of the participants believed that Hindi also benefited their family relationships, a significant increase from just 8.3% in 2018. Only a small number of participants associated English with building personal relationships. These findings highlight the growing importance of Hindi in social interactions, even within families. This trend is consistent with the language choices discussed in the previous section, where bilingualism and the exclusive use of Hindi increased in interactions with siblings and school friends, while Santhali remained the primary language spoken with parents. Thus, shifts in linguistic behavior may influence the roles that respondents associate with the Santhali and Hindi languages.

Table 2. Benefits of Knowing the Languages (2024)

| Language | Family | Friendships | Academic | Future | Culture |
|----------|--------|-------------|----------|--------|---------|
| Santhali | 66%    | 17%         | 58%      | 59%    | 66%     |
| Hindi    | 50%    | 57%         | 70%      | 66%    | 57%     |
| English  | 4%     | 6%          | 67%      | 49%    | 28%     |

All three languages—Santhali, Hindi, and English—were considered beneficial for academic performance and future prospects, although Hindi and English were rated higher in terms of academic value. While 58% of respondents felt that knowledge of Santhali contributed to academic success, 70% felt that Hindi was important for academics, and 67% associated English with better academic performance. Interestingly, 59% associated Santhali with broadening future opportunities, while only 49% believed that English would do so, despite its strong academic association. In contrast, Hindi was seen as the most important language for career prospects, with 66% linking it to future opportunities.

These findings reflect the medium of instruction and regional career paths. In government schools, Hindi is the primary medium of instruction, except for tribal languages, Sanskrit, and English. Proficiency in Hindi is, therefore, crucial for academic success, while higher education is largely conducted in English, requiring a high level of proficiency in this language. Although both Hindi and English are essential for academic competitiveness, most jobs after graduation do not necessarily require English. This linguistic discrepancy—common among many young people in India—may explain the respondents’ high regard for English in academia and their lower expectation of its impact on future opportunities.

Moreover, the association between Hindi and business has grown from 2018 to 2024, as shown in Table 1. In 2018, only 35% of respondents reported using Hindi exclusively in the workplace, but by 2024, more than half expected to do so. Compared to English, Hindi is perceived as more versatile, which will contribute to both academic success and job opportunities. Besides its official status, Hindi serves as a lingua franca in the linguistically diverse region of Jharkhand, where various ethnic groups, including Indigenous populations, Bengali, and Odias, coexist.

About two-thirds of respondents felt that knowing Santhali was beneficial for cultural preservation, a higher percentage than felt the same about Hindi (57%) or English (28%). This is consistent with their responses regarding their motivations for learning Santhali, as shown in Table 3. 68% of the respondents were motivated by a desire to preserve their ethnic culture. In addition to cultural preservation, just over half of respondents cited learning for a certificate, and about a quarter for academic success. A notable 18% of respondents continued to learn Santhali for business purposes, indicating its active use in some business contexts. Additionally, 17% cited preparation for civil service

exams, reflecting the recent inclusion of tribal languages in these exams. The association of Santhali with serious pursuits such as business and government service suggests that it is becoming increasingly institutionalized, even if not yet fully integrated into the public education system.

Table 3. Reasons for Learning Santhali Scripts (2024)

| Reasons               | %   |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Cultural Preservation | 68% |
| Certificate           | 51% |
| Academic Success      | 25% |
| Business Use          | 18% |
| Civil Service Exams   | 17% |

As Nozawa (2021) discusses, interviews with educators revealed a sense of accomplishment following the state's policy change to include tribal languages in the state's civil service exams. Since this change, several Santhali individuals have successfully passed these exams, creating excitement and pride within the community. This success has inspired younger generations, who now see proficiency in their native language as a potential path to career advancement. Educators believe that these individuals' contributions to public service will lead to more inclusive policymaking, elevating the collective status of the Santhali community. This achievement marks a significant milestone in their broader political and social movements.

Respondents expressed strong support for Ol Chiki education within civil society, with 86% in favor. Over 90% believed that Santhali children should learn how to speak Santhali and write in Ol Chiki script. In addition, 87% expected that more people would speak Santhali in the future. This strong support reflects a shared belief that preserving their language and ensuring active community involvement in language

education are critical to its promotion. These civil society efforts contribute to a sense of optimism among Santhali youth about the future of their ethnic language. These findings suggest that respondents viewed learning Santhali as part of a larger effort to promote their ethnic identity and their social status, which fueled their active participation in Indigenous language education.

In summary, while the Santhali language remains a vibrant aspect of family discourse, there is an increasing prevalence of bilingualism, particularly in interactions with siblings and friends. This indicates the possibility of a future increase in bilingualism among the younger generation. In addition, the survey results reveal different attitudes towards Santhali, Hindi, and English. Santhali is primarily associated with family relationships and cultural preservation, emphasizing its central role in maintaining ethnic identity. In contrast, Hindi is viewed as a means to make friends and achieve academic and career success, while English is seen as a tool for pursuing academic opportunities.

The inclusion of tribal languages in state civil service exams is perceived as elevating the status of Santhali and indicating a potential avenue for career advancement. As a result, younger generations increasingly view their native language as both a cultural asset and a practical means to success. This policy change is regarded as an affirmation of the community's broader strategy, in which community-driven language education serves to promote cultural heritage, strengthen solidarity, and advance Indigenous rights in political and social spheres.

## **7. Discussion**

The present research employs the framework of Linguistic Human Rights and Linguistic Citizenship to analyze Santhali language

education initiatives within Indian civil society. Both approaches are rooted in the principle that individuals should have the unrestricted right to use their native language in private and public domains. Scholars of Linguistic Human Rights argue that these rights are fundamental to the human condition and assert that governments and legal systems must protect them as inalienable. While case studies vary in methodology, research grounded in Linguistic Human Rights often questions government failures in providing adequate support for the official recognition of minority languages. In contrast, proponents of the Linguistic Citizenship approach, while also emphasizing individual linguistic rights, prioritize grassroots movements and activities. This perspective explores how linguistic landscapes and power dynamics are disrupted and mediated by language practices that are contingent on specific circumstances. Unlike the more static focus of Linguistic Human Rights on legislation and status, Linguistic Citizenship places an emphasis on informal language use in civil society and popular culture.

As previously mentioned, although Santhali lacks official status, it has been institutionalized in certain areas, including its recognition in the Indian Constitution, availability of postgraduate programs, elective language courses in secondary schools, and its inclusion in the Jharkhand state civil service examinations. However, despite the publication and distribution of textbooks in tribal languages for preschool and primary school students in some areas, the effectiveness of instruction in these languages remains limited because of a shortage of qualified teachers. An examination of this situation through the Linguistic Human Rights framework offers important insights into the current status and achievements of the Santhali ethnic group and their language activism. It also highlights the obstacles they face in seeking broader legal recognition. The frustration of Santhali educators regarding the slow implementation of tribal language education in primary schools

reflects the absence of adequate linguistic human rights. These findings can be compared with the experiences of other Indigenous languages, thereby fostering opportunities for wider collaboration and collective strategies to enhance their status at the local, national, or global levels. Moreover, it underscores the need for governments and institutions to recognize marginalized languages, support a more linguistically diverse society, and promote mutual understanding.

In contrast, the Linguistic Citizenship approach allows the researchers to track civil society initiatives in Indigenous language education, as well as language behaviors and attitudes among younger generations. Since the invention of the Ol Chiki script and the community-driven language education movement of the 1960s, ASECA has provided grassroots-level education in the Ol Chiki script without government or external support. More recently, TATA Steel's CSR initiative has also facilitated Ol Chiki classes in local communities through the TCS. Whereas these endeavors may not represent formal legal or administrative accomplishments, they have yielded numerous tangible and intangible outcomes. These initiatives have led to an increase in Ol Chiki learners and improvements in Santhali literacy. ASECA's community-based activism has raised awareness of the educational needs of tribal languages, as evidenced by TATA Steel's involvement in Indigenous language education as part of its community services. The incorporation of lessons beyond the Santhali language in textbooks published by GGPRMA further reflects their efforts to bridge the language gap and provide students with a broader curriculum that addresses both linguistic and academic needs in formal education. Moreover, these activities have supported Indigenous movements to enhance the status of tribal languages in official contexts. This is evidenced by the expansion of postgraduate courses in tribal languages and the inclusion of tribal languages in state

civil service examinations. This indicates that civil society activism and the gradual institutionalization of the language in official domains are interconnected and exist on a continuum.

In addition, these community-driven programs appear to have fostered positive attitudes toward the language among younger generations. In surveys, younger respondents indicated that their motivation for learning Ol Chiki stemmed from a desire for cultural preservation, reflecting a profound connection to their ethnic culture. Many respondents expressed the conviction that Santhali children should be encouraged to speak the language, with the expectation that this practice will become more prevalent in the future. These findings suggest that young Santhali respondents have developed a positive sense of ethnic identity and self-esteem, supported by a stable language community. Given Pattanayak's (2023) observations that government school educators are likely to hold negative perceptions of tribal children's academic capabilities, it is imperative to establish a linguistic environment where proficiency in their ethnic language is unconditionally valued. As Hindi-Santhali bilingualism is becoming more prevalent in everyday interactions among younger generations, community-led language initiatives will play an increasingly significant role in fostering this positive linguistic environment. However, while civil society initiatives play a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting Santhali, they cannot substitute for the institutionalization of indigenous-language education within formal schooling—a commitment that has been endorsed by the Constitution and a series of national educational policies. From a Linguistic Human Rights perspective, Santhali-speaking children continue to be denied their right to receive education in their mother tongue at the primary level.

The contrasting operational models of ASECA and TCS illustrate the intricate nature of Indigenous language education initiatives,

reflecting diverse approaches to community engagement, resource allocation, and ethnic community autonomy. ASECA, which has operated independently for nearly four decades without external support, has placed an emphasis on volunteer-based efforts to teach the Ol Chiki script at the grassroots level. In contrast, TCS, a more recent initiative, has leveraged substantial corporate resources to provide structured programs, teacher training, and cultural and sports events that have successfully attracted young learners. Both programs have undoubtedly contributed to the growth of Indigenous language education and raised awareness of the broader needs of these communities. However, the dynamic between the two approaches underscores an inherent tension: ASECA's independence ensures local autonomy, whereas TCS's reliance on external resources, while providing immediate opportunities, raises concerns about the long-term autonomy and self-determination of the ethnic community. This tension highlights both the potential and challenges involved in the broader realm of Indigenous language education.

## **8. Conclusion**

This research project examined the functioning and impact of Santhali grassroots educational initiatives on their ethnic community through the lenses of the Linguistic Human Rights and Linguistic Citizenship approaches. The objective of the study was to ascertain how community-based language initiatives, in the absence of comprehensive instruction in the tribal language medium in formal primary schools, have contributed to the advancement of ethnic identity, cultural heritage, and linguistic awareness among Santhali youth.

Preliminary findings suggest that these initiatives have expanded Santhali script education and have coincided with a growing awareness

of the significance of preserving and promoting cultural and linguistic heritage. Moreover, local educators have underscored the necessity of state support for the comprehensive implementation of tribal language instruction in primary education. This support is deemed essential for fulfilling children's educational needs, nurturing Indigenous identity and self-respect, and advancing diversity.

While young people express a strong appreciation for the cultural preservation and familial benefits of knowing Santhali, the survey data reveals a nuanced attitude towards multilingualism. In addition to their optimistic outlook on the future of Santhali, they acknowledge the value of Hindi and English for academic and professional advancement in a diverse, multilingual society. Bilingualism and multilingualism are likely to become increasingly normative among Indigenous youth, with community-driven language initiatives continuing to play a pivotal role in preserving their ethnic identity and heritage.

The two distinct operational models of Santhali community-based education, one independent and the other supported by external resources, offer valuable insights into the sustainability of grassroots Indigenous language movements in contexts of limited public support. Although the findings are preliminary, this study contributes to the understanding of the challenges and potential of Indigenous language initiatives in civil society. Further research is needed to examine the long-term impacts of these initiatives on promoting ethnic culture and advancing the self-determination of Indigenous communities.

### **Acknowledgements**

This work was supported by a Special Grant for Research (Tokutei Kadai Kenkyu-hi) from Chuo University.

## References

- Anderson, B. 1983; 2016. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition. London and New York: Verso.
- Ethnologue. 2024. Republic of India. <<https://www.ethnologue.com/country/IN/>> (retrieved September 27, 2024)
- Government of India. 2009. *The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009*. Ministry of Human Resource Development. <[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/upload\\_document/RTE\\_Section\\_wise\\_rationale\\_rev\\_0.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/RTE_Section_wise_rationale_rev_0.pdf)>
- . 2016. *National Policy on Education Report: Report of the Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy*. Ministry of Human Resource Development. <<https://niepa.ac.in/download/NEP2016/ReportNEP.pdf>> (retrieved September 12, 2024)
- . 2020. *National Education Policy 2020*. Ministry of Education. <[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/NEP\\_Final\\_English\\_0.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf)>
- . 2021. *There have been Considerable Improvements in Quality of Life of Scheduled Tribes Over the Years*. Ministry of Tribal Affairs. <<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1778541>> (retrieved September 10, 2024)
- . 2024. *ST Statistical Profile – At a Glance*. Ministry of Tribal Affairs. <<https://tribal.nic.in/Statistics.aspx>> (retrieved September 29, 2024)
- . n.d. *State/Union Territory-wise List of Scheduled Tribes in India*. <[https://tribal.nic.in/downloads/Statistics/StatewiseListofScheduledTribesinIndia\\_09072024.pdf](https://tribal.nic.in/downloads/Statistics/StatewiseListofScheduledTribesinIndia_09072024.pdf)> (retrieved October 6, 2024)

- Hornberger, Nancy H. and Serafin M. Coronel-Molina. 2004. Quechua Language Shift, Maintenance, and Revitalization in the Andes: The Case for Language Planning. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 167, 9–67
- Hynsjö D. and A. Damon. 2016. Bilingual Education in Peru: Evidence on How Quechua-Medium Education Affects Indigenous Children's Academic Achievement. *Economics of Education Review*, 53, 116–132 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2016.05.006>>
- International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. 2023. Indigenous People in India. <<https://www.iwgia.org/en/india/5117-iw-2023-india.html>> (retrieved September 11, 2024)
- Leighton, M. 2022. Mother-tongue Reading Materials as a Bridge to Literacy. *Economics of Education Review*, 91. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2022.102312>>
- Lim, L., C. Stroud, and L. Wee. 2018. *The Multilingual Citizen: Towards a Politics of Language for Agency and Change*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters
- McCarty, T. L. and S. E. Nicholas. 2015. Indigenous Education: Local and Global Perspectives. In M. Martin-Jones, A. Blackledge, and A. Creese (eds.), *A. The Routledge Handbook of Multilingualism*. London and New York: Routledge, 145–166.
- Mohanty, A. K. 2009. Multilingual Education: A Bridge too Far? In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, R. Phillipson, A. K. Mohanty, and M. Panda (eds.), *Social Justice through Multilingual Education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 3–15.
- . 2010. Languages, Inequality and Marginalization: Implications of the Double Divide in Indian Multilingualism. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 205(2010), 131–154. <DOI: 10.1515/IJSL.2010.042>

