

# **Language Manual: A Clinician's Guide to the Language of Konkani**

Information Compiled by: Katrina Harris & Whitney Hayes

Supervised by: Rahul Chakraborty

*Disclaimer:* The following information was gathered from various resources listed in the reference section. This is a collection of the information to provide comprehensive information about the Konkani Language.

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## Linguistic Community, Geographical Distribution, & Demography



Photo from <http://www.goa-health-travel.co.in/index.html>.

## Location of the Language

Konkani is a language that is spoken in the state of Goa, which is a state in Western India. The capital of Goa is Panaji. Konkani is also found to be spoken in neighboring states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala. All of these states are places where speakers from Goa may have migrated over the past five centuries (Garry, 2001). The 2001 Census Department of India states that there are approximately 2,489,015 speakers of Konkani in India (Wikipedia). The population of speakers in the United States is not known.



Image retrieved from Google Images.

## **History & Religions**

Goa is a former Portuguese territory and is therefore greatly influenced by the Portuguese culture. It is often referred to as the “Rome of the East.” The main religions in Goa are: Hindu, Muslim, and Christianity. Although the majority is Hindu and the minority is Christianity the groups are very tolerant of each other’s faith. It is not uncommon to see Hindu’s partaking in Christian festivities and vice versa (Nikki’s).



Images from Google Images

# **Linguistic Features**

\* All of the following linguistic information was taken from the book: Facts about World Languages. Tables were scanned and copied from the book.

## The Language

Since Konkani is spoken on the Indo-Aryan/Dravidian border, it is significantly influenced by Kannada. Goa (the mainland for speaking Konkani) was under Kannada rule for centuries before Portuguese arrival. Therefore old Konkani from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries show heavy influence of Kannada. Konkani also uses loan words from Sanskrit, Perso-Arabic, Kannada, and Portuguese.

## Orthography

Depending on the dialect of Konkani used, dictates the type of script used. The Goa Christian dialect uses the Roman script, the North Kanara Hindu and the Goa Hindu use the Nagari script, while the South Kanara Hindu and South Kanara Christian uses the Kannada script. The Nagari script, which is used for Sanskrit, Hindi, and Marathi languages, has been adopted as the official script of Konkani.

|       |    |   |    |   |   |   |    |   |    |
|-------|----|---|----|---|---|---|----|---|----|
| अ     | आ  | इ | ई  | उ | ऊ | ए | ऐ  | ओ | औ  |
| a [ə] | ā  | i | ī  | u | ū | e | ai | o | au |
| क     | ख  | ग | घ  |   |   |   |    |   |    |
| k     | kh | g | gh |   |   |   |    |   |    |
| च     | छ  | ज | झ  |   |   |   |    |   |    |
| ç     | çh | j | jh |   |   |   |    |   |    |
| ट     | ठ  | ड | ढ  | ण |   |   |    |   |    |
| ṭ     | ṭh | ḍ | ḍh | ṇ |   |   |    |   |    |
| त     | थ  | द | ध  | न |   |   |    |   |    |
| t     | th | d | dh | n |   |   |    |   |    |
| प     | फ  | ब | भ  | म |   |   |    |   |    |
| p     | ph | b | bh | m |   |   |    |   |    |
| य     | र  | ल | व  | श | स | ह | ळ  |   |    |
| y     | r  | l | w  | ṣ | s | h | ḷ  |   |    |

## Phonology

### *Consonants*

Konkani is like other Indian languages that has a four-way contrast among voiceless unaspirated, voiceless aspirated, voiced unaspirated and voiced aspirated stops. Alveolar and palatal sounds listed as stops are phonetically affricates. Also dental and alveolar consonants become retroflex when they immediately follow retroflex consonants.

