

**IMPACT OF HOME ENVIRONMENT ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN  
WITH RESPECT TO THE KONKANI LANGUAGE**

**Dr. Denis Vaz** Assistant Professor Department of Konkani Rosary College of Commerce & Arts  
Navelim, Salcete – Goa

**Abstract:**

This research paper aims to examine the impact of Home Environment on children's language development with respect to Konkani. Konkani is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in the western coastal regions of India. The study explore the various factors that contribute to language development in children, such as family communication patterns, parents education, socio-economic status, and exposure to language – rich environments. The Home Environment is an essential factor that contributes to children's language development. The study's findings will have important implications for educators, parents, and policymakers in promoting language development in Konkani – speaking children.

**Key words:** Home Environment, Language Development, Mother Tongue

**1. Introduction**

Language development is a critical aspect of a child's growth and development. It is a fundamental tool for communication, social interaction, and cognitive development. There are many factors which influence in the children's language development, such as genetics, cognitive ability, socio-economic status, and the Home Environment. The Home Environment, in particular, plays a crucial role in shaping a child's language development.

The Home Environment is a child's first and most important context of language exposure and interaction. It provides children with opportunities to learn and use language in real-life situations. The type of language exposure and interaction that children's receive in the Home Environment can have a profound impact on their language development.

Goa is the bilingual state of India. There is a vast scope for linguistic study in Goa. Even though Goa being a smallest state of India with an area of 3702 sq. km., it has 15,21,991 population according to 2022 census of Goa. The literacy rate of Goa is 88.70%. Konkani is a regional language of Goa, which serve as mother language of 66.11% of the population and also recognized as official language of the state from the year 1975 onwards. The language has a rich history and cultural significance in the region, with a unique dialects and scripts.

For the political-administrative purpose Goa is divided into two district viz. North Goa and South Goa. North Goa is comprising of 8,53,591 population, of which 76.06% is of Hindu, 16.40% is of Christian and 7.08% is of Muslim Population. North Goa has 4,34,802 males and 4,18,789 females in teams of Gender. Similarly South Goa is comprising of 6,68,400 population of which 53.34% of Hindu, 36.21% of Christians and 9.93% of Muslim. It also has 3,36,490 males and 3,31,910 Females.

**2. Literature Review**

There is limited research on the impact of Home Environment on children's language development with respect to Konkani. However, studies have shown that the language is primarily transmitted through informal, family-based communication rather than through formal education (Gokhale, 1988). Additionally, Konkani-speaking communities have rich oral tradition, with storytelling and folk songs playing a significant role in language transmission (Barreto & Pinto, 2004).

A study conducted by D'souza (2016) examined that impact of Home Environment on the language development of children in Goa. The study found that the quality of the Home Environment



significantly impacted children’s language development. Another study conducted by Deokar and Singh (2017) examined the impact of the Home Environment on children’s language development in India. The study found that parental education and socio-economic status were significant predictors of children’s language development.

**3. Methodology**

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The study is constructed in the coastal region of Goa, India and is focused on bilingual (Konkani – English) parents, grandparents and siblings of children between the ages of 3 to 10 years old. The survey was conducted on online mode and the participants for the survey were from rural, urban and sub-urban areas of Goa.

The researcher has made use of Alberta Language Environment Questionnaire (ALEQ) by making necessary changes as per the requirements. The data from the respondent was collected, transcribed and thematic analysis was conducted to identify common themes and patterns in the data using the SPSS software. Themes that emerged from the data were then used to generate conclusions.

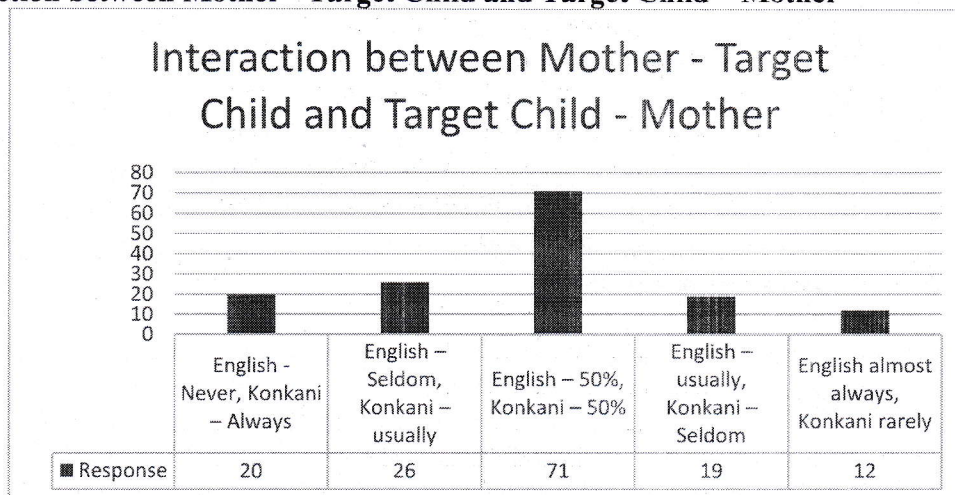
A total number of 74 families from both the district of Goa have participated in the survey. The details of the target child of the total 74 families are given in the Table 3.1.