- Mohanty, A. K. and M. Panda. 2016. Language Policy and Education in the Indian Subcontinent. In T. McCarty and S. May (eds.), *Language Policy and Political Issues in Education, Encyclopedia of Language and Education*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 507–518. <DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-02320-5\_37-1>
- Muto, S. 2024. “Shometsu Kiki” no Ainu-go Fukko Dekiruka <Tane Okaan ushike~Ainu Sinpo 5-nen> Jo. *Hokkaido Shimbun*, May 18, 2024. (in Japanese) <<https://www.hokkaido-np.co.jp/article/1012299/>> (retrieved September 10, 2024)
- National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). 2005. *National Curriculum Framework*. Government of India. <<https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/nc-framework/nf2005-english.pdf>>
- Nozawa, E. 2017. Bunka no Jizoku Kanosei to Buzoku Gengo: Indo Santhal-go no Jirei wo Toshite (Cultural Sustainability and Tribal Languages: A Case Study of the Santal Language in India). In S. Miyazaki and T. Sugino. *Gurobaru-ka to Gengo Seisaku: Sasuteinaburu na Kyoseishakai, Gengo Kyoiku no Kochiku ni Mukete*. Tokyo: Akashi-shoten, 164–177. (in Japanese)
- . 2021. Minzoku Gengo wo Tsujite Kochiku suru Tsunagari: Shimin Shakai ni okeru Indo Senjumin Gengo Kyoiku eno Sanka (Building Connections Through Indigenous Languages: Participation in Indigenous Language Education in Jharkhand, India). In T. Sugino, E. Nozawa, and F. Tanaka. *“Tsunagaru” Tameno Gengo Kyoiku: Afuta Corona no Kotoba to Shakai*. Tokyo: Akashi-shoten, 95–108. (in Japanese)
- Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner. 2011. *Census of India 2011*. Government of India.
- Pandey, A. and R. Ozarkar. 2024. Reworking the Aesthetics of Language Use: The Multilingual Challenge for NEP 2020. *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, 22(1), 75–101. <DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40316-024-00800-0>>

doi.org/10.1177/09731849241273730>

- Pandey, P. 2016. Jharkhand School Books to Go Local: Tribal Students to Start with Text in Own Languages. *The Indian Express*. January 16, 2016. <<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/jharkhand-school-books-to-go-local/>> (retrieved September 2, 2016)
- Pattanayak, B. 2013. *Language Diversity in Jharkhand: A Study of Sociolinguistic Pattern and Its Impact on Children's Learning in Jharkhand*. Ranchi: JTWRI
- . 2023. Towards a Mother-Language Based Multi-Lingual Education in Jharkhand, India. *Journal of Productive Discourse*, 1(1), 33–42. <<https://typeset.io/pdf/towards-a-mother-language-based-multi-lingual-education-in-3s2fe2x5.pdf>> (retrieved September 12, 2024)
- Phillipson, R. 1992. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Phillipson, R., M. Rannut, and T. Skutnabb-Kangas. 1994. Introduction. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas and R. Phillipson (eds.) in collaboration with Mart Rannut, *Linguistic Human Rights. Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination*. (Contributions to the Sociology of Language 67). Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1–22.
- Pramanik, R. and M. Bag. 2012. Educational Performance of Tribal Students in Schools Managed by the State Government in Western Orissa, India. In D. P. Rao (ed.), *Development of Scheduled Tribes in India: Politics and Programmes*. New Delhi: Serials, 291–311.
- Ranjan, M. 2022. Tribal Kids in Jharkhand to Get Lessons in Their Own Language. *The New Indian Express*. Updated on April 25, 2022. <<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2022/Apr/25/tribal-kids-in-jharkhand-to-get-lessons-in-their-own-language-2446174.html>> (retrieved September 19, 2024)

- Rao, V. S. 2019. Language and Schooling of Adivasi Children in India: Issues Relating to Their Rights to Education. In Rao V. S. (ed.), *Adivasi Rights and Exclusion in India*. London and New York: Routledge, 297–310.
- Sen, A. K. 2019. *Indigeneity, Landscape and History: Adivasi Self-fashioning in India*. London and New York: Routledge
- Shah, A. 2011. Who Cares for a New State? The Imaginary Institution of Jharkhand. In D. Rycroft and S. Dasgupta. *The Politics of Belonging in India: Becoming Adivasi*. London and New York: Routledge, 217–230.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. 2009. Multilingual Education for Global Justice: Issues, Approaches, and Opportunities. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, R. Phillipson, A. K. Mohanty, and M. Panda (eds.), *Social Justice through Multilingual Education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 36–62.
- Stroud, C. 2018. Introduction. In L. Lim, C. Stroud, and L. Wee (eds), *The Multilingual Citizen: Towards a Politics of Language for Agency and Change*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 1–14.
- . 2018. Linguistic Citizenship. In L. Lim, C. Stroud, and L. Wee (eds), *The Multilingual Citizen: Towards a Politics of Language for Agency and Change*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 17–39
- Tanaka, K. 2019. The Saga of the Ainu Language. *UNESCO*. <<https://courier.unesco.org/en/articles/saga-ainu-language>> (retrieved September 12, 2024)
- The Telegraph. 2015. Governor, Tribal Textbooks in Sight- Ethnic Kids of Classes I & II to Open New Page Next Year. November 27, 2015. <<https://www.telegraphindia.com/jharkhand/governor-tribal-textbooks-in-sight/cid/1379337>> (retrieved January 11, 2026)
- Tribal Cultural Society. 2019. *Annual Report 2018–19*.

*Chapter 2*

*Ethnic Language Education in Multilingual India: Community-driven Santhali  
Language Education in Jharkhand*

Wee, L. 2018. Essentialism and Language Rights. In L. Lim, C. Stroud, and L. Wee (eds), *The Multilingual Citizen: Towards a Politics of Language for Agency and Change*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 40–64

# **Chapter 3**

## **Urdu: A Cultural Bridge in Asia's Multilingual Tapestry**

Hina Jamshed

### **1. Introduction**

Asia is the largest and most populous continent in the world. It is a home to a remarkable linguistic diversity that reflects its complex history and rich cultural tapestry, with over 2,300 languages spoken across its vast territory. Asia serves as a living testament to the human capacity for communication and the importance of language in shaping identity and community. This essay highlights the importance of multilingualism in Asia, in particular the Urdu language, its cultural diversity, its historical significance, the challenges it faces in the present day and the ways in which it enriches the lives of its inhabitants.

The linguistic landscape of Asia is incredibly diverse, encompassing several major language families, including Sino-Tibetan, Indo-European, Altaic, Dravidian, and Austro-Asiatic, among others. Mandarin Chinese, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Arabic, and Japanese are among the most spoken languages, each serving as a primary means of communication for millions of people in Asia. Beyond these prominent languages, numerous regional and minority languages also contribute to the continent's rich linguistic fabric.

In the Indian subcontinent alone, over 122 major languages and more than 1,600 dialects are recognized. Besides Sanskrit, there are 21

modern Indian languages: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Kashmiri, Kannada, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Santali, and Sindhi. This multilingual environment fosters a sense of regional identity and cultural heritage, while also reflecting the historical influences of colonization, partition, migration, post-colonization, religious, and trade issues.

It is commonly known that language is deeply intertwined with culture and identity. In Asia, multilingualism often signifies a rich cultural heritage. For instance, in countries like Pakistan and India, the coexistence of Hindi, Urdu, Chinese, Tamil, English and local languages illustrates the multicultural dynamics of these nations. The ability to speak multiple languages enables individuals to navigate different cultural, traditional and historical contexts, facilitating social cohesion and mutual understanding.

## **2. The Cultural Dimensions of the Urdu Language and Literature**

Urdu, with its rich tapestry of culture and history, stands as a language that reflects the amalgamation of diverse influences that are rooted in the Indian subcontinent. Urdu has evolved into a linguistic canvas that beautifully captures the cultural diversity of multiple regions. This essay also explores the cultural dimensions of the Urdu language, examining its historical development, linguistic influences and the way it has become a symbol of unity amid cultural multiplicity.

Urdu, a language that originated in the Indian subcontinent, is more than just a means of communication; it is a vibrant cultural artifact that embodies the history, emotions, and identities of its speakers. With its roots in Indo-Aryan languages and influences from Persian, Arabic, and

Turkish, Urdu has evolved into a rich linguistic and literary tradition. Thus, the cultural dimensions of the Urdu language and literature reflect the diverse influences that have shaped it over centuries, highlighting its role in expressing human experiences, fostering social cohesion, and preserving its cultural heritage. This essay explores the multifaceted cultural aspects and dimensions of Urdu language and literature, focusing on their historical significance, literary contributions, poetic and prose traditions, their social impact and contemporary expressions.

### **3. Urdu: A Language of History and Heritage**

Urdu has great historical significance that cannot be overstated. It developed in the medieval period in the context of Mughal India, where various cultures and languages converged. In the past, it was a beloved language of poets, so it had a unique historical journey that reflects the beautiful synthesis and expressions of Persian, Arabic and local dialects. It evolved in the Indian subcontinent. As a result, Urdu emerged as a language of communication among different communities, particularly in urban centres. This linguistic evolution reflects the historical amalgamation of diverse cultures and traditions that made Urdu a symbol of unity amidst diversity.

During the Mughal era, it served as a lingua franca for diverse communities. It embodies the essence of South Asian culture and acts as a powerful unifier among people of diverse linguistic communities and multicultural backgrounds. It also serves as a mother tongue to millions of Pakistanis and is the 10th most widely spoken language in the world. This essay also examines the impact of historical events on the development of Urdu as a language that unites people from various backgrounds. As Dr. Tabassum Kashmiri says:

Turks, Iranians and Arabs, who came from outside and settled in India, and made it their homeland, so the Urdu language here became the language they used in their homes and businesses, and thus the cultural diversity of the language increased immensely. (Tabassum 2009, 20)

Urdu's vocabulary, script and literary expressions are deeply influenced by various cultures and religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism. As a result, Urdu serves as a linguistic bridge that connects people of diverse cultures and backgrounds, contributing to the rich tapestry of multiculturalism. As Dr. Jameel Jalibi says:

The connection and association of Urdu with different languages and the claim of different language areas over this language are proof that it has given its existence individuality by taking advantage of all. That's why this language is the language of all the languages of the subcontinent, and as such, it is the only lingua franca of the entire continent. (Jamīl 1975, 3)

## **4. Urdu Poetic Traditions**

Urdu literature, especially in poetry, boasts a rich and diverse tradition that has significantly contributed to the cultural and artistic landscape of South Asia. Its rich narrative and poetic traditions continue to resonate with huge audiences both in South Asia and worldwide, making it an enduring part of global literary heritage.

### **(1) Urdu Ghazal: A Dialogue of Cultures and Social Narratives**

The poetic traditions of Urdu are a cornerstone of its cultural

dimensions. Poetry in Urdu is not just an art form; it is a means of exploring deep emotional and philosophical themes in a refined, expressive way. The influence of Sufism on Urdu poetry is profound, as many poets have drawn upon Sufi concepts to articulate their spiritual experiences and seek a connection with the Divine. Poets such as Bulleh Shah<sup>1</sup> and Amir Khusro<sup>2</sup> have left an enduring legacy, using the language to express love for God and humanity.

As Ameer Khusro says:

ہر قوم راست را ہے دینے و قبلہ گاہے  
من قبلہ راست کر دم ہر سمت کج کلا ہے

Translation: Every sect has a faith, a direction (Qibla) to which they turn, I have turned my face towards the crooked cap of (Nazimudin Aulia), the whole world worships something or the other, some look for God in Mecca, while some go to Kashi (Banaras), so why can't I, Oh wise people, fall at my beloved's feet? Every sect has a faith, a Qibla. (Narang 2008)

Ghazal is a distinct form of Urdu poetry, often addressing themes of romantic love and existential contemplation. The structure of the

---

1 Sayyid Abdullah Shah Qadri (1680–1757), known popularly as Baba Bulleh Shah and Bulleya, was a 17th and 18th-century Punjabi revolutionary philosopher, reformer and a Sufi poet, universally regarded as the “Father of Punjabi Enlightenment.” He spoke against powerful religious, political and social institutions.

2 Abu'l Hasan Yamin-ud-din Khusrau (1253–1325 AD), better known as Amir Khusrau, was an Indo-Persian Sufi singer, musician, poet and scholar who lived during the period of the Delhi Sultanate. He is an iconic figure in the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent. He was a mystic and a spiritual disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi, India. He wrote poetry primarily in Persian, but also in Hindavi that was the ancient form of Urdu.

*Chapter 3*  
*Urdu: A Cultural Bridge in Asia's Multilingual Tapestry*

Ghazal is characterized by couplets that can stand independently, allowing for a fluid exploration of feelings and emotions. This poetic form has transcended cultural boundaries, resonating with audiences beyond South Asia. The beauty of Urdu poetry lies in its ability to evoke universal emotions, creating a profound connection among speakers of different cultures and backgrounds. As Daag Dehlvi says proudly:

نہیں کھیل اے داغؔ یاروں سے کہہ دو  
کہ آتی ہے اردو زباں آتے آتے

Translation: Oh Daagh, make it known, it is no child's play, the learning of Urdu happens by and by. (Dāgh 1961)

Urdu Poetry, especially Ghazal, collects and encapsulates the experiences and emotions of various communities and cultures. Classical iconic poets like Meer Taqi Meer, Mohammad Ibrahim Zauq, Mirza Ghalib, Daag Dehlvi, Momin Khan Momin, Allama Iqbal and Faiz Ahmed Faiz have left an indelible mark on Urdu poetry by addressing universal themes of love, humanity, peace and social justice in their poetry. Their words still resonate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, fostering a sense of shared humanity and promoting multiculturalism.

Urdu Ghazal encompasses a diverse range of varieties and bodies of work; its literary contributions cover a wide array of themes, including love, patriotism, social justice, and humanity. The emergence of the Ghazal, which is characterized by its lyrical quality and exploration of complex emotions, as a prominent poetic form in Urdu literature has always been particularly significant. The Ghazal allows poets to convey feelings of love, longing, and loss in a uniquely expressive and cultural manner. As Dr. Ibadat Bareilvi says:

There was a tradition of Urdu Ghazal for about two hundred and fifty years, and as the caravan of our lives passed through whatever paths, our civilization came to light; thus, the true and correct picture of our lives could be found in our Urdu Ghazal. ('Ibādat 1955)

The genre of Ghazal is specific to certain countries of the East. It took its current form in Iran. But the style of Urdu Ghazal, especially in the form of Qasida, is found in Arabia even before that. However, the genre of Urdu Ghazal under the influence of Iran took hold in India, and it found such a reception that it was practiced in Persian and Urdu at the same time. It received what no other genre could get ('Ibādat 1955, 6). Many notable figures of Urdu Ghazal have enriched Urdu Ghazal by allowing it to flourish as a medium for philosophical and existential exploration.

Urdu serves as a unifying force by transcending linguistic, religious, and regional boundaries. In a multicultural society, where people speak different languages and follow distinct customs and traditions, Urdu acts as a neutral platform for communication. Its inclusive nature allows individuals from various linguistic backgrounds to communicate with each other, share ideas, and express themselves without losing their cultural identity. Urdu poetry, in particular, has a universal appeal that resonates with people across different cultures, contributing to a sense of unity and expressing the universality of love and pain that are a true reflection of one's emotion, as Mirza Ghalib says:

دل ہی تو ہے نہ سنگ و خشت درد سے بھر نہ آئے کیوں  
روئیں گے ہم ہزار بار کوئی ہمیں رلائے کیوں

Translation: This heart is not a brick or a stone; why shouldn't it

feel pain?