**Table 1: Consonants**

|            | Voicing/<br>Aspiration | Labial           | Dental           | Alveolar         | Palatal        | Retroflex        | Velar            | Glottal          |
|------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Stops      | -voi, -asp             | p p <sup>y</sup> | t t <sup>y</sup> | c                | č              | ʈ ʈ <sup>y</sup> | k k <sup>y</sup> |                  |
|            | -voi, +asp             | p <sup>h</sup>   | t <sup>h</sup>   | c <sup>h</sup>   | č <sup>h</sup> |                  | k <sup>h</sup>   |                  |
|            | +voi, -asp             | b b <sup>y</sup> | d d <sup>y</sup> | j                | ǰ              | ɖ ɖ <sup>y</sup> | g g <sup>y</sup> |                  |
|            | +voi, +asp             | b <sup>h</sup>   | d <sup>h</sup>   | j <sup>h</sup>   | ǰ <sup>h</sup> |                  | g <sup>h</sup>   |                  |
| Fricatives |                        |                  |                  | s                | š              |                  |                  | h h <sup>y</sup> |
| Nasals     | -asp                   | m m <sup>y</sup> |                  | n n <sup>y</sup> |                | ɳ ɳ <sup>y</sup> |                  |                  |
|            | +asp                   | m <sup>h</sup>   |                  | n <sup>h</sup>   |                |                  |                  |                  |
| Flaps      |                        |                  |                  | r r <sup>y</sup> |                |                  |                  |                  |
| Laterals   | -asp                   |                  |                  | l l <sup>y</sup> |                | ɭ ɭ <sup>y</sup> |                  |                  |
|            | +asp                   |                  |                  | l <sup>h</sup>   |                |                  |                  |                  |
| Glides     | -asp                   | w w <sup>y</sup> |                  |                  | y              |                  |                  |                  |
|            | +asp                   | w <sup>h</sup>   |                  |                  | y <sup>h</sup> |                  |                  |                  |

### *Vowels*

All nine vowels in the Konkani language have nasal equivalents. The difference between a nasal or non-nasal vowel can signal a plural or singular equivalent of nouns.



**Table 2: Vowels**

|          | Front | Back      |         |
|----------|-------|-----------|---------|
|          |       | Unrounded | Rounded |
| High     | i     |           | u       |
| Mid High | e     | ə         | o       |
| Mid Low  | ɛ     | ʌ         | ɔ       |
| Low      |       | a         |         |

**Morphology***Nouns*

Nouns are divided into three classes and are inflected for gender, case, and number. Gender can either be masculine, feminine, or neutral. The cases are indicated by suffixes on pronouns and postclitics on nouns and are divided into five groups: absolute, dative/accusative, instrumental/ergative, genitive, superessive, and inessive.

Nouns are divided into two stems: the directive stem, which can be singular or plural, and the oblique stem. The directive stem stands as the absolute case and has no additional endings, whereas other case endings are added to the oblique stem.

*Verbs*

Verbs are inflected for tense and aspect, person, gender, and number. The two types of verbs are perfect and imperfect. Perfect is marked by a suffix –l, and imperfect is marked by the suffix –t.

## **Syntax**

Konkani syntax is strongly SOV. Konkani uses verb-final clause order, and in addition, auxiliary verbs follow main verbs, and adjectives and other modifiers follow nouns.

## **Possible Errors/Linguistic Transfers**

Some possible errors a speaker of Konkani may make when speaking English are:

- Final obstruent devoicing
- Interdental fricative to stop
- /w/ to labial fricative
- /r/ to trill
- Non aspiration

Retrieved from <http://accent.gmu.edu/>

## Social Aspects & Pragmatics



\*Images retrieved from Google Images.

## **General Social Aspects and Pragmatics**

People from India are very conscious of status. All relationships involve a hierarchy. They typically define their selves based on the groups they belong to (religion, family, career, ect.). People from India also do not like to express “no” either verbally or nonverbally. They would rather please you. This should not be taken as being dishonest (Kwintessential). Also the following pragmatic aspects is for people from India in general and should not be assumed that all people follow these traditions and customs.

## **Meeting Etiquette**

- Greet the eldest person first.
- Upon leaving everyone must say goodbye individually.
- Shaking hands is common between same sexes but uncommon for a male to shake hands with females.
- When you are in doubt about whether or not to shake one’s hand, wait for them to extend their hand first.

