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**Teaching and Learning Language Through
Distance Education**

Kannada for Administrators: A Case Study

B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.

Teaching and Learning Language Through Distance Education

Kannada for Administrators: A Case Study

B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.

Kannada as the Language of Administration in Karnataka

Karnataka has a long history of administration. The language used for administration depended on the rulers. By and large the Kannada kings used Kannada, Muslim rulers used Urdu and the British used English. However, the Muslim rulers and the British knew the importance of the use of the language of people in their day-to-day administration and thus used of Kannada wherever they found it necessary. After Independence, and after the Constitution of India came into operation, the State of Karnataka passed the Karnataka Official Language Act 1967, according to which Kannada was declared as the Official Language of Karnataka.

Karnataka Official Languages Act

This Act envisages that all the official transactions are conducted within the state in Kannada. However, due to various reasons like non-availability of materials (manuals, glossaries of technical terms, etc.), manpower (knowing Kannada well to conduct administration in Kannada because these officials were educated mainly in English), and the lack of adequate machinery like typewriters and now appropriate and user-friendly software, Kannada has not totally replaces English in government administration.

The Official Language Policy of Karnataka – Why This Slow Progress?

The Official Language policy of the state intended the use of Kannada in administration. But it was possible for an individual to complete his school education in Karnataka without learning Kannada. This incompatibility of language use in education and administration, created due to a flawed language policy, necessitated a way out.

Educated people fail to acquire working knowledge of Kannada in the school education. Since knowledge of Kannada is a precondition for some category of jobs and a post-condition for some others, the Government provides many avenues for them to learn Kannada. Some of the ways that one acquired the knowledge of Kannada were:

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Having Kannada both as first language and as medium of instruction.

Having Kannada as a medium of instruction, though first language is different from Kannada.

Studying Kannada as a main or first language though the medium of instruction might be other than Kannada.

Studying Kannada as an optional subject; or as second language. Or,

Passing any language examination recognized equivalent for the purpose of government administration was considered as sufficient.

Objectives of Learning Kannada for Administration

The aims and objectives of language learning and teaching in all the above cases are different from the aim of making the language learner competent to conduct official business in Kannada. A wide gap is easily visible in terms of the objectives of language teaching, instructional materials used, teaching methodology, outcome and the actual performance of the persons coming into the government service from many of these avenues. There is a big gap between the real language needs of the professions and the language competence gained by the persons through the first four avenues. The language competence of these individuals is enhanced through in-service/orientation/training programs in administrative Kannada.

So, far, efforts have been made to train a large number of employees of the government who do not know Kannada through conventional means such as classroom instruction, and printed learning manuals for home study, etc. While these efforts have borne fruit, a combination of several media, in addition to classroom instruction, need to be exploited. Furthermore, the learning materials used for teaching the Government officials need to be function-oriented.

Composite Correspondence Course in Kannada for Government Officials

One of the ways that the fifth option above is carried out is through the one year **Composite Correspondence Course in Kannada** which we deal with in this article. This course is implemented for the last 24 years and several categories of officials have benefited by this course.

In this paper, I intend to share the experience of this successful course with the readers of the journal *Language in India*, with the hope plans and strategies adopted

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or to be adopted in other states of the Indian Union will benefit by a study of this experience. Hence this paper presents an in-depth account of the course design, methodology adopted to teach Kannada through distance education, learner strategies and an evaluation of the instructional materials and the learning processes.

The Composite Correspondence Course in Kannada is for the employees of the Government of Karnataka who do not know Kannada. This strategy is one of the several steps undertaken by the Government of Karnataka, for the effective implementation of their language policy to make Kannada as medium of administration in Karnataka at all levels of administration.

Basic Kannada and Administrative Kannada

This Course has **Basic Kannada and Administrative Kannada** as its main language components. *Basic Kannada* means Kannada used in day-to-day oral and written communications and administrative Kannada is the kind of Kannada frequently used in oral and written administrative discourse in the Government of Karnataka. Both these materials are basically defined in terms of frequency of use of vocabulary, frequently used sentence patterns and a set of formats of written communications. Naturally, decisions relating to these features need a lot of linguistic and applied linguistic research.

Background Research

Before undertaking the task of designing the syllabus and learning materials we undertook an analysis of **language needs of the learners** since this was going to be a need-based course or special purpose course meant for specific groups of people, and not a general purpose course which anybody can opt for.

Considering these aspects, the Composite Correspondence Course set before itself the following general objectives. At the end of the course, the employees, who undergo the course will be able to perform the following in Kannada:

Listening: Comprehend the conversation, discussion in the official/formal contexts, radio news bulletins and public speeches given in normal speed in Kannada.

Speaking: Speak with ease in Kannada in the official circles (among the officials) about routine administrative matters, conduct or participate in official discussions, and speak with ease in Kannada regarding personal needs.