Let none tyrannize this heart, or I shall cry again and again  
(Ghalib 1967)

Through their masterpieces, they not only shared and expressed human experiences of love, fate, sorrows, and grief, but also transcended cultural boundaries and resonated with people of different regions. In such a way, Allama Muhammad Iqbal's poetry influenced a wide range of people, including Indians, Turks, Iranians, Afghans, Germans and many others by expressing universal feelings of love, peace and relationships between the individual and society. Here are a few couplets *from Allama Iqbal's poetry* for example:

نگہ بلند، سخن دل نواز، جاں پر سوز  
یہی ہے رختِ سفر میرِ کارواں کے لیے

Translation: High ambition, Winsome speech, a passionate soul,  
this is all the luggage for the leader of the Caravan. (Iqbal 2017)

ستاروں سے آگے جہاں اور بھی ہیں  
ابھی عشق ے امتحان اور بھی ہیں

Translation: Beyond the stars, many a world, Before love is  
proved, many a test. (Iqbal 2017)

## **(2) Urdu Nazm: A Cultural Lens on Human Experience**

Urdu Nazm is a significant and vibrant poetic form that embodies the multicultural dynamics of South Asia. It draws influences from diverse linguistic, cultural, and philosophical traditions. Free-verse poetry enables poets to express a diverse range of themes, from personal

experiences to social issues, reflecting the region's rich tapestry of identities and cultures. Poets like Altaf Hussain Hali, Nazeer Akbar Abadi, Akbar Alabadi, Allama Iqbal, Sahir Iudhyanvi, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, Meera ji, Noon Meem Rashid and Majeed Amjad have utilized Nazm to explore universal themes of love, resistance, humanity, peace and social justice by fostering connections across cultural boundaries from all around the world. As Shamim Hanfi says:

Hali (Altaf Hussain Hali) and Azad's (Mohammad Hussain Azad's) commitment to new ideas in Nazm was the result of a conscious contact with the dominant trends of the era. Iqbal was also a poet of commitment, and his relationship with his faith was not merely conscious; it had dissolved into his blood and become an indispensable part of his personality. (Hanafi 2008, 41)

The multicultural essence of Urdu Nazm is evident in its ability to resonate with audiences from various backgrounds by encouraging dialogue and understanding in an increasingly interconnected world, through its innovative style and thematic artistic diversity. Urdu Nazm serves as a powerful medium for celebrating cultural plurality and promoting shared human experiences from all around the world. According to the famous critic of Urdu literature, Shamim Hanfi, it is also true that meaningful poetry does not exist without a meaningful idea, and even the finest idea is unable to become a poem without the high capacity of artistic interpretation. (Hanafi 2008, 42)

Here is an example of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's famous poem, *Bahar Aai* filled with universal emotions of love, sorrow, joy and sadness.

بہار آئی تو جیسے یک بار  
لوٹ آئے ہیں پھر عدم سے  
وہ خواب سارے شباب سارے  
جو تیرے ہونٹوں پہ مر مٹے تھے  
جو مٹ کے ہر بار پھر جنے تھے  
نکھر گئے ہیں گلاب سارے  
جو تیری یادوں سے مشکبو ہیں  
جو تیرے عشاق کا لہو ہیں  
ابل پڑے ہیں عذاب سارے  
ملال احوال دوستان بھی  
خمار آغوش مہ و شاں بھی  
غبار خاطر کے باب سارے  
ترے ہمارے  
سوال سارے جواب سارے  
بہار آئی تو کھل گئے ہیں  
نئے سرے سے حساب سارے  
(Faiz 2012, 55)

Translation: It is spring, and the ledger is opened again.

From the abyss where they were frozen,  
those days suddenly return, those days  
that passed away from your lips, that died  
with all our kisses, unaccounted.

The roses return: they are your fragrance;  
they are the blood of your lovers.

Sorrow returns. I go through my pain  
and the agony of friends still lost in the memory  
of moon-silver arms, the caresses of vanished women.

I go through page after page. There are no answers,  
and spring has come once again asking

the same questions, reopening account after account. (Faiz 1995)

The historical context of Urdu Nazm is intertwined with social movements, political changes, and cultural shifts, illustrating how language and literature are influenced by the larger socio-political landscape.

Poets like Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ahmed Faraz, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, Habib Jalib and Majeed Amjad harnessed the power of their verses and poems to address social inequalities, political oppression, and human rights issues, becoming prominent voices in the struggle for democracy and social justice in South Asia. They have used Urdu Nazm effectively to express their thoughts, emotions, and societal critiques. That is why the literary history of Urdu is marked by significant contributions from various poets and writers.

### **(3) Urdu Prose: Literary Traditions**

Urdu prose has a dynamic literary form that encompasses a wide range of genres, including novels, Afsana, essays, humor, travelogues and plays. Its rich tapestry reflects the cultural diversity of South Asia, drawing influences from various linguistic, regional, and social contexts. Eminent writers have utilized Urdu prose to explore themes of identity, social justice, and human emotions, often highlighting the experiences of marginalized communities. This diversity enables Urdu prose to resonate with readers from diverse backgrounds worldwide, fostering a deeper understanding of the region's complex social fabric by weaving together various cultural narratives. Urdu prose serves as a grand and vital medium for celebrating the richness of human experience and promoting cross-cultural dialogue.

#### **(4) The Art of Storytelling: Cultural Legacy of Urdu Dastan**

The cultural and multilingual diversity of Urdu is evident in its literature, such as Dastan, where words echo with Persian grace and unfold their meanings as “a tale” or “a story.” This ancient tradition was loved by diverse nations, including Iran, Afghanistan, India and regions of Central Asia. The charm of Dastan finds its home in the hearts of different communities through communal participation. In different villages and towns, ordinary individuals or multiple storytellers came together and began weaving the fabric of tales, creating an atmosphere of wonder and mystery; they gathered a circle of eager listeners. Dastan thrived in the intimate spaces where all communities gathered, fostering a deep sense of belonging and tradition.

Telling and listening to stories has always been a favorite pastime for people around the world. In their early days, *Dastangos*<sup>3</sup> narrated charming and captivating tales of love, mystery, magic and adventure of wars. Then, through drawings and paintings, they encouraged a love of listening to Dastans from diverse sources, such as the tales of *The Arabian Nights*.<sup>4</sup> People came from far and wide to listen to these famous stories from Arabian culture. The tradition of storytelling, like the ancient Indian *Panchatantra*,<sup>5</sup> stories of the ancient Greeks, *Aesop's*

---

3 A “dastango” was a person who narrated the most amazing and splendid stories, in the true form and spirit of dastan, in an exciting and mysterious way.

4 “Arabian Nights” is actually the famous collection of “One Thousand and One Nights” tales that were called “Alif Laila.” It is a collection of Middle Eastern folktales compiled in the Arabic language during the Islamic Golden Age. It is often known in English as “the Arabian Nights,” from the first English-language edition (c. 1706–1721). This work was collected over many centuries by various authors, translators, and scholars across West Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, and North Africa.

5 “The Panchatantra” is an ancient Indian collection of interrelated animal fables in Sanskrit verse and prose, arranged within a frame story. The surviving

*Fables*,<sup>6</sup> and stories from all around the world travel to India where they all get translated or merged into the land of India and thus become a part of Urdu literature and cultural diversity.

The land of India has always been rich in intellectual wisdom. One of the most popular Dastans ever written in this region was *Kalila-wa-Dimna*,<sup>7</sup> written in Sanskrit. It was actually part of the Sanskrit *Panchatantra* or “Five Discourses” written in the fourth century (Jain 1986, 26) by the Brahmin philosopher and pandit, Bidpai. This Dastan was written for a King, advising him to hold his kingdom wisely, and concealed great practical wisdom in the form of animal fables, in easily digestible form, which caused the king to rule judiciously. After two hundred years, Khosrow I (Anushirvan),<sup>8</sup> a Sasanian Persian king, asked his Wazir to send his personal physician Burzoe, to find this world-famous book which was being kept in secret in India because of its magical and miraculous effect for ruling the kingdom. During

---

work is dated to approximately 200 BCE, but the fables are likely much older. It is undoubtedly the most frequently translated literary product of India, and these stories are among the most widely known in the world.

6 “Aesop’s Fables,” or the *Aesopica*, is a collection of fables credited to Aesop, a slave and storyteller who lived in ancient Greece between 620 and 564 BCE. These simple tales, renowned for their charm and simplicity, feature the adventures of animals, birds, and beasts, with each story conveying a moral lesson. For centuries, children and adults have treasured and learned from these fables.

7 “*Kalila wa-Dimna*” or “*Kelileh o Demneh*” is a collection of fables. The book consists of fifteen chapters, each containing numerous fables with animal heroes. A remarkable animal character is the lion, who plays the role of the king; he has a servant ox, *Shetrebah*, while the two jackals of the title, *Kalila* and *Dimna*, appear both as narrators and as protagonists. Its likely origin is the Sanskrit “*Panchatantra*,” which we mentioned above. The book has been translated into many languages, with surviving illustrations in manuscripts dating back to the 13th century.

8 “Khosrow I” also spelled *Khosrau*, *Khusro* or *Chosroes*; Middle Persian king, traditionally known by his epithet of “Anushirvan,” meaning “the Immortal Soul,” was the Sasanian King of Kings of Iran from 531 to 579.

his visit to the palace on the pretext of playing chess, Burzoe secretly copied this Dastan and brought it back by hiding it in his chess box. The king welcomed this wise Dastan with open arms and ordered it to be translated into Pahlavi, a form of Old Persian, and valued it so much that he enshrined this translation in a special room of the palace (Jain 1986, 26).

Three hundred years later, after the Muslim conquest of Persia, this Dastan was translated into Arabic by a Persian convert to Islam, named ‘Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa’. His Arabic translation was so eloquent that it is still considered the best model of Arabic prose. Kalila and Dimna are actually two jackals, who are the main protagonists of this Dastan, which was principally intended as guidance for the purpose of governing the state (Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ 2022, 18). Upon entering the Muslim world, this wise and entertaining Dastan became extremely popular, and was even carried by the Arabs to Spain and translated into Spanish in the 13th century. Later, the Arabic version was translated into Greek, Latin, German, Old Church Slavic, Ethiopic, Syriac, Turkish, Persian, Malay, Laotian and Siamese. Then, in the 16th century, this Dastan finally returned to India after completing a cycle of 1700 years, in its Persian translation named *Anwar-i Suhaili* (*Anvār-i Suhaylī*) by Husayn Wā‘iz Kāshifī. Then in 1587 it was translated once again into Persian, due to the interest of Mughal King “*Jalal-ud-Din Akbar*,” by one of his worthy historians Abū al-Faḍl, under the name of ‘*Iyār-i Dānish*’.

In the 18th century, Hafiz-ud-Din translated this Dastan into Urdu, at the request of Dr. John Gilchrist, who was the principal of Fort William College, Calcutta, in 1803. Later, it was also published by that institute under the name of *Khird Afroz*. After that, a chain of Urdu translations of this Dastan followed, exhibiting diverse cultural intellectuality and excellent expression of multicultural Wisdom (Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ 2022, 20).

In the 13th century, the Dastan were deeply rooted and flourished in India during the opulent era of the Mughals. As was the tradition at that time, a storyteller, who was known as a *Dastango*, crafted and delivered fascinating and immersive experiences. Every tale was a carefully selected fine gem, delivered with grand expressive gestures and vocal cadence, especially accompanied by deep, emotive facial expressions. These performances were not just recitations but living, breath-holding artworks that painted brilliant, vivid and glowing pictures in the minds of the listeners.

Thus, Dastan's journey begins in various regions and places, featuring epic heroes, mythical characters, mysterious creatures, historical sagas, and timeless folklore. With the passage of time, these native narratives became steeped in poetic eloquence and were then adorned with deep metaphors and sound allegorical nuances. Each tale carries the echoes of a past or a bygone era, which resonates with the diverse culture and literary influences of that time.

During the 14th century, Persian *Dastangos* focused on the life and adventures of *Amir Hamza*. At that time, the Dastangoi incorporated some unique storytelling techniques and elements such as "aiyyari," which means trickery in the Indian context. This adaptation enriched the narrative of the story, making it more interesting and enchanting; it added depth and intrigue to the tales being told. Through this evolution, Dastangoi became a culturally diverse and dynamic oral tradition by intertwining its elements from various sources and cultures to create vibrant and rich storytelling experiences.

In the 19th century, the earliest documented references to Dastangoi were found in a text comprising 46 volumes of *Dastaan-e-Amir Hamza*, the story of Amir Hamza's adventures (Lakhnāvi and Shāhid 2011). This Dastan was woven from Persian and Urdu and originated in medieval India. The journey of this Dastan began from Arabia, spread to Iran and

then eventually reached Delhi, the heart of India, due to the remarkable features of Urdu and its ability to preserve and showcase cultural diversity.

After that, this narrative genre, Dastan, got such a boost in India that stories and tales from many languages and regions of the world were translated or merged into Urdu, which not only expanded its cultural diversity but also brought the different communities of the world together. There is a beautiful cultural combination in *Sab Ras* by Mullah Wajhi, *Nau Tarz-e-Murassa* by Hussain Ata Khan Tehsin, *Bagh-o-Bahar (Qissa Chahar Darwaish)* by Mir Aman, *Aaraish-e-Mehfil* by Haider Bakhsh Haidri, *Fasana-e-Ajaib* by Rajab Ali Baig Saror, and many more.

Dastan always stands as a profound and captivating form of literature, which is still alive in the oral traditions of storytelling. It is a literary artistry that is woven into the very fabric of cultural heritage, from which the words transcend the boundaries of time and space, and thus create a captivating tapestry of charming tales. Its literary richness lies not just in the stories but also in the art of storytelling, the rhythm of speech, and the choice of words and the subtleties of expressions that afterwards became crucial elements of this literary form. Thus, these oral traditions, historical events, myths, and moral lessons were not merely recounted but also reimagined, revitalized, and passed down from one generation to the next.

### **(5) Urdu Novel: Cultural Diversity and the Spectrum of Society**

Urdu novels are a relatively recent addition to the rich tapestry of Urdu literature. It has emerged as a powerful medium for storytelling that transcends social, cultural and geographical boundaries. Since the inception of the Urdu novel in the 19th century, it has evolved

significantly by reflecting the socio-political changes of the Indian subcontinent. The first novel of Urdu literature was “*Miraat-ul-Uroos*” by Deputy Nazeer Ahmed in 1869. That offered profound insights into human experiences. Afterwards, through its narrative techniques and thematic diversity, Urdu novels have not only shaped the literary landscape of South Asia but have also facilitated cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

The emergence of the Urdu novel coincided with the rise of modernity in the Indian subcontinent. Writers like Prem Chand, Krishan Chandar, Ismat Chughtai, Quratulain Hyder, Intezar Hussain, Abdullah Hussain, Shoukat Siddiqi, and Mustansar Hussain Tarrer pioneered this genre by addressing contemporary issues such as the postcolonial period, problems before and after partition, migration, social injustice, identity, and the struggles of marginalized communities. The novel’s ability to capture the complexities of life in a rapidly changing society made it a most famous and popular form of expression, allowing authors to explore the intricacies of cultural identities, social and moral issues, gender dynamics and communal tensions.

Themes that are explored in Urdu literature often resonate with universal human experiences that make them relatable to readers from diverse backgrounds from all around the world. Novels like *Aag Ka Darya* by Quratulain Hyder, *Udas Naslain* and *Nadar Log* by Abdullah Hussain, *Basti* by Intezar Hussain, *Bahao* by Mustansar Hussain Tarrar and *Khuda Ki Basti* by Shoukat Siddiqi explore the colonial period, Partition, Migration, postcolonial issues, wars between India and Pakistan, dominated historical narratives, existential questions, love, hate, loss, and social critique. These narratives not only reflect the cultural context of their time period but also address themes that transcend cultural boundaries by inviting readers from different backgrounds to engage with their stories and characters.