Retrieved from (Kwintessential).

## **Gift Giving**

- Many Indians believe that giving gifts help ease the transition between lives.
- A gift of cash is given amongst family and friends for marriage, birth, and death.
- The value of the gift is not as important as the sincerity of the gift.
- Do not give frangipani or white flowers because these are used at funerals.
- Try to wrap your gift in red, yellow, and green because these are lucky colors.
- Do not open the gift immediately after receiving it.
- Do not give a gift made of leather to someone who is Hindu nor give a gift made of pigskin or alcohol to someone who is Muslim.

Retrieved from (Kwintessential).

### **Dinning Etiquette**

- When invited to eat at someone's home that is from the Indian culture be sure to arrive punctually even though some people from India are not on time because they expect it from their guest.
- You will want to take off your shoes before entering the house and be sure to dress modestly & conservatively.
- Also something that is extremely important is to say no to your first offering of coffee, tea, or snacks. You will be asked again and again but turning down the first offering is custom.
- Much of the dinning is formal but various rules are determined by religious beliefs.
- A lot of Indian food is eaten with your fingers.
- Do not sit until you are told where.
- You may need to wash your hands before a meal.
- Always use your right hand to eat even if using utensil or fingers.
- In some situations you may be served but in others you may be allowed to serve yourself from a bowl.
- If you leave a small amount of food on your plate it means you are satisfied but if your plate is empty this indicates that you are still hungry.
- Guests are usually served in a particular order starting with the guest of honor, then the men, and finally the children.
- Women usually serve then eat later

Retrieved from (Kwintessential).

### **Business Etiquette**

- The best time for a meeting is late morning or early afternoon.
- Reconfirm your meeting the week before and call again that morning, since it is common for meetings to be cancelled at the last minute.

- You should arrive at meetings on time since Indians are impressed with punctuality.
- Meetings will start with a great deal of getting-to-know-you talk. In fact, it is quite possible that no business will be discussed at the first meeting

Retrieved from (Kwintessential).

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## Food



Images taken from Google Images

## **Goan Diet**

The staple diet in Goa contains fish curry and rice. Most Hindu's in Goa eat fish (unlike most of India). During the monsoons fresh fish is not available so the Goan's have very long faces. Pork is also a favorite with chicken not far behind. Alcohol is a major problem. The drink of Goa is Feni which is made with coconut sap or cashew fruit (Nikki's). This staple drink is associated with Goa just like Scotch is associated with Scotland. To make Feni, cashews are crushed manually in a rock that is in a basin buried deep in the ground to allow fermentation. 4% of the juice turns to alcohol. It is collected and distilled in copper pots. It is then distilled three times. (Goa Directory)

## **Local Restaurants**

- Bombay Bistro  
10710 Research Blvd #126  
Austin, Texas 78759
- G'Raj Mahal  
10710 Research Blvd #126  
Austin, Texas 78759
- New India Cuisine  
91 Red River  
Austin, TX 78701
- Clay Pit  
1601 Guadalupe St  
Austin, TX 78701

The following videos were found to give useful information about Goan food:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HaKDyMxb2Zo>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0exw7aiQZ\\_o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0exw7aiQZ_o)



Konkani

## Music



Images from Google Images

### **A Culture that Loves Music**

Music is very important to the Goan's. Some of their music includes Portuguese music, techno, rave, and Goa Trance. Music is played on the radio in Konkani, Hindi, and English. (Nikki's)

These videos are an example of the Goa Trance and dancing at the National Konkani Convention:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1boYTkcsli8>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Pfs0aQijN0>

## **Audio Recordings and Research Articles**

## **Audio Sample:**

The following is an audio sample provided by The Speech Accent Archive. It can give the listener an idea of how the influence of Konkani would affect a speech sample spoken in English.