Districts of Goa	No. of respondent					Total Number of respondent (District wise)
	Religion			Gender		
	Hindu	Christian	Muslim	Male	Female	
North Goa	10	10	08	08	20	28
South Goa	15	26	05	26	20	46
<b>Total Number of Respondent</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>74</b>
	<b>74</b>			<b>74</b>		

*Table 3.1: Details of Respondents*

**4. Analysis**

**4.1 Interaction between Mother - Target Child and Target Child – Mother**



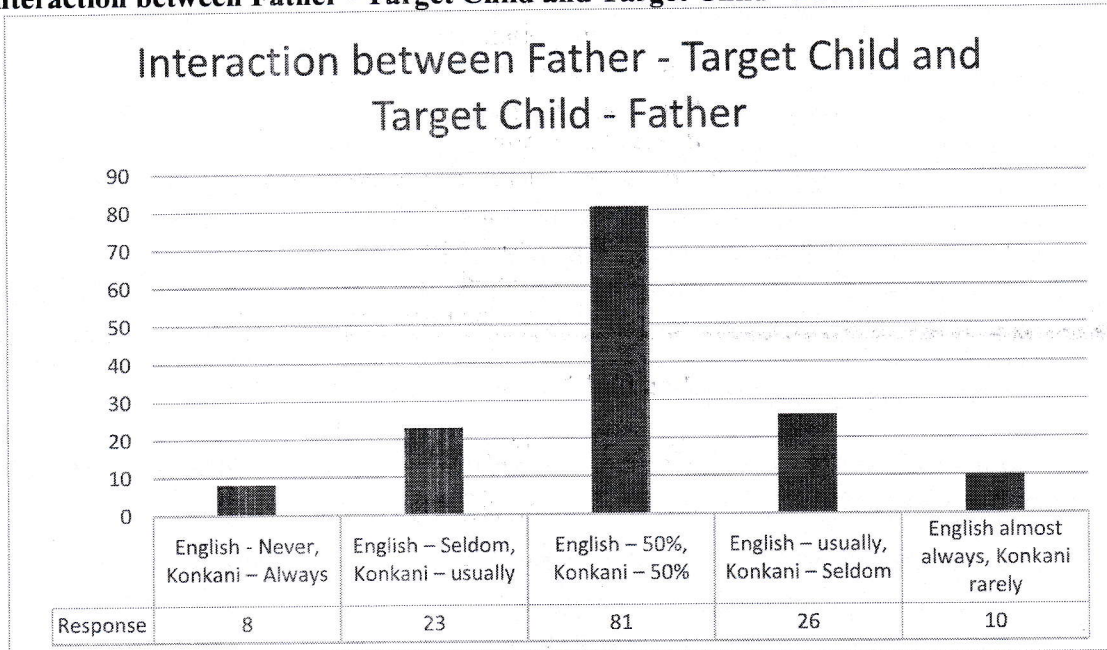
*Figure 4.1.1: Interaction between Mother - Target Child and Target Child - Mother*

From the data given in Figure 4.1.1, we can observe that the majority of the interactions between the mother and the target child are in a combination of Konkani and English, with "English – 50% Konkani 50%" being the most frequent response. The second most frequent response is "English – Seldom Konkani - Usually" with a frequency of 26. There is moderate response for "English – Never, Konkani – Always" and "English – Usually, Konkani – Seldom" with frequency of 20 and 19. The least frequent responses are "English almost always, Konkani rarely" with a frequency of 12. The data suggests that mothers and their target children tend to use a combination of Konkani and English during their interactions, with Half Konkani Half English being the most common category.



This finding indicates that the population being studied is bilingual or multilingual, with individuals comfortable using both Konkani and English.