As Urdu novels have gained much popularity beyond South Asia, they have facilitated cultural exchange and developed a dialogue. Translations of eminent Urdu novels into English and other languages have allowed non-Urdu speakers to appreciate the beauty and richness of Urdu language and literature. This exchange promotes a greater understanding of South Asian culture, tradition and history by fostering connections between diverse communities and cultures. Readers from various cultural backgrounds of the world can find common ground in the themes and emotions that are portrayed in these novels by enriching their understanding of the human condition. As Dr. Naeem Virk says:

The relationship between novel and culture plays an important role in their shaping each other. The structure of the novel, the rituals, the ways of creating the characters, the behavior of the characters, the dialogue, all these are influenced by the culture of any region. (Virk 2019, 102)

The cross-cultural effect of Urdu novels has extended beyond literature, as they have also influenced social and political discourse. Many contemporary Urdu writers address global issues, such as partition, migration, identity, and human rights, by reflecting the interconnectedness of today's world. Urdu novels contribute to global conversations by engaging with themes of cultural identity, resilience, and the question of justice.

The popularity of Urdu novels is found in literary festivals and academic circles around the world, underscoring their impact on cross-cultural issues and dialogues. When events celebrate Urdu literature, they attract diverse audiences by encouraging discussions that bridge cultural divides. Through such events and engagements, readers and writers share broad perspectives by fostering mutual respect and

understanding among different cultures.

For many decades, Urdu novels have served as a significant medium for cross-cultural communication and understanding. Through their rich narratives, cultural diversity and exploration of universal themes, they transcend linguistic and cultural barriers by inviting readers from various backgrounds to engage with their stories. As the genre of Urdu novels continues to evolve and reach new places and audiences, its cross-cultural effects will undoubtedly contribute to a more interconnected global community. Thus, the Urdu novel stands not only as a testament to the literary heritage of the Urdu language and literature but also as a catalyst for fostering cross-cultural dialogue, peace and harmony in an increasingly globalized world.

#### **(6) Urdu *Afsana*: Capturing the Essence of Multicultural Narratives**

Urdu *Afsana*, or the short story, is a diverse literary form that has emerged as a powerful medium for exploring human experiences, social issues, and cultural narratives. Originating in the early 20th century, Urdu *Afsana* has gained prominence through the literary works of eminent Urdu writers such as Allama Rashid-ul-khairi, Sajjad Haider Yelderam, Prem Chand, Krishan Chander, Rajinder Singh Baidi, Ismat Chughtai, Hajra Masror, Saadat Hasan Manto and Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi. This literary genre not only reflects the socio-cultural landscape of the Indian subcontinent but also serves as a catalyst for cross-cultural communication and understanding.

Urdu *Afsana* is characterized by its brevity, focusing on a single event, and conveying profound insights into human feelings and emotions with societal norms. This short and to-the-point method of storytelling allows writers to capture the complexities and issues of life in a condensed format, creating an Urdu *Afsana* that is both impactful

*Chapter 3*  
*Urdu: A Cultural Bridge in Asia's Multilingual Tapestry*

and accessible. Themes that are explored in Urdu Afsana often address issues such as power and imperialism, partition, migration, identity, gender, social injustice, and the effects of historical events by making them relevant across different contexts and time periods.

For instance, Saadat Hasan Manto's stories about partition and migration painfully affect the feelings and highlight the trauma and chaos experienced by individuals during that disruptive and troubled period. These narratives resonate with universal themes of loss, sorrows, grief, displacement and resilience. They invite readers from diverse backgrounds to engage with the emotional realities of others.

The cross-cultural effects of Urdu *Afsana* are very profound, as these compelling stories often transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries. The translation of Urdu short stories into other languages has allowed a global audience to appreciate the richness and depth of Urdu literature. Readers from various cultures from all around the world can find common ground in the themes of love, hate, conflict, social and psychological issues, and human struggle that permeate these narratives.

Urdu *Afsana* actually serves as a platform for fostering empathy and understanding among its readers. It often comprises and presents the lives, issues and struggles of marginalized communities. These stories encourage their readers to reflect and understand their own societal contexts, problems and challenges. The ability to connect the characters of stories with their own experiences can lead to increased awareness and compassion among people from different cultures and backgrounds. As Dr. Anwar Ahmed says:

The reputation of every genre of literature is in the hands of its great creator. The experience and style of this creator or writer expand the semantic world of this genre of literature, and the diversity of his experiences calls for new forms and techniques. This is the reason

for the mental and emotional training of the readers of fiction.  
(Anwar 2017, 26)

Literary festivals and cultural exchanges celebrating Urdu literature also play an important role in promoting cross-cultural dialogues. These events bring together writers, scholars, and readers from diverse cultural backgrounds by facilitating discussions that highlight shared human experiences while celebrating cultural differences. Such interactions enrich, enhance, and develop the literary landscape, fostering mutual respect among participants.

The rise of digital media has expanded the reach of Urdu *Afsana*. Many online platforms are available to enable writers to share their works with a global audience. They encourage discussions and collaborations that further enhance and enrich cross-cultural understanding. The accessibility of Urdu literature in the digital age has created many opportunities for its readers and writers to engage with one another, regardless of their geographical locations and countries.

Urdu *Afsana* stories remain a concise and powerful literary form that contributes significantly to cross-cultural communication, contemporary issues, and mutual understanding. They are brief in form but comprehensive in scope, and that is why it has narratives and exploration of universal themes. Urdu *Afsana* transcends cultural boundaries by inviting readers to engage with the complexities of human experiences. As Urdu literature continues to reach new audiences, its cross-cultural effects will foster greater empathy, awareness, peace, harmony and appreciation for the rich tapestry of diverse cultures. By encouraging and celebrating the power of Urdu *Afsana*, we can promote a deeper understanding of our shared culture and humanity in an increasingly interconnected world.

## **(7) Other Literary Contributions**

The Urdu Language and literature boast a rich and diverse body of creative work, encompassing poetry, intellectual prose, riveting drama and joyful stories. The literary contributions of Urdu writers encompass a wide array of themes, including love, partition, migration, patriotism, social injustice, and the pathetic human condition. The emergence of Urdu Ghazal as a prominent poetic form of Urdu literature has been particularly significant. Characterized by its lyrical quality and exploration of complex emotions, Urdu Ghazal allows poets to convey feelings of love, sorrow, engagement, Sufi thought, and loss in a unique expressive manner.

In addition to Urdu Ghazal, Urdu literature includes various narrative forms, such as short stories, novels and other genres. Great writers like Qurat-ul-Haider, Abdullah Hussain, Saadat Hasan Manto and Ismat Chughtai have used their works to challenge societal norms and also to shed light on the struggles faced by marginalized communities. Their narratives in their writings reflect the cultural realities of their time. They have made Urdu literature a powerful tool for social commentary and change.

## **5. Social Impact and Identity**

Urdu language and literature play a significant role in shaping social identities and community cohesion. For many speakers, Urdu is such an important marker of cultural identity that it particularly develops cultural harmony among Muslims and other communities in South Asia. It serves as a basic means of expressing cultural values, beliefs, and traditions by reinforcing a sense of belonging.

In Pakistan, where Urdu is the national language, it serves as

a unifying force among the country's diverse ethnic groups and communities. The promotion of Urdu in education, media, and government fosters a sense of national identity and cultural pride among its people. Similarly, in India, Urdu holds a special, unique and distinctive place within the broader context of Indian culture, particularly in literary and artistic circles in the country. Literary festivals, events, poetry recitals, conferences and cultural events centred on Urdu provide valuable platforms for speakers to celebrate their historic heritage and culture and connect with one another.

Moreover, in history, Urdu literature has also played a significant role in political and social movements. Writers and poets have used their creative work to advocate for the struggle for freedom from British imperialism, social justice, peace and equality, drawing attention to the class system and human rights by contributing to larger struggles for independence and empowerment. The voices of Urdu writers and poets have become instruments of resistance against oppression and imperialism by illuminating the cultural dimensions of activism and social change.

Urdu plays a crucial and central role in fostering, understanding and developing tolerance and acceptance among diverse communities, with eloquent expressions and refined, nuanced vocabulary. It facilitates meaningful and insightful dialogue in social and cultural exchange by promoting the appreciation of different perspectives through literature, poetry, and artistic expressions. The Urdu language, from its inception, has contributed to breaking down stereotypes and dispelling misconceptions and misinterpretations among different communities. In a multicultural society, understanding, patience, and tolerance are essential for harmonious coexistence; thus, Urdu plays a fundamental and vital role in nurturing these values.

The strength and power of Urdu lies in its historical significance. Its

actual role is preserving cultural diversity and contributing to fostering peace, understanding, tolerance, and cultural harmony. Urdu transcends and breaks down the borders of hate and bigotry, bringing people together with its inclusive nature and rich artistic and literary heritage. It provides a shared space where diverse communities and cultures can coexist. As the prominent Pakistani political scientist Eqbal Ahmad remarked:

Urdu is neither a Muslim nor a Hindu language. It developed in response to the necessity of two peoples to discover a common language. It developed out of an honest, genuine, meaningful, creative encounter between Islam and India. Out of that multicultural, multi-religious encounter, a language has developed that is our common heritage.” (Ahmad et al. 2001)

## **6. Contemporary Expressions**

In contemporary society, Urdu continues to evolve and adapt to new social, global and cultural contexts. The rise of digital media, social platforms and informative global literary events has provided opportunities for young writers and poets to engage audiences with their literary work in creative and innovative ways. Contemporary Urdu literature often addresses contemporary themes and issues such as identity, globalization, wars, human insecurity regarding artificial intelligence,<sup>9</sup> and the complexities of modern urban life. Modern Urdu

---

<sup>9</sup> Artificial Intelligence (AI) has completely changed the literary landscape by introducing sophisticated machine learning algorithms and natural language processing techniques. These algorithms have not only changed the creation of new works and technologies but also it has given new topics for discussion and creativity in literature and art.

writers are exploring diverse genres, from novels to short stories and blogs, by reflecting the dynamic, energetic and vital nature of Urdu as a living language.

The global reach of Urdu literature has been enhanced and expanded by translations into other languages, allowing non-Urdu speakers to engage with its richness. Literary translations foster cross-cultural and multilingual appreciation by creating connections among diverse communities and cultures, contributing, encouraging, and promoting a greater understanding of Urdu's cultural significance.

## **7. Urdu: A Cultural Thread in Asia's Linguistic Tapestry**

In conclusion, the historic cultural dimensions of Urdu language and literature are quite profound and multifaceted. From its deep historical roots to its contemporary expressions, Urdu serves as a basic tool for cultural identity, artistic creativity, narration, and social engagement. The true face of Urdu literature is revealed in its creative poetic traditions and diverse narratives that reflect the complexities of human experiences and social norms that are the cultural heritage of South Asia.

As Urdu continues to emerge and evolve in the modern developed world, its role as a language of unity, peace, tolerance, expression, and cultural richness remains indispensable and vitally important by contributing to the broader linguistic and cultural landscape of not just South Asia but the world as a whole. Embracing, welcoming and celebrating the cultural dimensions of Urdu will definitely ensure its continued relevance, importance and significance in a rapidly changing global environment.

In conclusion, it is essential to highlight the ongoing relevance of Urdu as a bridge between cultures worldwide. This can be achieved

by encouraging readers to appreciate, celebrate, and contribute to the promotion of the Urdu language, fostering a more harmonious, peaceful, and inclusive global society. Although there are issues in shaping the future of Urdu, such as language preservation, the impact of globalization, and the role of modern information and artificial technology, this language has endured many challenges in the past and continues to face them in contemporary times. As we celebrate the nuances, distinctions and expressions embedded in Urdu, we acknowledge the profound role it has played in uniting diverse cultures and communities by fostering a sense of shared identity with the traditions and culture we have been following for decades.

\*English translations are by the author.

## References

- Aḥmad, Zahrah, Iftikhār Aḥmad and Ziyā Miyān. 2001. *Iqbāl Aḥmad ke muntakhab maẓāmīn*. Lahore: Mishal Books.
- Anwar, Aḥmad. 2017. *Urdū aḥsānah ek ṣadī kā Qīṣṣah*. Multan: Kitab Nagar Multan.
- Dāgh Dihlavī. 1961. *Intikhāb-i kalām-i Dāgh*. compiled by Hali Publishing House Delhi. Delhi: Hali Publishing House.
- Faiz, Faiz Ahmad. 1995. *The Rebel's Silhouette: Selected Poems*. translated with a new introduction by Agha Shahid Ali. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- . 2012. *Nuskah hā'e vafā*. Lahore: Maktaba-e-Karwaan.
- Ghalib, Asad-ul-lah Khan. 1967. *Dīvān-i Ghālib*. compiled by Molana Gulam Rasool Mehr. Lahore: Sheikh Gulam Ali and Sons Educational Publishers
- Ḥanafī, Shamīm. 2008. *Jadīdiyat aur na'ī shā'irī*. Lahore: Sang-emeel Publications, Lahore.

- ‘Ibādat Barelvī. 1955. *Ghazal aur muṭāla‘ah-yi ghazal*. Karachi: Idara Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu Pakistan.
- Ibn al-Muqaffa‘. 2022. *Kalila-wa-Dimna*. compiled by Hina Jamshed. Jhelum: Book Corner.
- Iqbal, Muhammad. 2017. *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publication Lahore.
- Jain, Gian Chand. 1986. *Urdū kī naṣrī dāstāneḡ*. Lackhnow: Urdu Academy.
- Jamīl Jālibī. 1975. *Tārīkh-i adab-i Urdū* (jild awwal). Lahore: Majlis-e-Tarqi-e-Adab.
- Lakhnāvi, Ghālib and Shāhid, Rafāqat ‘Alī. 2011. *Dāstān-i Amīr Hamzah*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Narang, Gopi Chand. 2008. *Amīr Khusrāu kā Hindvī kalām: ma‘nuskhah-yi Barlin zakhīrah-yi Ishpringar*. Lahore: Sang-e-meel Publications.
- Tabassum Kāshmīrī. 2009. *Urdū adab kī tarīkh, ibtidā se 1857 tak*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publication.
- Virk, Muhammad Naeem. 2019. *Urdū nāvil kā saqāfatī muṭāla‘ah, 1869 se 1947 tak*. Lahore: Akas Publications.

# **Chapter 4**

## **Between Prestige and Pragmatism: The Role of English in Shaping Educational Aspirations in Pakistan**

Emiko SUNAGA

### **1. Introduction: From Japan to South Asia**

Japan's decision to introduce driver's tests for Class 2 licenses in twenty foreign languages is regarded as a significant measure in addressing the country's shortage of taxi and bus drivers. Previously, the examinations were only available in Japanese. Nevertheless, industry bodies have advocated for enhanced accessibility to facilitate the recruitment of foreign nationals. A multilingual approach has already been implemented for the first-class license, which is the test for driving standard passenger vehicles. It is common for foreigners who have lived in Japan for a considerable period to obtain their license in both Japanese and English, enabling them to drive cars. However, to drive taxis or buses, a second-class license is required. This qualification, which is necessary to ensure the safety of passengers, has been available only in the Japanese language for many years. The languages offered for new Class 2 licenses include several Asian languages, such as Chinese and Korean, Indonesian, Arabic, Hindi, Nepali, and Urdu, as well as English and Portuguese (The Japan Times 2024). This marks a significant shift from Japan's historically monolingual testing policies.