Reading: Read printed, typed and hand written materials in Kannada relating to routine administrative matters, matters of public Interest and newspapers with appropriate speed and comprehension.

Writing: Write short paragraphs with connected sentences, write short notes on administrative matters and draft short official communications in Kannada.

Some Important Areas of Research

After setting the above objectives that the learners have to achieve, a study of the types of **spoken language situations** that the officials come across in their official and personal transactions were listed out. An exhaustive list of the **types of sentence patterns** that are normally used along with the kinds of **specific vocabulary** that form part of such transactions were also listed. These lists prepared with great care were extensively used for the writing of the lessons. These were helpful in the grading and presentation of learning materials also.

Next step was to look into the literary styles to have a reliably good selection of texts to represent the **Kannada prose style**. Every piece selected represents the writing of a leading writer in Kannada. Also included are a brief history of the land, language, culture and literature. A few samples of news items from the newspapers, radio and newspaper editorial items also form part of the prose selection in the materials. As for the aspects of administrative Kannada, frequently used types of correspondence – the types that a government office and the secretariat use - were identified. A linguistic study of the **structures** that are used in them, their average frequency and the **vocabulary** that they embed to communicate the intended administrative meaning was done along with a study of the **formats** of correspondence.

Course Package

The above research formed the basis for the design and implementation of the **Special Purpose Kannada Learning Distance Education Course**. The Course has 100 skill and function-oriented lessons in four parts and twenty learning packets. These include lessons for learning (a) Kannada script, (b) spoken Kannada, (c) reading and writing skill and (d) use of Kannada in administration. Response Sheets are part of every learning packet.

This package is supported by audio cassettes to reinforce the speaking skill. In addition to teaching, monitoring, guidance and evaluation at regular intervals, the learner outcome is evaluated at the end of the course also.

Kannada Script

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The first two learning packets cover the letters of the Kannada script. Here, the letters are introduced based on the principle of pattern perception and contrastive observation, or popularly known as **shape similarity method**. All the letters are classified on the basis of similarity in their shapes and placed into different groups based on such similarity. In order to help the learner, the cues are given in Roman and Devanagari scripts.

ಎ ಏ ಐ ವ ಮ ಳ ಪ ಫ ಘ ಷ
e ee ai va ma cha pa pha gha Sa
ऐ ए ऐ व म छ प फ घ ष

The learner, while learning Kannada script, has to know the way *aksharas* 'letters' are formed. The vowels have primary character and also a secondary letter always added to the consonant at the top or bottom or by the side of the letter. In these lessons the learner is introduced to the secondary symbols immediately after the teaching the primary letters.

I Observe the hand movements for writing each letter.

ಲ

ಲ

ಅ

ಅ

ಆ

ಆ

ಉ

ಉ

ಊ

ಊ

II Observe the hand movements for writing each letter.

ರಾ ಹಾ ಯಾ ಲಾ

ರಾ ಹಾ ಯಾ ಲಾ

The consonants form conjuncts with the same or different consonant. The consonant conjuncts are expressed in writing in three ways in Kannada - by repeating the primary letter below the letter in small form; by writing the half of the letter below the

primary letter and by using a different symbol which has no resemblance to the main letter.

ವ್ + ವ = ವ್ವ ಶ್ + ವಾ = ಶ್ವಾ

ವ ಜ ಟ ಣ ಬ ಖ

va ja Ta Na ba kha

ವ ಜ ಟ ಣ ಬ ಖ

ಽ + ಕ = ಕ್ಕ ಽ + ಕಾ = ಕ್ಕಾ

ಕ ಗ ಚ ಠ ಡ ಢ ಡ ಧ ಲ ಳ ಶ ಷ ಸ ಲ

k g c Th D Dh th d dh p ph sh S s L

ಕ್ ಗ್ ಚ್ ಠ್ ಡ್ ಢ್ ಡ್ ಧ್ ಲ್ ಳ್ ಶ್ ಷ್ ಸ್ ಲ್

ಮ್ + ಮ = ಮ್ಮ ಯ್ + ಯ = ಯ್ಯ

ಠ	೨	೨	೨	೯	೩	೩
m	n	t	r	r	l	y
ಮ್	ನ್	ತ್	ರ್	ರ್	ಲ್	ಯ್

While using these script learning lessons the learners are advised to:

- identify the relation between the letter and its sound value with the help of the cues
- link them both and pronounce loudly (Also use audio support from the cassette.
- identify each letter in the given word and read the word if it is in short sentence, read the sentence and
- after learning a lesson, practice the script with the help of the exercises.