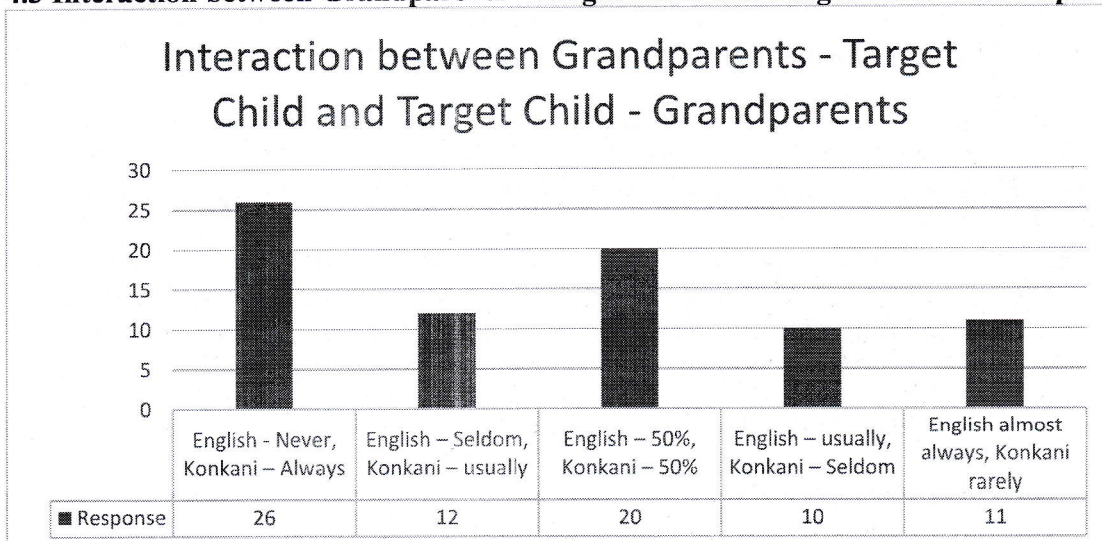
**4.2 Interaction between Father - Target Child and Target Child - Father**



**Figure 4.2.1: Interaction between Father - Target Child and Target Child - Father**

From the data given in Figure 4.2.1, we can observe that the majority of the interactions between the father and the target child are in a combination of Konkani and English, with "English – 50% Konkani 50%" being the most frequent response. The second most frequent response is "English – Usually Konkani - Seldom" with a frequency of 26. There is moderate response for "English – Seldom, Konkani – Usually" and "English – almost always, Konkani – Rarely" with frequency of 23 and 10. The least frequent responses are "English – Never, Konkani Always" with a frequency of 08. The data suggests that fathers and their target children tend to use a combination of Konkani and English during their interactions, with Half Konkani Half English being the most common category. This finding indicates that the population being studied is bilingual or multilingual, with individuals comfortable using both Konkani and English.

**4.3 Interaction between Grandparents - Target Child and Target Child – Grandparents**



**Figure 4.3.1: Interaction between Grandparents - Target Child and Target Child - Grandparents**



According to the data given in Figure 4.3.1, the most common language used in these interactions is Konkani. 26 respondents reported always using “English – Never, Konkani – Always” while 12 respondents reported usually using it in “English - Seldom, Konkani - Usually”. This suggests that Konkani is an important language in the cultural identity of the grandparents and the target child.

Additionally, 20 respondents reported using a combination of Konkani and English as depicted in “English - 50% and Konkani – 50%”, indicating that bilingualism is present in the family and that both languages are valued.

However, there is also a significant proportion of respondents who primarily use English in their interactions. 10 respondents reported usually using English in “English – usually, Konkani - Seldom”, while 11 respondents reported almost always using it as depicted in “English almost always, Konkani rarely. This suggests that English is also an important language in the family, possibly associated with education or economic opportunities.

Overall, the data suggests that the language interactions between grandparents and the target child are diverse and multilingual. The importance of Konkani as a cultural language is evident, while bilingualism and English proficiency are also present. This highlights the significance of language and cultural identity in family relationships and underscores the value of linguistic diversity.