In Japan, the prevailing practice is to conduct school education, civil service examinations and driving tests in Japanese. However,

in light of the growing number of foreign residents in recent years, the monolingual framework is undergoing a gradual evolution. This initiative represents a significant advance and offers an intriguing case study in the field of multilingualism. The right to take such examinations in one's native language is known as "language rights." The study of language rights represents a significant area of enquiry within the broader fields of multiculturalism and language education. In the United States, bilingual signage in English and Spanish is a common occurrence in subway stations and museum exhibits. This exemplifies a language right that furnishes the requisite information to residents whose native language is Spanish.

The American Plain English movement has been a significant force in advocating for the simplification of legal and governmental language to enhance accessibility for the public. This movement is consistent with the concept of language rights, which emphasizes the entitlement of individuals to access information and engage in legal and governmental processes without linguistic impediments. The Plain English movement in the United States gained significant traction in the 1970s and 1980s as a response to the pervasiveness of overly complex and technical language in legal and official documents (Sumi 2020). In his article, "The Great Myth That Plain Language Is Not Precise" (*Michigan Bar Journal* 1998), Joseph Kimble challenges the assumption that legal precision requires the use of complex language. Kimble argues that the use of plain language does not preclude clarity; rather, it enhances it, thereby supporting individuals' rights to comprehend legal texts. In his seminal work, *Legal Writing in Plain English*, Bryan A. Garner puts forth the proposition that the use of plain language can enhance the accessibility of legal writing to the public. His works provide evidence to support the assertion that the right to language is a fundamental human right that encompasses the capacity to comprehend legal documents that have a

direct bearing on one's life.

The Plain Writing Act of 2010 signified a legislative commitment to language rights, requiring federal agencies to use clear communication that the public can understand and use. In her book, *Plain Language for Lawyers* (2003), Michele M. Asprey examines how legal professionals can adopt plain language to facilitate client comprehension and engagement in legal proceedings. Asprey puts forth the argument that the inaccessibility of legal documents due to complex language is detrimental to the fairness of the legal system and the individual's right to informed consent and due process. Scholars such as Kimble, Garner and Asprey have emphasized the importance of plain language in ensuring that individuals can fully comprehend and engage with legal and official documents. The movement advocates continued efforts to simplify language to uphold these principles.

Moreover, studies have been conducted in Canada and in countries where English is not the primary language, including Germany and Italy, examining the development of "plain language" movements in these contexts. In Japan, research on "Plain/Easy Japanese" began in the aftermath of the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and has since yielded a substantial corpus of practical knowledge to support foreign residents. In a study conducted by Iori et al. (2019), the evolution and expansion of "Plain/Easy Japanese" are examined. Initially developed as a communication tool for non-native speakers, it has since been adopted by other groups, including children and people with disabilities. The concept is examined further, and its potential as an instrument for fostering multicultural coexistence in Japan is discussed (Iori et al. 2019).

The concept of "language rights" is not as widely recognized in South Asia, particularly in countries like India and Pakistan, in comparison to other regions. While matters concerning language and

language preference are intermittently raised in the context of social and political discourse, the concept of language rights remains less clearly delineated within the framework of language policy. In Pakistan, while Urdu is designated as the national language, English is also recognized as an official language. A multitude of regional languages, including Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto, coexist in the region. Nevertheless, research is more focused on the interrelationship between English, Urdu, and regional languages, often within the context of language policy or language ideology, rather than on the question of language rights in and of itself. For instance, Shamim (2011) analyses the function of English education and its influence on social stratification and inequality, which can be regarded as an indirect examination of language rights.

Nevertheless, there are a number of issues that require further consideration with regard to the role of languages in South Asia. For example, in the context of driving license examinations, it would be pertinent to ascertain the number of South Asians residing in Japan who are genuinely proficient in Nepali or Urdu at an advanced level, and thus able to take written examinations in these languages. This is due to the fact that South Asia is a highly multilingual region, with not all of its citizens having Hindi or Urdu as their native language. Moreover, individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to have received instruction in English. It is thus conceivable that a considerable number of candidates may elect to sit the examination in English.

The “Plain English” and “Plain/Easy Japanese” initiatives are principally intended to facilitate communication in multilingual contexts resulting from immigration. They do so by offering the majority language in an accessible manner. Pakistan, in contrast, is an inherently multiethnic and multilingual society in which no single language is considered superior. In light of the aforementioned social contexts, this research employs meticulous linguistic analysis to organize the

flow of ideas and situate them within the analytical framework of language rights. This research makes a significant contribution to the study of linguistic rights by presenting a new case from South Asia and indicating the emergence of a new research field on the “global social strata formed through Urdu as a lingua franca.”

## **2. Background and Previous Work**

South Asia, comprising India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, is notable for its prevalence of multilingualism, with a multitude of languages spoken across a diverse range of regions. In India, the constitution acknowledges twenty-two official languages in addition to the numerous regional dialects that exist throughout the country. Pakistan has designated Urdu as its national language, while major regional languages such as Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto are also spoken. Similarly, the country of Bangladesh primarily utilizes the language Bengali, yet also has several Indigenous languages spoken by ethnic minorities, which reflects the linguistic diversity of the region.

In addition to the multilingualism observed at the societal level, South Asia is characterized by the prevalence of individual bilingualism and multilingualism, irrespective of an individual’s educational background. In India, a significant proportion of the population speaks their regional language at home, while utilizing Hindi or English for official and educational purposes. Similarly, in Pakistan, it is common practice for individuals to switch between Urdu, their regional language (e.g., Punjabi or Sindhi), and English, depending on the context. The majority of the population in Bangladesh is bilingual, demonstrating proficiency in both Bengali and at least one Indigenous or regional language. This demonstrates the complex linguistic abilities of individuals in these countries. To illustrate, the Constitution of Pakistan

stipulates that Urdu is the national language, and English is the official language used in public offices. In this section, I will present a quotation from the Constitution of Pakistan.

Chapter 4-251 National language

251. (1) The National language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day.
- (2) Subject to clause (1), the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.

In addition, four representative languages shall be spoken in each of the four provinces: Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushto, and Baloch.

Chapter 4-251

- (3) Without prejudice to the status of the National language, a Provincial Assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language.

In addition, the Constitution of Pakistan specifically mentions Islamic education and includes provisions for the teaching and promotion of the Arabic language.

Chapter 2-31(2) Islamic way of life.

- (2) The State shall endeavor, as respects the Muslims of Pakistan,-
- (a) to make the teaching of the Holy Quran and Islamiat

## *Chapter 4*

### *Between Prestige and Pragmatism: The Role of English in Shaping Educational Aspirations in Pakistan*

compulsory, to encourage and facilitate the learning of Arabic language and to secure correct and exact printing and publishing of the Holy Quran;

In reality, however, there are almost no situations in which Arabic is used on a daily basis. As explained in the following sections, Arabic is taught as a school subject.

The constitution also guarantees the rights of smaller languages that are not designated as provincial languages. There are between 30 and 60 other local languages. These include languages with a large number of speakers, such as Saraiki, as well as Burushaski, which is spoken in the northern mountainous region, and many endangered languages with a limited number of speakers. In Japan, linguist Yoshioka is researching the minority languages of Pakistan, including Burushaski, Domaaki and Kati, which originate from the northern mountainous region (Yoshioka 2019; 2021; 2022). The Constitution deals with the preservation of languages, scripts, and cultures.

#### Chapter 1-28 Preservation of language, script, and culture

Subject to Article 251, any section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture shall have the right to preserve and promote the same and subject to law, establish institutions for that purpose.

Urdu is the national language of Pakistan. However, in terms of linguistic hierarchy, English is considered to be of a higher status than Pakistan's national languages, as well as notional, regional or minority languages (Manocha 2022, 149). Setting aside the administrative burden of adjusting for differences in difficulty between languages, the expansion of language options is generally a positive development.

Against this background, this paper will discuss the coexistence of English and regional languages in the context of schooling and language rights.

### **3. Language for Education and the Impact of Mother Languages**

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, Art. 27) states that persons belonging to linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right to use their own language. In South Asia, a multilingual society where English has a strong presence due to the colonial experience, the languages used in schools are also diverse, ranging from regional languages to official languages and English. A significant number of primary classrooms in India are multilingual. In other words, irrespective of the language policy or school policy in place, the reality is that pupils are usually taught in their own regional language. Conversely, a significant number of post-secondary and private primary schools offer English medium education.

The research book *Multilingual Education in South Asia*, compiled by Lina Adinolfi and others, presents a comprehensive collection of case studies on multilingual practices and the latest research findings in South Asia, including India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. It is widely acknowledged that being educated in one's mother tongue or a language closely related to it is of significant importance. Conversely, ensuring the provision of educational opportunities across all languages is a significant challenge, largely due to practical constraints such as a shortage of qualified personnel and teaching materials (Fillmore and Paudel 2022). This is especially difficult in multilingual societies such as South Asia. Furthermore, it is notable that not all of these languages are afforded the same status and privileges. A study has shown that using

learners' mother tongues in the classroom facilitates the development of a strong cognitive foundation and offers a range of affective benefits, including improved engagement, attendance, retention, and well-being. Furthermore, this approach has been shown to have a positive impact on long-term learning outcomes. In a recent study, John (2022) examined the long-term academic performance of Indigenous students who were taught in their native language. The results showed that students who received early education in their native language performed significantly better in all five high school subjects than those who were taught in a non-native language (John 2022).

Urdu is a language of the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European language family, widely spoken in northern India and Pakistan. It has the same basic grammar and vocabulary as Hindi and uses a right-to-left Arabic script. Although Urdu was mentioned as the national language before, there are actually two twists in Urdu. Firstly, although Urdu is widely understood in the country, only 8% of the population actually speak Urdu as their mother tongue. This percentage has not changed significantly since the creation of Pakistan in 1947, and these 8% of native Urdu speakers are mainly the Muhajir community, who migrated from India. Urdu, a minority language, became the national language largely because of its historical background: in the history of the Mughal dynasty, which lasted 200 years from the 17th century, Islamic religious scholars, intellectuals and court poets used Persian and Urdu; during British colonial rule in the 20th century, in the independence movement against the British, the Muslim political leadership class that led to the creation of Pakistan was often Urdu-speaking. As a result, when Pakistan gained independence in 1947, Urdu was upheld alongside Islam as a principle of national unity.

Despite the limited number of sociolinguistic studies of Urdu and English in Pakistan, there is a recurring argument against the choice of

English for employment and the decline of Urdu. This is based on the promotion of 'beautiful Urdu' as a high culture. S.A. Manan et al.'s (2017) study on the use of English among native Urdu speakers and the language crisis caused by the switch. Ashraf's (2018) study on the role of English and Urdu in Pakistan's linguistic landscape examined the impact of different languages on the social status and opportunities of their speakers. The study highlighted the historical rise of English and its impact on local languages, such as Urdu, which are often considered less valued in the labor market and educational contexts. Other studies, such as those conducted by Shamim and Rashid (2019), focus on the language attitudes of Pakistani youth and the implications of the preference for English over Urdu for national language policies and language ideologies. Collectively, these studies examine the complex dynamics between English and Urdu and highlight the challenges faced by native Urdu speakers in contexts where English is prioritized. Consequently, although studies have been conducted on the language choices made by individuals seeking social advancement in Pakistan and the opposition between these choices and those made in favor of English, the debate surrounding the guarantee of language rights for Urdu and other regional languages has yet to be addressed.

Language services in English and other languages include discussions about the right to multilingual education, voting, court interpreters, and interpretation and translation in healthcare. On the other hand, what distinguishes Urdu from English and Japanese is that while Urdu is a national language, it is a minority language in Pakistan, where the numbers of regional and national languages are reversed. Therefore, for Urdu to maintain its status as a national language, it needs to be motivated in both directions: ease of language acquisition and motivation to choose the language.

Another twist is the presence of English, which is widely used in

society. As in India, English is linked to economic and social success in Pakistan, where it is essential for employment in the civil service and the large private sector. Parents and students are keen to learn English, and the *raison d'être* of Urdu, which is supposed to be the national language, is often under threat.

#### **4. Education and Language in Pakistan**

Pakistan is a multilingual country, but education in Urdu and English, the national language, begins at the start of primary school tuition, and the language of instruction is limited to these two languages. Textbooks for other subjects, such as social studies and science, are also in Urdu or English. Regional languages are not taught as subjects or adopted as languages of instruction or textbooks. In practice, in rural areas where Urdu is not widely spoken, teachers may use regional languages, but only as a supplement.

In a study by Haidar (2019), he explores how English-language teaching in elite schools in Pakistan serves to reinforce existing social class structures and privileges. The study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach, with data collected through participant observation and interviews conducted in four different types of schools. The argument is that the teaching of English in these institutions provides students with different language skills and social capital, preparing them for different social roles and perpetuating class divisions. English is seen as a prestigious language, essential for career advancement and higher education. However, access to English education is not universal, and there are significant inequalities between socio-economic classes (Haidar 2019).

Table 1. Subjects taught in Primary to Secondary Schools

| Grade              | Subjects                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1~3                | <u>Urdu</u> , <u>Islamic Studies</u> , English, Math, <u>General Knowledge</u>                                                                                                   |
| 4~5                | <u>Urdu</u> , <u>Islamic Studies</u> , English, Math, <u>Social Studies</u> , <u>Science</u>                                                                                     |
| 6~8                | <u>Urdu</u> , <u>Islamic Studies</u> , <u>Arabic</u> , English, Math, Computer, History, Geography, Science                                                                      |
| 9~10<br>Humanities | <u>Urdu</u> , English, <u>Islamic Studies</u> , <u>Math</u> , <u>Pakistan Studies</u> , <u>Science and Technology</u> , <u>Elective</u> (Computer and IT, Environmental Studies) |

\*Underlined in the table ... Urdu, dotted lines ... Urdu OR English, not underlined ... English

In Pakistan, the subjects taught in primary and secondary schools vary by grade, and the medium of instruction is determined based on the nature of the language rights in South Asia. From Grades 1 to 3, students are taught Urdu, English, Mathematics, Islamic Studies, and General Education. As they progress to Grades 4 and 5, the curriculum includes Urdu, English, Mathematics, Islamic Studies, Social Studies, and Science. In Grades 6 to 8, the subjects become more diverse, covering Urdu, English, Mathematics, Islamic Studies, History, Geography, and Computer Studies. For Grades 9 to 10 in the Humanities stream (as of the 2021 academic year), the curriculum includes Urdu, English, Mathematics, Islamic Studies, Pakistan Studies, Science and Technology, and elective subjects such as Computer and IT or Environmental Studies. Urdu (national language), English, arithmetic, and Islamic studies are the core subjects in primary schools.

The basic policy on language of instruction is that Urdu and Islamic Studies as subjects are taught in Urdu, while English and Mathematics

are taught in English. In other subjects, such as Social Studies and Science, where the language of instruction can be either Urdu or English, the language of instruction is determined on a school-by-school basis. Schools where almost all subjects are taught in Urdu are called Urdu schools and are common among government schools. Schools where all subjects except Urdu and Islamic Studies, which must be taught in Urdu, are taught in English are called English medium schools and include some government schools and private schools in urban areas. The subjects taught and the curriculum are the same as those prescribed by the national government, but English medium schools have a higher percentage of students going on to higher education and are considered superior.