ರ	ರಾ	ರಿ	ರೀ	ರು	ರೂ	ರೆ	ರೇ	ರೈ	ರೊ	ರೋ	ರೌ
ಗ	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ಟ	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

While learning the script with the help of these lessons, as part of practice, the learners are advised to read the sign boards, cinema posters, bold type letters in the newspapers, advertisements, brochures pamphlets, etc., since they are available in abundance in their environment.

Spoken Kannada

The lessons in the learning packets 3 to 10 are meant for learning to listen, understand and respond orally, appropriate to the situations.

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<p>ಬಾಗಲ್ಯೋಟಿ : ಬಿಳಿಗೈಯಿಂದ ಸಂಜೆಯ ತನಕ ಜನ ಉಸಿರಾಡಕ್ಕೆ ಬಿಡಲ್ಲ. ಸಾಲ ವಾಪಸ್‌ಕೊಳ್ಳಕ್ಕೆ ಸಾಲಿಗರು ಬರ್ತಾರೆ. ತೆರಿಗೆ ವಸೂಲ್ಯಾಡಕ್ಕೆ ನೀವು ನೋಟೀಸ್ ಮೇಲೆ ನೋಟೀಸ್ ಕೊಡ್ತೀರಿ.</p> <p>BagalkoTi : beLiggeyinda sanjeya tanaka jana usiraaDakke biDalla. saala vaapas keeLakke saaligaru bartaare. terige vasuulmaaDakke niivu notice meelee notice koDtiiri.</p> <p>ಸುಂದರ್ : ಅಂಗಡಿಯವರನ್ನು ಬಾಕಿ ಕೊಡಕ್ಕೆ ಕೇಳಿ.</p> <p>Sundar : angaDiyavarannu baaki kodakke keeli.</p> <p>ಬಾಗಲ್ಯೋಟಿ : ಅವರು ಬಾಕಿ ಕೊಡಲ್ಲ. ಅದರ ಬದಲು ಮಾಲನ್ನು ವಾಪಸ್ ಕೊಡಕ್ಕೆ ಬರ್ತಾರೆ. ಅದನ್ನು ಮಾರಕ್ಕೆ ನಾನೆಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಹೋಗಲಿ? ಅವರನ್ನು ಬಾಕಿ ಕೊಳ್ಳಕ್ಕೂ ಆಗಲ್ಲ ಬಿಡಕ್ಕೂ ಆಗಲ್ಲ.</p> <p>BagalkoTi : avaru baaki koDalla. adara badalu maalannu vaapas koDakke bartaare. maalannu maarakke naanellige hoogali</p>	<p>From morning till evening people do not allow me to breathe. Money lenders come to me, demanding their money back. You give notice after notice to collect taxes.</p> <p>Ask the shopkeepers to pay their dues.</p> <p>They do not give their dues. Instead of this they come and return the goods. Where can I go to sell the goods? Neither I can ask them to pay the dues nor can I leave.</p>
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Here, as already said earlier, the major sentence patterns that are used in spoken Kannada are used in situations that are relevant to the officials. These sentence patterns are graded from simple to complex. Each lesson has four parts:

- (a) text of the lesson
- (b) vocabulary used in the lesson along with the meaning
- (c) exercises for practicing listening and speaking and
- (d) notes that aid the learners to the extent to which they can make use of them.

Here, the learners are advised to:

- (a) read the text of the lesson aloud as many times as possible to understand the language used in the context

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- (b) use the Roman transliteration and English translation also
- (c) complete the exercises orally and then in writing and
- (d) use the sentence types learnt in the lesson in the contexts that they come across, without waiting for the learning process to complete.

Hence, whatever is learnt should be put to use then and there itself without further delay to complete learning all the sentence patterns.

Though script and spoken lessons are technically separated, the lessons are designed in such a way that the learning of Kannada script and spoken language takes place simultaneously.

Reading and Writing

The learning packets 11 to 15 have selections from Kannada prose written by different Kannada writers. They include a sample each from an autobiography, folk story, editorial, news items from newspapers, news bulletin from the All India Radio, short stories etc. In a way, they cover the kind of Kannada used in different genres.

These lessons help the learners to understand Kannada used in day to day reading and writing. And also help them to understand the Kannada prose writing in its various forms of literature. Each lesson has:

- (a) text
- (b) introduction to the author
- (c) exercises for reading and writing practice and
- (d) translation passage from English to Kannada, since translation from English to Kannada is one of the expected tasks that the officials are involved in.

At the end of each lesson, new vocabulary items that occur in the lesson are listed in the order of occurrence under *vocabulary* and given gloss in the context of its occurrence.

While using these lessons the learners are advised to

- (a) read and understand the content of the prose
- (b) understand the way in which the vocabulary and sentence types are used by different writers along with their relation to the genre
- (c) answer the questions in the exercise part of the lessons
- (d) write compositions as indicated in the exercise
- (e) note the idiomatic usages of words which were not so frequently used in the spoken Kannada lessons, and
- (f) pay special attention to the nuances of language use.