#### 4.4 Interaction between Other members of the family at Home - Target Child and Target Child - Other members of the family at Home

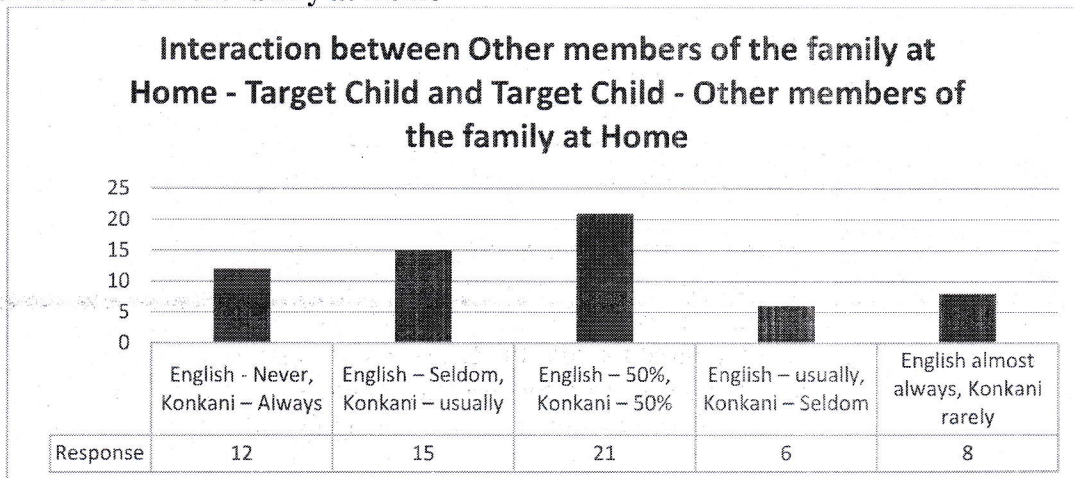


Figure 4.4.1: Interaction between Others at Home - Target Child and Target Child – Others at Home

The data from Figure 4.4.1 indicates that the majority of the participants interacted with the target child in a combination of Konkani and English, with 21 participants responding with "English – 50%, Konkani – 50%." This suggests that bilingualism is prevalent in the households of the participants.

Furthermore, 15 participants usually interact with the target child in Konkani as depicted in “English – Seldom, Konkani – Always”, while only 12 participants from “English – Never, Konkani Always” “interact always in Konkani. This suggests that there is a high level of Konkani language proficiency in the household.

Interestingly, only 06 participants reported using "English - usually, Konkani - Seldom" which suggests that the target child is not frequently interacting in English with others at home. However, eight participants reported using "English almost always, Konkani rarely," which indicates that English proficiency is present in some households but not as common as bilingual interactions.

Overall, the data suggests that bilingualism is common in households, and Konkani is a prevalent language of interaction, while English is less commonly used.



**4.5 Correlation between Mothers Language to Target Child and Target Childs Language to Mother**

<i>Variables</i>	<b>Target child</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<i>Mothers lang to the target child</i>	0.94	0.000***
<i>Mother of child speaking English</i>	0.608	0.004**
<i>Mothers Language at Home</i>	0.643	0.000***
<i>Mothers work outside home</i>	-1.28	2.76
<i>Mothers language at work</i>	8.27	0.00***
<i>Mothers Education Level</i>	4.47	0.02**

**Table 4.5.1: Correlation between Mothers Language to Target Child and Target Childs Language to Mother**

Correlation is a statistical tool explaining the relationship between two variables. To examine the relationship pertaining to understanding language environment, two variables viz: mothers' language and father language to target child were examined. The above table displays the values of their relationship. The above table indicates that the correlation between mothers language to the target child is .094 indicating a very high positive relationship between the two. In addition, the relationship between the two variables is highly significant at 1% level of significance.

There is a positive correlation between the influence of mother speaking English on the target child. The Karl Pearson correlation value is 0.608, indicating a moderate relationship between the two and the relationship is significant at 5% level of significance. In similar aspects, with respect to mothers language at home the correlation value is 0.643 indicating a moderate relationship yet significant at 1%. To understand the working environment of mother and its influence on target child language environment, three variables were accounted into study: mother working outside home, mothers' language at work and mother's educational level.

It was interesting to observe that there is negative correlation between mother working out and its influence on target child, while a mother's language at work displayed a high a very high correlation value on the target child language environment amount to 8.27 showing a very high significance at 1%. Similarly, mothers' education showed no correlation as the correlation value is 4.47 yet significant.

**4.6 Correlation between Fathers Language to Target Child and Target Childs Language to Father**

<i>Variables</i>	<b>Target child</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<i>Fathers lang to the target child</i>	0.754	0.00***
<i>Father of child speaking English</i>	0.601	0.000**
<i>fathers Language at Home</i>	0.620	0.000***
<i>Fathers work outside home</i>	0.23	3.6
<i>Fathers language at work</i>	0.56	0.00***
<i>fathers Education Level</i>	0.497	0.07*
<i>Fathers communication with parents</i>	0.36	0.008*

**Table 4.6.1: Correlation between Fathers Language to Target Child and Target Childs Language to Father**

The above analysis pertains to understanding the influence of father's exposure of language across various setups on the target child language environment. Thus the above table displays the values of their relationship. It is indicative that the correlation between fathers' language to the target child is 0.754 indicating a positive relationship between the two. In addition, the relationship between the two variables is highly significant at 1% level of significance.