Regardless of what language children speak as their mother tongue, they start receiving instruction in Urdu and English when they enter primary school and begin learning to read and write. The only exception is Sindh province, where students are required to learn Sindhi. However, in other provinces, speakers of regional languages such as Pashto, Balochi, and Punjabi do not have opportunities for literacy education. As a result, many Pakistanis who attend school are unable to read or write in their mother tongue. When they want to take notes from conversations with their parents, they have to switch to Urdu or English.

Pakistan is a multilingual society where it is common for people to be bilingual or trilingual, speaking their mother tongue along with Urdu and English. However, this primarily applies to spoken language. In terms of written language, it is often restricted to either Urdu or English, with many cases where only one of these languages is used in educational settings. Thus, the use of written language in education is more limited than its spoken counterpart.

A friend of mine who grew up in Quetta, a city near the border with Iran, has Dari (Persian) as her mother tongue and understands Balochi,

which is used in Balochistan province. She used English in school, conversed with her university dormitory friends in Urdu, and due to her extended stay in a university dormitory in Lahore, she also picked up basic Punjabi. Although she is a highly competent woman who became a national civil servant, she can only read and write in English and Urdu, while other languages are only used orally. Despite Dari, her mother tongue, sharing the same Arabic script as Urdu, she never had the opportunity or necessity to learn to read or write it.

In Pakistan's primary education, the high dropout rate remains a major issue. This is likely to include many students who struggled to adapt to the national language (Urdu) or English, which they do not use at home. When discussing language education in Pakistan, the topics of "urban and rural disparities" and the "educational gap between the elite and the impoverished" are frequently highlighted (Tayyaba 2012). In rural areas, school enrollment and literacy rates remain low, and issues such as access to education, dropout rates, and educational quality are ongoing concerns. Conversely, in urban areas among the affluent class, private English-medium education has intensified competition, and there is a growing demand for early childhood education. The author's friend even felt pressured to reserve a spot at a reputable preschool during pregnancy, as these schools are highly sought after and fill up quickly.

## **5. Enthusiasm for English Education**

The shift away from Urdu among Pakistani youth has always been a concern. This has not been limited to recent years. Muhammad Iqbal, Pakistan's founding poet, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a politician regarded as the country's founding father, both qualified as lawyers in the UK. To this day, university courses are taught in English and university entrance exams are written in English. It is not possible to

enter university without knowledge of English. Naturally, pupils and students up to high school age are keen to learn English.

English education has always been popular in Pakistan, and people in both rural and urban areas can read and write basic English if they have completed primary school. Many city and traffic signs are in English. However, this is at a basic level, and ordinary Pakistanis speak English with a strong Pakistani accent. On the other hand, students who have been educated in English schools speak fluent English like native speakers, without an accent. Good English is automatically associated with academic qualifications, parental wealth, and good job opportunities. In universities, English departments are more popular than Urdu departments, and the strict criteria for entrance examinations make it easier to attract the best students. The author, a Japanese, who studied Urdu at a university in Pakistan, was repeatedly asked by people in Pakistan: “Why bother learning Urdu? Why don’t you just learn English?”

When Khan et al. discussed Pakistan, they noted that a hostile stance towards English coexisted with a more positive discourse about English. Students also showed social shyness and embarrassment in speaking English, with others considering them “show-offs” and teasing them as “angrazaan / angreza,” which means *English people* or *Europeans* (Khan et al. 2022). Parents who want to prepare their children for university choose English schools from primary school or earlier. In private preparatory schools in urban areas, all teaching, textbooks, daily conversations, and announcements are in English, except for Urdu as a subject. Students in these schools also speak English with their friends and siblings on a daily basis, and Urdu is only used with non-English speaking parties, such as grandparents and maids.

At the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), a top private institution in Punjab province, Urdu and Islamic studies

are also taught in English. Students are, of course, brought up with English as their first language from infancy, and Urdu is only one of the compulsory subjects during school days. It is expected that the most proficient students will memorize the Urdu language in class and will be able to recite a number of Urdu poems, which are considered an integral part of a well-rounded education. However, this is a component of their education and culture, rather than a practical application in their daily lives. As a student at this university, one would be expected to engage in conversations with friends and at home in English. The only instances in which Urdu or other local languages would be required would be in the context of providing instructions to domestic staff who do not speak English.

The acquisition of English language skills is widely regarded as a highly effective means of advancing one's social position. This trend is not confined to the urban elite. A considerable number of businesses offer support for those whose first language is not English, providing opportunities for them to develop their English language abilities. There are English language schools even in medium-sized towns in rural areas, and one can see advertisements in Urdu and English for "cramming," "private tuition," "exam preparation," and "preparation for work or higher education abroad" to learn English. On the other hand, I have not seen any advertisements for learning Urdu. One student, who was born into an Urdu-speaking family but whose first language among her siblings was English, found that although she was fluent in Urdu, reading and writing took time and she was tutored by a teacher who had taught Urdu in college to prepare her for high school. However, such cases are very rare, and if you have a limited amount of money to invest other than for tuition fees, English education is generally the choice, and it is difficult for education in the national language, Urdu, to be viable as a business.

The author undertook a period of study in Pakistan with the objective of acquiring proficiency in Urdu and selected Karachi as their destination, a city where Urdu is particularly prevalent. The number of international students pursuing Urdu studies is relatively limited, and there is currently no established methodology for teaching Urdu to non-native speakers at Pakistani universities. The textbooks used were the same ones Pakistanis use to learn their national language. They were not designed for teaching as a foreign language, which presented a significant challenge for the author. Moreover, there were no supplementary educational institutions or other external sources where individuals could pursue Urdu studies. In some instances, other international students were compelled to solicit the assistance of English language instructors to receive private tutoring in Urdu. This indicates that a lack of proficiency in Urdu was not perceived as a source of shame, and it was challenging to establish a profitable enterprise centered on Urdu education.

Despite the growing importance of English in Pakistan, higher education institutions are not particularly committed to English education and research. For example, the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of the Punjab in Lahore does not employ any native English speakers, either full-time or part-time. Additionally, the faculty's expertise is predominantly in literature, with little focus on areas like linguistics (Mamiya 2016, 96–97). The point that there is not much emphasis on “learning” English in higher education is important, and Mamiya analyses that this is because students “have many opportunities to use English in their daily lives, so they don’t feel the need to go to university to learn (or relearn) English” (Mamiya 2016, 97).

During the author’s period of study abroad at the University of Karachi in 2006, a notable proportion of the student population was

comprised of individuals from African countries. The students had selected Pakistan as a destination for their studies because it was geographically closer and more affordable than Western countries, provided opportunities to use English, and was a Muslim-majority country. However, these students expressed discontent when, in what were supposed to be English-medium computer science classes, the instructors frequently switched to Urdu, making it challenging for them to follow the lectures. Consequently, English in Pakistan is regarded as a highly practical tool for higher education and employment, rather than a subject of academic or literary inquiry.

## **6. Conclusion: Language rights in the National Language**

While we have described a multilingual situation in which English is the dominant foreign language, higher education in Urdu, the national language, has long been the subject of debate. In 2002, the establishment of the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (commonly known as Urdu University) in Karachi and Islamabad was approved. This is a landmark university in Pakistan where science and law are taught in Urdu as the medium of instruction.

The Urdu University's predecessors were the Urdu Arts College and the Urdu Science College, which opened in 1949. Both were founded by Abdul Haq (1871–1961), the “Father of Urdu,” who was a linguist and compiled the 22-volume Urdu Dictionary. The Urdu University's charter states that “Urdu shall be the language of instruction and promotion of Urdu,” while allowing the use of English for technical terms. The Urdu University has 12,000 students and 450 faculty members. The main campus, Abdul Haq, located in the old city of Karachi, houses the faculties of Islamic Studies, Law, Commerce, Mass Communication,

Education, Management and Urdu Studies. Another campus in Karachi houses science faculties, including botany, biology, chemistry, geology, mathematics, pharmacy, physics, and zoology; the Islamabad campus, established in 2003, is more compact than Karachi and offers a range of management, computer, mathematics, and humanities courses. Japanese language courses are also available.

While it is common in Japan for university courses to be taught in Japanese, for Pakistan, where higher education has long been conducted in English, the Urdu University was a milestone in offering university education in Urdu, the national language. The university provided an important opportunity for students from low- and middle-income groups, who were economically unable to access adequate English-language education, to benefit from higher education.

From the perspective of language rights, the most significant aspect is the provision of opportunities to pursue higher education in a language that is more closely aligned with one's native tongue than English. By disseminating this information more widely, it is hoped that the fixed idea that higher education is synonymous with English will be challenged. Currently, apart from this Urdu University, there are no other universities in Pakistan that utilize solely the country's native languages as the medium of instruction. The growth of this university will probably result in the establishment of a linguistic sphere that can be employed for a multitude of purposes, including higher education, court terminology, and the creation of highly familiar educational materials, such as signage.

Urdu, Hindi, Nepali, and other regional languages have played a significant role in shaping the history of South Asian societies. English is also an important aspect of South Asia, including Pakistan. Knowledge of English can affect higher education and employment opportunities, creating a divide, but it can also empower individuals. In

this paper, I have discussed the challenges and opportunities of language education in South Asia, with a focus on language rights. There is a growing interest in English language education in the region, but there are also concerns about the lack of support for other languages.

However, the momentum for the right to education in national and regional languages has not yet spread. Thus, the right to study in one's mother tongue has coexisted with English in Pakistan *without becoming a significant issue*. In fact, there are many young people who would not be able to read books, talk to their friends, or get an education if they could not use English. Therefore, there is a need for a society that not only breaks the English monopoly and promotes regional languages but also successfully *accommodates* a multilingual society, including English.

## References

- Ashraf, H. 2018. Translingual Practices and Monoglot Policy Aspirations: A Case Study of Pakistan's Plurilingual Classrooms. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 19(1), 1–21.
- Erling, E. J., L. Adinolfi, A. K. Hultgren, A. Buckler, and M. Mukorera. 2016. Medium of Instruction Policies in Ghanaian and Indian Primary Schools: An Overview of Key Issues and Recommendations. *Comparative Education*, 52(3), 294–310.
- Fillmore, N. and J. R. Paudel. 2022. Policy to Practice, National to Local: Multilingual Education at the Meso and Micro Levels of Western Nepal. In L. Adinolfi, et al. (eds.), *Multilingual Education in South Asia: At the Intersection of Policy and Practice*. London: Routledge, 69–92.
- Haidar, S. 2019. Access to English in Pakistan: Inculcating Prestige and Leadership through Instruction in Elite Schools. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 22(7), 833–848.

- Iwata, Kazunari, Takuzo Sato, and Naomi Yanagida. eds. 2019. *Yasashii Nihongo to Tabunka Kyosei (Plain Japanese and Multicultural Conviviality)*. Tokto: Coco Shuppan.
- John, S. V. 2022. Bilingual Early Schooling among Tribal Children in India. In L. Adinolfi, et al. (eds.), *Multilingual Education in South Asia: At the Intersection of Policy and Practice*. London: Routledge, 112–131.
- Khan, Imdad Ullah, Louisa Buckingham, and Martin East. 2022. Multilingualism and English Learning in Pakistan: Towards an Effective Multilingual Policy. In L. Adinolfi, et al. (eds.), *Multilingual Education in South Asia: At the Intersection of Policy and Practice*. London: Routledge, 93–111.
- Mamiya, Kensaku 2016. Pakisutan ni okeru Gengo Kyoiku no Genjo (Language Education in the Universities of Pakistan). In Tomimori Nobuo (ed.), *Ajia Shogo wo Shutaru Taisho ni shita Gengo Kyoikuho to Tsu-gengoteki Gakushu Tasseido Hyokaho no Sogoteki Kenkyu, Seika Hokokusho 2014 (Comprehensive Study on Language Education Methods and Cross-linguistic Proficiency Evaluation Methods for Asian Languages-Final Report 2014)*. Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 95–97.
- Manan, S. A., F. P. Dumanig, and M. K. David. 2017. The English-Medium Fever in Pakistan: Analyzing Policy, Perceptions and Practices through Additive Bi/Multilingual Education Lens. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 20(6), 736–752.
- Manocha, S. 2022. Participation of Saora Children in MLE and MLE Plus Schools in Odisha, India: Lessons Learned and Lessons to Learn. In L. Adinolfi, et al. (eds.), *Multilingual Education in South Asia: At the Intersection of Policy and Practice*. London: Routledge, 149–171.

- Shamim, F. 2011. English as the Language for Development in Pakistan: Issues, Challenges and Possible Solutions. In H. Coleman (ed.), *Dreams and Realities: Developing Countries and the English Language*. London: The British Council, 291–310.
- Shamim, F. and U. Rashid. 2019. The English/Urdu-medium Divide in Pakistan: Consequences for Learner Identity and Future Life Chances. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 6(1), 43–61.
- Sumi, T. 2020. *Imin Taikoku Amerika no Gengo Sabisu: Tagengo to “Yasashii Eigo” wo meguru Undo to Seisaku* (Language Services in Immigrant America: Movements and Policies around Multilingualism and ‘Plain English’). Tokyo: Akashi Shoten.
- Tayyaba, Saadia. 2012. Rural-urban Gaps in Academic Achievement, Schooling Conditions, Student, and Teachers’ Characteristics in Pakistan. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 26(1), 6–26.
- The Japan Times. 2024 (February 11). Japan Taxi and Bus Driver’s License Tests to Go Multilingual. *The Japan Times*. <<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2024/02/11/japan/society/taxi-bus-drivers-license-multilingual/>> (accessed February 23, 2024)
- Yoshioka, Noboru. 2019. The Decay and Reconstruction of Nominal Classes in Srinagar Burushaski. *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology*, 44(2), 239–254.
- . 2021. Nominal Echo Formations in Kati: In the Context of Languages of Northern Pakistan. *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology*, 45(3), 429–40.
- . 2022. Eat a Spoonful, Speak a Night Tale: A Domaaki (Hi) story Telling. *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology*, 46(4), 565–592.

## **Chapter 5**

# **Japanese Language Education in Taiwan**

Tatsuo ARAKI

### **1. Language Landscape in Taiwan**

“Taiwan” generally refers to the island of Taiwan, which lies southwest of Okinawa Prefecture, Japan, east of Fujian Province, China, and faces the Philippines to the south across the Bashi Channel. The term also includes the surrounding smaller islands. Currently, approximately twenty-three million people live in Taiwan, and the languages spoken can be broadly divided into two categories.

The first category includes the Chinese languages, the mother tongues of the Han Chinese, who comprise over 90% of the population. There are several dialects of Chinese, but those spoken in Taiwan include Mandarin, which is based on the northern dialects of mainland China; Southern Min, commonly referred to as Taiwanese, which is based on the southern dialects of Fujian Province; and Hakka, which is mainly from Guangdong Province. The differences among these three dialects are considerable, and mutual understanding is challenging.

The second category consists of the Austronesian languages used by the Indigenous peoples. At present, the government officially recognizes 16 Indigenous ethnic groups, each with its own language. Additionally, other ethnic groups identify themselves as independent people with their own languages, although they are not officially recognized. Indigenous peoples mainly reside in the Central Mountain Range of Taiwan, its eastern side, and the outlying islands. There are also the so-called “Pingpu” or non-Han peoples who live in the western plains. The

Han migration has historically spread from the western coastal plains, leading to early contact between the Han and the Pingpu. Consequently, it is generally believed that the Pingpu were quickly “Hanized” or assimilated into Han culture. However, there is now a movement to reevaluate and revive Pingpu culture and traditions.