Administrative Communications

The learning packets 16 to 20 have formats of administrative communications that are used in day to day administration (which forms administrative register) like: circular, official letter, demi-official letter, file noting, notification, endorsement, office order, government order, minutes of the meeting, sample office file, sample government file, memorandum etc. Here, each lesson is on a distinct format of official communication.

Also each lesson has:

- (a) text of the lesson,
- (b) introduction to the format,
- (c) vocabulary with English meaning and
- (d) exercises for the use of language, and translation from English to Kannada.

In this part of learning, the learners are advised to study

- (a) each format of correspondence and understand their features,
- (b) the text and context of correspondence,
- (c) the use of vocabulary and frequent sentence types in the correspondence and
- (d) to try to write short correspondences in each of the formats on the analogy of the given model.

Monitoring of Learning

The learners' achievement in language learning is regularly monitored by administering tests in the form of response sheets.

RESPONSE SHEET – 9

PART-1

I Encircle the correct Kannada equivalent for the given word.

1. Reserve
a. ಕಾಯು b. ಕಾದಿರಿಸು c. ಕಾದಿರು
2. Weigh
a. ಅಳಿ b. ತೂರು c. ತೂಗು
3. get down
a. ಇರಿ b. ನಿಲ್ಲಿ c. ಇಳಿ
4. Traveler
a. ಪ್ರಯಾಣಿಕೆ b. ಪ್ರವಾಸ c. ಪ್ರವಾಸಿಗ
5. to board
a. ಇಳಿ b. ಹಾರು c. ಹತ್ತು
6. what day
a. ಯಾವ b. ಯಾವತ್ತು c. ಯಾವಾಗ
7. Compensation
a. ಪರಿಚಯ b. ಸಾಲ c. ಪರಿಹಾರ
8. Suspicion
a. ಅನುಮಾನ b. ಅನುಧಾನ c. ಬಹುಮಾನ
9. Subsidy
a. ಗೌರವಧನ b. ಸಹಾಯಧನ c. ವಿಶೇಷ ಧನ
10. Trouble
a. ಅನುಕೂಲ b. ತೊಂದರೆ c. ಪ್ರಯೋಜನ
11. background
a. ಹಿಂದೆ b. ಹಿಂದುಳಿದ c. ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆ
12. tax
a. ವಿಮೆ b. ನಿಧಿ c. ತೆರಿಗೆ

Each learning packet is followed by a response sheet. The registrants answer the questions and return the answer sheets for correction, valuation and suggestions. The corrected and evaluated answer sheets are sent back with appropriate suggestions as help for self study.

Final Evaluation

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Learning outcome is measured at the end of approximately one year of learning with the help of open-ended and close-ended questions to test reading and writing. Oral test is also conducted for testing the spoken abilities.

Continuing Learning

Language learnt will be lost if it is not constantly used in speaking or writing or both. In order to do so, the learners are advised to be in touch with Glossaries, Manuals on administrative Kannada, and Departmental manuals which are available on hand for the use by learners in their departments and offices. These materials have been developed by the government as part of their language development activity.

Registrants Profile

The learners belonged to different Mother tongue groups like Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, etc. They were of different age groups, from the person just joined the Government service to the one who may retire in a year or two. Their educational qualifications too are of varied nature. Also, they belonged to different cadres of the government service. In terms of their prior knowledge of Kannada also most of them were at different points in a scale of ten. If someone knows how to speak, he or she may not know how to write. Someone else may not know even a little bit of Kannada. So to say, we have a heterogeneous group, in real sense. Distance learning becomes the fittest strategy for this kind of diversity. But, all of them or most of them had positive attitude towards learning Kannada, may be because of their professional need and government compulsion.

Obstacles in Learning

The learners did face some difficulties during the process of learning relating to language. They are:

1. differences between spoken and written varieties of Kannada
2. differences between the language variety - standard written Kannada in the written part and standard spoken Kannada in the lessons for teaching spoken Kannada and the variety of Kannada used in the environment of the learner due to regional and or social differences.
3. lack of standardization of the usages used in the administrative language leading to confusion.

Benefit of Distance Mode

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Many felt in the beginning that this mode is suitable for learning different subjects like history, sociology, but not suitable for learning science and language. But our experience is that with well prepared materials like ours as described above, the language learners learn better since the learner's autonomy in terms of time, place and pace of learning is established in this mode. The standard learning materials prepared by the professionals play an important role in motivating and retaining the learners' enthusiasm. Uniformity in terms of standard teaching helped the learners to achieve the objectives.

Another advantage that this mode and the learners had was that it was possible for the learners to use what they learnt since they are in the environment where Kannada is constantly used. Abundant reinforcement for all the language skills existed naturally and there was no need to create artificial environment.

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