There is a positive correlation between the influence of father speaking English on the target child. The Karl Pearson correlation value is 0.601, indicating a moderate relationship between the two and the relationship is significant at 1% level of significance. In similar aspects, with respect to fathers



language at home the correlation value is 0.620 indicating a moderate relationship yet significant at 1%. To understand the working environment of father and its influence on target child language environment, three variables were accounted into study: fathers working outside home, fathers language at work and fathers educational level.

It was interesting to observe that there is no correlation between father working out and its influence on target child, while a father's language at work displayed a high a very high correlation value on the target child language environment amount to 0.56 showing a very high significance at 1%. Similarly, fathers' education showed no correlation as the correlation value is 0.497 yet significant.

#### 4.7 Correlation between other members of the family at home and Language to Target Child

Variables	Target child	p-value
Grandparents language at home	0.904	0.00***
Others at home language to child	0.930	0.00***

**Table 4.7.1: Correlation between other members of the family at home Language to Target Child and Target Childs Language to other members of the family at home**

A child's communication is not just linked to his parents but to other members of the family at home as well. To make the analysis more authentic, the language of the grandparents and other members at home, were also taken into account for the purpose of evaluation. It was interesting to observe that there is positive relationship between the language spoken by grandparents at home and other members at home, language with the target child. The correlation is 0.904 and 0.930 respectively. With respect to significance level, the language to the target child by grandparents and other members at home is highly significant at 0.01% level of significance.

#### 4.8 ANOVA Test

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Extracurricular Activities Language</b>	Between Groups	52.627	4	13.157	1.433	0.003* *
	Within Groups	505.106	55	9.184		
	Total	557.733	59			
<b>Movie Language</b>	Between Groups	123.614	4	30.904	1.904	0.002* *
	Within Groups	1038.676	64	16.229		
	Total	1162.290	68			
<b>Book Reading Language</b>	Between Groups	122.041	4	30.510	1.697	.164
	Within Groups	970.840	54	17.979		
	Total	1092.881	58			
<b>Literacy And Language Activities Of Target Child</b>	Between Groups	151.494	4	37.873	10.213	.000** *
	Within Groups	255.871	69	3.708		
	Total	407.365	73			
<b>School Level Of Target Child</b>	Between Groups	1.910	4	.478	1.986	.106
	Within Groups	16.590	69	.240		
	Total	18.500	73			

**Table 4.8.1: ANOVA - Test**

As per the results displayed along the lines of ANOVA- test in Table 4.8.1, it can be observed that – there is significant difference between Extracurricular activity language of the child, movie language, literacy & language activities of target child with the response of target child. I.e. with respect to extracurricular activities pertaining to language and child response to it, is significant at 5% level of significance, while movie language is significant at 5% and literacy and language activities is



significant at 1% level of significance. It was interesting to observe that there is no relationship between book reading language and school level of target child on his language environment, i.e., it is reported that the p-value for book reading language and school level of target child is 1.64 and 1.06 which is above 0.05% level of significance.

## 5. Conclusion

This study looked into the current situation of Goan families in terms of improving language affiliation for their children, as well as the problems that families encounter in their home setting. Goan families are suffering from the loss of their children's native language, Konkani, despite living in a family where the Mother Tongue is Konkani, but the home environment is English. The decline of Konkani language is being caused by a shortage of sources for speaking the Mother Tongue language. Not only that, but Konkani households in Goa suffer from the loss of their Mother Tongue because many families send their children to English Medium schools, where children have few opportunity to talk and write in their Mother Tongue. Grandparents speak more Konkani to the target child, but it should be emphasized that Goa families are becoming more nuclear. This may result in the loss of Mother Tongue in the future. Similarly, other family members speak Konkani or English to the target child, diluting the Mother Tongue even further. Several circumstances may result in language loss and a loss of pride in one's linguistic affiliation. According to the findings of this study, Goan families who live in their homeland and speak their original language experience similar problems in obtaining language attachment and language maintenance. Another issue that Goan families who live in Goa face is the fight to keep Konkani alive in their children due to Goa's diglossic traits, which cause code switching and code mixing. To summarise, a HE is critical to the growth of Mother Tongue and the survival of Mother Tongue for future generations.

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