Currently, Taiwan and the outlying islands of Kinmen and Matsu are under the effective control of the government of the Republic of China (ROC), which has designated Mandarin Chinese as the national language. However, many elderly people in local towns understand or speak only their ethnic mother tongues.

## **2. History of Japanese Education in Taiwan**

Settlers from mainland China began migrating to Taiwan in the 16th century, and from the 17th century, the western part of the island came under the control of the Qing Dynasty of China. In 1895, following the Treaty of Shimonoseki (also known as the Treaty of Maguan), which ended the First Sino-Japanese War, the entire island and the Penghu archipelago to the west were ceded to Japan. Japan established a Governor-General’s Office in Taiwan and began its colonial rule.

During the Japanese occupation of Taiwan, Japanese was declared the national language, as in mainland Japan, and a system of teaching Japanese to non-native speakers gradually took shape. This period is considered the first time in Japanese history that systematic and institutionalized Japanese-language education was implemented overseas. Although there was considerable resistance among the local population to the imposition of the Japanese language, its spread gradually increased, reaching nearly 80% by the early 1940s. This rise in literacy was largely due to Japan’s coercive policies, but was also influenced by the multilingual nature of Taiwanese society. Prior

to Japanese rule, no group in Taiwan had Mandarin as its mother tongue, and there was no common language (*lingua franca*) to facilitate communication between the various ethnic groups. Ironically, Japanese, which was forcibly introduced as a national language, became the *lingua franca* between groups of different languages.

Under Japanese rule, there were various forms of discrimination between Japanese and non-Japanese. In primary education, separate schools were established for Japanese and non-Japanese children; the former attended elementary schools, whereas the latter attended public schools. Most of the students who attended secondary and higher education were Japanese. In accordance with Japan's old education system, Taihoku High School (equivalent to today's university preparatory courses) and Taihoku Imperial University<sup>1</sup> were established in Taiwan; however, these institutions were no different from schools in mainland Japan—they were Japanese-language schools for Japanese. Consequently, the few non-native Japanese speakers who had advanced to secondary or higher education acquired modern culture, thought, and technology through the Japanese language. These Taiwanese intellectuals often conducted their intellectual activities in Japanese, and it was not uncommon for them to criticize their Japanese rulers.

In 1945, Japan lost the Second World War and surrendered all its overseas territories, and the Japanese population returned to the mainland. Taiwan was incorporated into the Republic of China (ROC). The national language of the ROC was Mandarin Chinese, and it was considered necessary to promote Mandarin in Taiwan. In other words, the authorities wanted to completely replace Japanese, which had served as a *lingua franca* between various ethnic groups, with Mandarin. To this end, the Taiwan Provincial Government, the governing body of the ROC in Taiwan, adopted a policy of thoroughly eradicating Japanese,

---

<sup>1</sup> Taihoku during the Japanese era is the present-day Taipei.

which was viewed as an enemy language and an obstacle to the spread of Mandarin. The use of Japanese was banned in official documents, government offices, schools, and the media. This effectively prevented those who did not understand Mandarin from advancing in society and improving their social status.

Meanwhile, with the establishment of the Taiwan Provincial Government, people whose mother tongue was Mandarin or who had learned Mandarin (these people were referred to as “mainlanders”) poured in from the mainland. Although they were a minority, they held key positions in government and business, becoming the ruling class in Taiwan. Some of those who had lived in Taiwan since before the war and did not understand Mandarin (known as “native Taiwanese”) continued to use Japanese as a means of communication, but Japanese speakers and intellectuals from the Japanese colonial period were seen by the authorities as particularly dangerous because they could facilitate opposition to government policies.

In 1949, the Republic of China lost almost all its mainland territories, and the central government moved to Taiwan, while the People’s Republic of China was established on the mainland. In 1952, the Republic of China signed the Japan-China Peace Treaty, formally ending the state of war with Japan. Although the use of Japanese and the teaching of Japanese in public were still banned, it became necessary to strengthen ties with Japan to promote economic and trade relations and to distinguish the ROC culturally from the People’s Republic of China. Consequently, the ban on Japanese education was gradually lifted, starting with private tutoring schools known as *buxiban* 補習班 and the introduction of Japanese as a second foreign language in universities. In the 1960s, private universities started their first Japanese language programs. However, these courses were given names such as “Eastern languages 東方語” to avoid explicitly using the term “Japanese language.”

In 1972, Japan broke off diplomatic relations with the Republic of China and signed a treaty with the People's Republic of China, leading to a rise in anti-Japanese sentiment. This temporarily halted the establishment of new Japanese departments and majors at universities. Nevertheless, the demand for Japanese-speaking personnel grew as economic relations continued through private economic exchange organizations, and Japanese companies began to expand into Taiwan. From the 1980s, the names of departments with explicit reference to the Japanese language were approved, and Japanese language courses were established in national universities.

In addition, around 1986, Commercial Japanese Language Departments 商用日文科 (renamed Applied Foreign Language and Literature Departments 応用外語日文科 in 1993) were established in high-level vocational schools 高級職業学校 (equivalent to Japan's specialized secondary schools), and practical training in business Japanese began. In 1995, Japanese was officially recognized as a second foreign language in high schools.

In summary, Japanese speakers in Taiwan can be broadly divided into two groups: those who attended school during the prewar and wartime periods and acquired Japanese as a second language, and those who studied Japanese as a pure foreign language after the war. The latter can be further divided into those who studied Japanese out of necessity for business, economics, or technology, and those who grew up in an environment where the Japanese language and culture were naturally present from childhood, after the lifting of the ban on Japanese culture.

### **3. Current Status and Challenges of Japanese Language Education in Taiwan**

Japanese language education in Taiwan is currently at a crossroads. Almost half of all Japanese learners in Taiwan were enrolled in higher

education institutions for a long time. However, with a declining birth rate leading to a steady decline in the population under the age of 18, combined with the government's emphasis on English education and the growing popularity of Korean, the number of students enrolled in Japanese language courses at universities is decreasing. Some universities have even stopped accepting new students into specialized Japanese language majors/departments. On the other hand, unlike in higher education, Japanese remains the most popular choice as a second foreign language in secondary schools. Nevertheless, various problems have been identified, such as a lack of practice in conversation and composition due to large class sizes, inadequate teaching materials tailored to specific learning goals, a shortage of qualified teachers skilled in direct instruction methods, and a lack of coordination with Japanese-language education at higher education institutions. It is crucial to address these issues and establish an environment that encourages students to pursue Japanese studies even at the university level.

#### **4. An Account of a Japanese Language Teacher at a Local Cram School**

In 2015, I began working part-time as a Japanese language teacher in Taipei. From 2016 to 2018, I taught full-time at a *buxiban* in Tainan, and from 2018 to 2019, I continued teaching at another *buxiban* in Hsinchu. What I share here is based on my personal experiences and may not be universally applicable to Japanese language education in Taiwan.

Like Japan, Taiwan has large cram schools with multiple branches and smaller local cram schools with only one or two branches. The latter, like *machi-juku* (town-based cram schools) in Japan, are flexible and responsive to students' needs, but can also appear disorganized and

improvised at times. This was the type of school where I worked.

A diverse range of people attend these local cram schools. While they are educational institutions, they also function as service-oriented businesses that aim to attract and retain as many students as possible. Consequently, they offer various Japanese language courses. Let me share some typical and memorable cases from my experience.

### **(1) Students in the Classroom**

While *buxiban* aim to offer personalized services, they follow a basic curriculum. Most cram schools provide regular classes for beginners with no knowledge of Japanese, elementary classes for those who have learned the basic syllabaries (hiragana and katakana), and intermediate-level classes. These courses have set textbooks and schedules, and classes typically start when a minimum number of students is reached, usually on weekday evenings or Saturdays. In the evening classes I taught, most students were young working adults in their mid-20s to mid-30s, who had grown up surrounded by Japanese anime, TV shows, and music. With more free time as adults, they decided to study Japanese—a subject they had been interested in since childhood. Although their motivation was generally high, a divide often emerged between those who enjoyed the lessons and improved quickly and those who struggled and lost interest over time. Taiwan is in an environment where people are easily exposed to Japanese language, and highly motivated beginners tend to acquire new skills rapidly.

Although beginners lack grammatical knowledge, they often have fragmented information. In beginner classes, I would first introduce the sounds of Japanese by asking questions such as “Who are the famous Japanese people you know?”, “What Japanese place names do you know?”, “What food do you know?”, and “What music do you

know?” I would then teach them how to pronounce these names and have them practice them. Place names and food were easy, but when it came to famous people and music, many names that I had never heard were mentioned. This was partly because “famous people” included characters from dramas, films, and anime, which I was not always familiar with. I often found myself looking for information online after class. Owing to my Taiwanese students, I learned a lot about Japanese subculture. In the final session of the beginner class, I handed out the lyrics of a Japanese song and had everyone sing it along with the music based on the artists and songs mentioned in the first survey.

In one intermediate class, there was a student in her twenties who was studying Japanese at a graduate school. She was a fan of Japanese bands and often travelled to Japan. During conversation practice and composition exercises, she frequently used terms like “cosplay” and “*bangyaru*” (band girl), which are not typically found in textbooks or dictionaries, leaving other students confused. However, because she was clearly enjoying herself and making progress, I did not want to interrupt. Instead, I asked her to explain these terms, hoping that it would become a mutual learning experience for everyone. Nonetheless, the older students often looked puzzled, as if to say, “I still don’t understand what she’s talking about.”

In another class, there was a man in his twenties who was a very passive learner. He began learning Japanese because he liked Japanese anime and games; however, he was too shy to speak up. Even when I tried to engage him in conversation, he responded with very short phrases, usually just saying, “I play games.” As a teacher, I wanted him to speak and write more, but he was always the first to arrive in class and took his attendance seriously. Five years after I left that class, I received a message in Chinese on social media while I was in Japan. It was from the same student who had rarely spoken in class. Surprisingly,

he told me that he had continued to study Japanese and was attending a language school in Japan for a six-month course. Although he was still reserved and did not speak much, he made an effort to come alone to the station where we had arranged to meet and spend the day walking with me. I will never forget the joy I felt. It made me realize that I had been wrong to assume that he was not interested in learning or practicing Japanese, just because he did not speak much. Everyone has their own unique way of showing interest in a language.

## **(2) Passive Learners and the Role of Motivation**

Some learners appear passive due to their reasons for attending classes. For example, some say, “My friend wants to learn, so I came along,” or “My partner is interested, so I decided to join in.” However, not all accompanying students lack motivation. In fact, there have been cases where parents who attended classes with their children made more progress than their children did. However, the accompanying students tend to be slightly less enthusiastic.

In one of my classes, there was a young couple in their twenties. Although I did not ask them directly, it seemed that the woman was interested in learning, and the man had joined at her suggestion. He often came to class without doing his homework and looked sleepy, but he was never late. The reason was simple: they rode to class together on a motorbike, with her sitting behind him. In Taiwan, where motorcycles are a common means of transport, parents, friends, and partners typically give each other lifts. Many students at private cram schools were dropped off and picked up by family or friends on motorbikes. This man not only took his partner to class but also attended every session with her. This might have been a way for them to spend time together, learning side by side twice a week. Perhaps the twice-weekly

class was like the rare reunion of Altair and Vega in Japanese folklore—two lovers separated by the Milky Way were only allowed to meet once a year, while we, the spectators, were like a flock of magpies watching from a distance.

Regardless of their reasons for attending, all students who pay tuition deserve the best possible experience. As a teacher, I always aimed to provide students with new knowledge or a positive learning experience, even if it was something small. During exercises or group work, I would have the more enthusiastic students act as role models and encourage the less motivated ones to participate. I also assigned tasks according to their abilities. However, more often than not, the girlfriend would quietly whisper the correct answers to him or subtly feed him hints like *kinou terebi wo mimashita* (yesterday I watched TV), and he would simply repeat what she said. I did not want to interfere with their relationship, but I often thought, “I wish you would try a little harder on your own.” On rare occasions, when he managed to provide a hesitant answer without her help, the classroom seemed to illuminate with a sense of achievement. On these days, I felt a sense of accomplishment that made my walk back to the teacher’s office feel lighter and brighter.

It was also common to encounter students aged 40 years and older, including some in their 50s and 60s. Some had used Japanese in their work or had been to Japan on business trips, but many had taken up Japanese as a hobby. Each person had their reasons for learning Japanese, but the widespread presence of Japanese language and culture in daily life and media in Taiwan, as well as Japan’s proximity, made it a popular choice. One student, a photographer, traveled to Japan almost every year and uploaded his photos to social media. Learners like him could be perceived as leisurely and relaxed—or, less favorably, as lacking the drive to improve. Unlike the highly motivated younger students in their twenties, who were eager to acquire new skills or pass

the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), these older students tended to take a more laid-back approach.

During a conversation practice session, I once asked about this photography enthusiasm, “Where did you go during the holidays?” She smiled nonchalantly and replied with just one word: “*nai!*” (not), even though this *nai* was grammatically incorrect for her elementary level. However, her social media profile showed that she had visited several places. When these laidback learners shared a class with more motivated younger students, it was sometimes challenging to find a suitable level of practice. However, once they reach the intermediate level, the pace naturally slows, allowing more focus on conversation and composition exercises. This way, each student could contribute according to their own pace and skill level. Such *buxiban* cram schools are supported by these “long-term leisurely hobby learners.”

In class, we often conducted small and sometimes more extensive tests to assess our students’ abilities. Naturally, the results varied, and sometimes I had to tell the students that their scores were below expectations. It is also the teacher’s responsibility if students do not achieve sufficient mastery. Even so, while it may be reasonable to say, “You have failed and need to repeat the course” at a high school or university, this approach does not work in a local cram school. Since it is a business, losing students would be problematic, and many might complain, “This is boring,” or “I only came because I wanted to be in the same class as my friends.” I generally allowed any student who wished to advance to the next class to do so, provided that they made an effort to review the materials. Ideally, they would catch up with the rest of the class by studying on their own; however, this rarely happened. If they had engaged in such study, they would not have fallen behind in the first place.

Repeating this process only widens the gap between students. This

is where the teacher's skill becomes essential. During problem-solving or pair work, I circulated around the classroom, spending more time with struggling students, giving hints, and reminding them of relevant lessons we had studied earlier. This was my way of helping them keep up with the class. These students knew that they were progressing slowly, but as long as they could participate in conversation practice and communicate with others, they continued to attend regularly and seemed happy. I realized that for many, attending a Japanese class at a *buxiban* cram school was a form of entertainment and a chance to spend time with friends, partners, or family members.

In one class, there was a student who had been with the group since the beginner level but was gradually falling behind. Still, I provided the support mentioned above, including writing detailed comments on her homework and preparing revision materials; the other students were very welcoming and inclusive. As a result, this student continued to attend classes. Approximately a year later, when I left the cram school, I documented the student's progress in detail, noting her level compared with the rest of the class. Approximately six months later, I happened to be in town and stopped at a shop where the student worked (most likely the family business). I asked, "How have you been?" She replied, "I'm no longer studying Japanese." While the change of teacher did not necessarily imply a dramatic shift in the course content or pace, it probably affected the classroom atmosphere, making it less conducive to her learning. I feel sorry and disappointed when I think about what a shame it is.

### **(3) Early Education in Taiwan**

A diverse array of individuals attend *buxiban* cram schools. In this context, I would like to share some of the memories of the younger

students I have met. Although they are few in number, high school, junior high, and even elementary school students attend these classes. I did not have much contact with the high school students, which primarily occurred through one-on-one tutoring sessions, and many students stop attending after junior high school because Japanese is not considered relevant to university entrance exams.