[http://accent.gmu.edu/browse\\_language.php?function=find&language=konkani](http://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=find&language=konkani)

## **Research Articles**

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=7CSomUzJQuYC&oi=fnd&pg=PA149&dq=Konkani+Language&ots=Qbm4GFp1TR&sig=IJX5L7ZrWN4iT5Mm8ceOgs7ptkM#v=onepage&q&f=false>

[http://www.sfb632.uni-potsdam.de/conference/posters/D2\\_Konkani.pdf](http://www.sfb632.uni-potsdam.de/conference/posters/D2_Konkani.pdf)

<http://www.india-seminar.com/2004/543/543%20madhavi%20sardesai.htm>

[http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Tg3XQlsgnHQC&oi=fnd&pg=PA25&dq=Konkani+speakers&ots=fxpsil0YNe&sig=kvBfHIO5rYPMQbLLwKw\\_vXUp0c#v=onepage&q=Konkani%20speakers&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Tg3XQlsgnHQC&oi=fnd&pg=PA25&dq=Konkani+speakers&ots=fxpsil0YNe&sig=kvBfHIO5rYPMQbLLwKw_vXUp0c#v=onepage&q=Konkani%20speakers&f=false)

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=JVpuTnlQRrWC&oi=fnd&pg=PA48&dq=Konkani+speakers&ots=7DIdi8oGG6&sig=6PIZMO-uWlg12YxZrfM7Uu4WFCQ#v=onepage&q=Konkani%20speakers&f=false>

<http://library.du.ac.in/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/10675/Ch.01%20Formation%20of%20konkani%20%281-%20100%20pages%29.pdf?sequence=3>

<http://library.du.ac.in/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/10675/Ch.02%20Formation%20of%20konkani%20%28101-%20160%20pages%29.pdf?sequence=2>

## **Speech Therapist in Goa:**

Speech therapist who spoke the Konkani language could not be located in the United States; however you can use these therapists in India as resources.

1. Sound Hearing Center

203, 2nd Floor, Citi Centre, 19 Edc Patto Complex, Panaji, Goa – 403001

2. Hearing Care Center

Cf/3,Pancharatna Complex, Behind Barkarsuper Store, Mormugaon, Goa –  
403803

3. Manipal Hospital

DR E Borges Road, Donapaula, GOA – 403004

4. All India Institute of Speech & Hearing

Phone: + 91-0821-2514449

Fax: + 91-0821-2510515

E-mail: director@aiishmysore.in

[http://goa.justdial.com/speech-therapists\\_Goa.html](http://goa.justdial.com/speech-therapists_Goa.html)

**ENT's In Goa:**

1. Noorani Dr. Akbarall  
Martires Dias Road

2. Sardesai Dr. Vivek M  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor, ENT Clinic  
Mahalaxmi Chambrs, Panaji  
Goa-403001

3. Dr. Jorson P Fernades  
C S 3  
Margao  
Goa-403601

4. ENT Specialists  
Adcon Centre Building  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Mapusa Andona Bus Stand  
Mapusa  
Goa-403507

[http://yellowpages.sulekha.com/goa/speech-therapist\\_goa\\_contacts.htm](http://yellowpages.sulekha.com/goa/speech-therapist_goa_contacts.htm)

## **Test Batteries**

In the absence of standardized language tests clinicians often rely on informal approaches for identification and quantification of a speech and language problems such as a delay, deviance, or misarticulation. No attempt was made to arrive at a language age or magnitude of the delay. Conclusions as to the presence of a language disorder were left to the clinician's intuitive judgment and her or his knowledge of norms based on western literature. This procedure was useful in identifying gross delays and disorders. This has been one of the primary and continuous goals of AIISH (All India Institute of Speech and Hearing) clinic to provide assessments and management in different Indian languages.

<http://www.languageinindia.com/may2001/speechindia.html>

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[http://yellowpages.sulekha.com/goa/speech-therapist\\_goa\\_contacts.htm](http://yellowpages.sulekha.com/goa/speech-therapist_goa_contacts.htm)

Thirumalai, M. (2001). Language in India. Retrieved from

<http://www.languageinindia.com/may2001/speechindia.html>

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konkani\\_language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konkani_language).