Compared to high school students, there were slightly more junior high school students attending classes. Some joined regular classes, whereas others opted for private tutoring. Based on my observations, individual tutoring seems to be slightly more popular. The reasons junior high and high school students attended *buxiban* schools varied, but most seemed to supplement their elective Japanese classes. At school, Japanese classes often had 20 to 30 students, even for conversation or composition classes, and students did not have enough opportunities to practice. Additionally, due to limited class time, Taiwanese teachers often explained in Mandarin, reducing students' chances of practicing Japanese pronunciation and listening. Consequently, I often met students who could handle written questions but struggled with composition, could not hold conversations, or produced disjointed phrases. This experience gave me insight into how difficult it can be to implement secondary-level second-language education effectively.

Many junior high and high school students first joined short-term intensive courses during summer or winter holidays and then continued in regular classes. Although learning alongside adults of various ages can be a good social experience, some young students felt uncomfortable. However, when they had a "big brother" or "big sister" figure in the class, they seemed more at ease and were able to interact better. For example, one junior high school girl seemed to be withdrawn and uneasy about older male students close to her father's age. But when a woman in her twenties, who acted like her "big sister," arrived,

the girl immediately perked up and started engaging actively. Although older men are kind and supportive, young learners need someone they feel comfortable talking to and can rely on.

To the best of my knowledge, all primary school students take one-on-one lessons. Many elementary and some junior high school students choose this more expensive option because their parents want them to acquire various skills early. Similar to Japan, it is common for financially stable families in urban areas of Taiwan to send their children to cram schools. English is the top priority, followed by subjects such as math, science, programming, and other computer-related fields, and even sports such as swimming. It is not unusual for children to attend several cram schools in a single day. After school, parents or grandparents pick them up and transport them from one school to another. Some children even have their meals during the short breaks between classes. Although learning English is considered essential, Japanese is often the next choice for parents who want their children to learn an additional language. The decision to learn Japanese may come from parents or the child's own preferences.

There was a junior high school boy attending an American school. Tall and energetic, he excelled in basketball and was fluent in English but struggled with Japanese. He seemed frustrated, aware that he was forgetting things he should already know. Traditional study methods such as textbooks and notebooks did not work for him, so I took a different approach. We stood in front of the whiteboard and asked questions such as “What did you do today?” or “How did your basketball game go last week?” If he had forgotten a Japanese word, he would write the English equivalent or draw a picture, and I would add Japanese next to it while saying it aloud. This kept him engaged and allowed him to use the Japanese language. The real challenge, however, arose when I reported on my study schedule. I could not just write

“conversation practice” every time... Reporting to the school and parents was often more difficult than the lessons themselves.

School life is demanding for Taiwanese primary and junior high-school students. Primary school ends at approximately 3:30 or 4:00 p.m., and junior high school ends at approximately 5:00 p.m., after which they go straight to cram schools. Many students appear exhausted or sleepy when they arrive. They seemed to realize that Japanese was less important than their other subjects, so some would doze off, zone out, or try to skip class entirely. Others would just try to pass the time without really studying. If a student was genuinely interested in Japanese, I kept them engaged in supplementary materials and activities. However, this did not apply to those who were attending reluctantly, sent by their parents. Quiet students would follow instructions but eventually start dozing off, whereas more rebellious students throw their textbooks across the room and run around. Since my job was to get them to use Japanese, I tried to stop them by saying things like “What are you doing?” or “Running around is dangerous,” all in Japanese.

Most cram schools in Taiwan employ a direct method of teaching Japanese by using only Japanese. This approach not only helps students interact with authentic Japanese but also addresses a practical issue: most Japanese teachers at *buxiban* have no background in Chinese and cannot provide explanations in Chinese. The direct method ensures consistent teaching across schools, regardless of each teacher’s Chinese proficiency. In my case, even though I had studied Chinese and spent three years with Taiwanese researchers, I was told to pretend I did not understand Chinese. So, I would say things like “stop” or “sit down” in Japanese. However, being scolded in a foreign language does not have the same effect as scolding in one’s native tongue. Unfamiliar sounds often seem amusing to students, who may even find them entertaining. If they responded with “No!” or “That’s no fun!” At least, they were

communicating in Japanese... I tried to be satisfied with that. For *buxiban* teachers, physical endurance, patience, and the ability to let things go are essential skills.

#### **(4) Tailored Lessons for Special Clients**

Various people attend *buxiban*. Some who find group classes ineffective choose individual or small group (one or two students) lessons instead. This is common among primary, middle, and sometimes high school students, as mentioned earlier. There are a few examples of these customized lessons.

One example is a request for small classes of one to three people, covering the same content as regular classes. Reasons include inconvenient class times or dissatisfaction with the pace and content of group lessons.

Another common request is for exam preparation, such as the JLPT. Although cram schools offer exam courses, some prefer classes tailored to their level and specific needs. In such cases, teachers can use materials and experience from regular classes; therefore, minimal additional preparation is required.

There have also been requests for classes for young children. At one cram school, a parent requested private lessons for his three children—a pair of sisters and their younger brother—separate from other preschoolers. The youngest, only three, enjoyed singing Japanese songs at the beginning of each lesson. However, when I introduced written characters to the oldest sibling, who was six years old, it proved too difficult for the younger two. They could not remember the characters and did not seem to understand why they were learning another language, which led to a rapid decline in their interest. To help them recall the characters, I used a simple game, but the older siblings

struggled to engage their younger brother, who would become frustrated and end up in tears. Eventually, the youngest student stopped attending class altogether.

Some students request content not covered in the regular curriculum, such as using their own materials, help with writing, or focusing solely on conversation practice. These are bespoke lessons that are tailored to individuals. Unlike mainstream classes that maintain consistency even with changes in the teacher, these bespoke classes depend heavily on the instructor. Once you accept this request, you will be required to make a full commitment.

A student in his fifties asked me to help him learn basic Japanese conversation in just three months for a trip to Japan. He had no prior experience with Japanese, making it an almost impossible task; yet I was assigned to teach him. When I asked why he had chosen this cram school, he said that his daughter was a student there. After enquiring further, I realized that she was in one of my classes.

First, I asked him when and where he planned to travel (I recall being allowed to use Chinese in this lesson). I gathered maps and guidebooks and prepared sample dialogues, including place names and local specialties. We practiced scenarios such as travelling from the airport to a tourist spot, shopping, asking about bus stops, and visiting another location. I explained how changing words could alter sentences, and we practiced pronunciation. Although he seemed satisfied, his listening skills did not improve overnight. If he encountered unfamiliar phrases, he would be completely lost. I felt guilty as if I were failing him. After three months of practice, he left for Japan. Upon his return, he told me, “It was great. My daughter did everything for me.” That was probably for the best. He added, “Sensei, I will ask for your help again before my next trip!” However, as my contract ended, I left the cram school before his next trip. I do not know what became of the “Pre-Travel

Course” after that.

There were also many enquiries from students wishing to study in Japan. Generally, there are two methods: passing the Examination for Japanese University Admission (EJU) or taking an entrance exam for a specific university or graduate school. The EJU tests not only Japanese language skills but also subjects such as history, geography, and science at a level equivalent to that of Japanese junior high and high schools. While *buxiban* schools can cover Japanese language skills, such academic subjects are usually outside their scope. Nevertheless, cram school owners, being businessmen at heart, tend to accept such requests with phrases like, “We’ll find someone who can teach that.” Preparing students for university entrance exams is not what *buxibans* are typically designed for, yet they continue to do so for business reasons.

At the time, I felt it was a convenient advertisement for the cram school. They would say, “We have an expert with a PhD from a Japanese university!” However, having attended graduate school does not necessarily make me qualified to teach high school subjects. A veteran teacher with years of experience teaching junior high and high school students would be far more suitable. Just because I went to graduate school does not mean I know how to get into any graduate school; I only have expertise in my own field and personal experience of the admissions process. When I asked other teachers for advice, they said, “We have never dealt with cases like this, so we do not know.”

Once the cram school accepted these requests, there was no turning back. Other teachers watched me explain history or earth science with expressions that seemed to blend curiosity and pity.

It is rare for someone who graduated from a Taiwanese university to start over at a Japanese university. However, if their field of study in Taiwan differs from what they want to pursue in Japan, they must write a new research paper for the entrance exam. I would ask them to

write one, but then wonder, should I correct the Japanese language or the content for them? I was not qualified for either. Despite my efforts to consult various resources from the library, my guidance fell short of what could be considered proper dissertation support. When I asked the cram school owner, he said, “Just teach what you can. Ultimately, it is up to the student’s ability.” He was right, but this was clearly beyond what *buxiban* could offer. If it were truly about a student’s ability, we should not have been involved in the first place. I still feel uneasy about these cases. I wonder if the students had sought guidance elsewhere before coming to us. The Japanese language education in Taiwan’s secondary and higher institutions aims to strengthen the domestic education system and does not consider the option of switching to Japan. Cram schools might have attempted to fill that gap inadequately. As a member of the Japanese language education industry, I regretted that we could not fully support students who wanted to continue their Japanese studies or attend Japanese schools.

### **(5) Japanese Language Training as a Company Benefit**

*Buxiban* attracts all kinds of students, including requests from companies to train employees. Such requests are rarely work-related; they are usually for Japanese lessons offered on-site to employees who wish to learn the language.

In Taiwan, it is fairly common for companies to support employee learning as a part of their benefits package. If enough employees are interested in learning Japanese, the company will ask a cram school to send a teacher to regular on-site classes. The content of these classes varies; some resemble typical *buxiban* lessons, while others are customized to the learners’ levels and interests.

I found these on-site classes to be a refreshing change in pace and

a chance to leave the staff room. At one company, employees could go wherever they liked under the guise of a “company trip.” They often shared with me the places they planned to visit in Japan. In Japan, many companies can no longer afford such trips; for those that do, they are still valued as opportunities to build team spirit. Rather than adhering to this old tradition, I thought that Japanese companies could learn from Taiwan and turn company trips into opportunities for employees to enjoy themselves freely and recharge.

## **(6) Teachers are Friends?**

In Taiwanese cram schools, teachers and students have a close relationship. Many *buxiban* teachers are young and energetic, so students of a similar or even older age often interact with them like family or friends. Having taught in Japanese high schools and universities for nearly ten years, I was accustomed to keeping a clear boundary between “teacher” and “student.” As a result, I did not form close relationships with my students as some younger teachers did. However, one company executive that I tutored often brought me gifts and took me to high-end restaurants that I would never have gone to on my own, even after living in Taiwan for six years. Initially, I hesitated, thinking it was inappropriate for teachers to accept such hospitality. However, other teachers and cram school owners told me, “It is fine to accept such gestures of goodwill—just do not get so close that you start giving private lessons outside the school.” Gradually, I came to understand that this was how things worked in Taiwan.

One family even invited me on a two-day camping trip. I hesitated at first and was unsure about spending the night with a student’s family, but it was a warm invitation, so I decided to go. The family consisted of the three siblings I had taught. Even the youngest brother, who had

stopped attending the class, greeted me with a smile. I was relieved to see that he did not dislike me; he simply did not enjoy learning Japanese. As I talked with the father and his friends over drinks, the sisters exclaimed in surprise, “Sensei speaks Chinese!” The next morning, I played ball with the younger brother and badminton with the sisters.

The cram school I worked at was small, but it welcomed people of all ages and backgrounds, like a miniature version of Taiwan. Through this experience, I gained valuable insights into how Taiwanese society embraces diversity. I feel fortunate to have had such an experience; it was like looking through a window that perfectly framed Taiwanese society.

## References

- Chen, Lihua. 2006. Taiwan no Daigaku ni okeru Nihongo Kyoiku no Enkaku ni Kansuru Ichi Kosatsu (Japanese Language Education Policy at University in Taiwan: History, Status Quo and Prospect). *Osaka Sangyo Daigaku Ronshu (Journal of Osaka Sangyo University)*, 120, 31–41. (in Japanese)
- The Japan Foundation. 2013. *Kaigai no Nihongo Kyoiku no Genjo (Present Condition of Overseas Japanese-Language Education)*. Tokyo: Kuroshio Shuppan. (in Japanese)
- Lai, Mei-Li and Teruhiko Okamoto. 2022. Taiwan no Kagi Daigaku Oyo Nichibun-kei ni okeru Nihongo Kyoiku no Genjo to Kadai ni Kansuru Ichi Kosatsu (A Study on the Current Status and Issues of Japanese Language Education in the Applied Japanese Language and Literature Department of Taiwan’s University of Science and Technology). *Beppu Daigaku Nihongo Kyoiku Kenkyu*, 12, 3–11. (in Japanese)

- . 2023. Taiwan no Ippan Daigaku Nihongo Senmon Katei ni okeru Nihongo Kyoiku ni Tsuite (Japanese Language Education in General University Japanese Language Specialisation Courses in Taiwan). *Beppu Daigaku Nihongo Kyoiku Kenkyu*, 13, 3–14. (in Japanese)
- Lin, Changhe. 2016. Taiwan no Daigaku ni okeru Nihongo Kyoiku no Genkyo to Jinzai Ikusei no Tenbo (Current Status of Japanese Language Education in Taiwanese Universities and Prospects for Human Resource Development). *Senmon Nihongo Kyoiku Kenkyu (Journal of Technical Japanese Education)*, 18, 15–20. (in Japanese)
- Okamoto, Teruhiko. 2016. Taiwan no Koki Chuto Kyoiku ni okeru Nihongo Kyoiku no Ichizuke (The Position of Japanese Language Education in Late Secondary Education in Taiwan). *Beppu Daigaku Nihongo Kyoiku Kenkyu*, 6, 3–10. (in Japanese)
- . 2017. Taiwan no Koki Chuto Kyoiku Nihongo Senmon Katei ni okeru Nihongo Kyoiku ni Tsuite (Japanese Language Education in Taiwan's Late Secondary Japanese Language Specialisation Course). *Beppu Daigaku Nihongo Kyoiku Kenkyu*, 7, 13–23. (in Japanese)
- . 2018. Aratana Tenkanki wo Mukaeta ni okeru Nihongo Kyoiku no Genjo to Kadai (Japanese Language Education in Taiwan at a New Turning Point). *Beppu Daigaku Nihongo Kyoiku Kenkyu*, 8, 3–11. (in Japanese)
- Tamaki, Mitsuko. 2024. Sengo Taiwan ni okeru Nihongo Kyoiku no “Fukkatsu” (“Restoration” of Japanese Language Education in Postwar Taiwan). *Takushoku Daigaku Nihongo Kyoiku Kenkyu (Journal of Research in Teaching Japanese Language)*, 9, 89–112. (in Japanese)

*Chapter 5*  
*Japanese Language Education in Taiwan*

- Togawa, Mieko and Chen Hyo-Di. 2022. Taiwan no Koki Chuto Kyoiku Katei ni okeru Nihongo Kyoiku no Genjo to Kadaï (The Current Status and Challenges of Japanese Language Education in Taiwan's Late Secondary Curriculum). *Beppu Daigaku Nihongo Kyoiku Kenkyu*, 10, 13–22. (in Japanese)
- Xu, Xingqing. 1999. Taiwan ni okeru Nihongo Kyoiku no Genjo to Mondaiten (Current Status and Problems in Japanese Language Education in Taiwan). *Gaikokugo Kyoiku: Riron to Jissen (Foreign Language Education: Theory and Practice)*, 25, 11–29. (in Japanese)

