1. Introduction

It was Jürgen Habermas, in his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* [1991(1989)], who drew our attention to the relationship between the media and the public sphere. Habermas argued that the public sphere originated from the rational-critical discourse among the reading public of newspapers in the eighteenth century. He further claimed that the expansion of powerful mass media in the nineteenth century transformed citizens into passive consumers of manipulated public opinions and this situation continues today [Calhoun 1993; Hanada 1996]. Habermas’s description of historical changes in the public sphere summarized above is based on his analysis of Europe and seems to come from an assumption that the mass media developed linearly into the present form. However, when this proposition is applied to a multicultural and multilingual society like India, diverse forms of media and their distribution among people should be taken into consideration. In other words, the media assumed their own course of historical evolution not only at the national level, but also at the local level. This perspective of focusing on the “local” should be introduced to the analysis of the public sphere (or rather “public spheres”) in India. In doing so, the question of the power of language and its relation to culture comes to the fore.
Three issues can be addressed when we embark on questioning the relationship between the media, language and the formation of local public spheres in India. The first is the uneven development and distribution of the media, the printed media in particular, among Indian languages. The second is the organization of the public sphere by people without literacy. The last is the creation of local identity through the formation of public spheres.

Let me explain the issues in order. Firstly, we should be aware that not all Indian languages have access to their own media. The printed media began to grow in the nineteenth century in the middle of the colonial period. But it was mostly limited to certain languages as we can learn from the literature on the creation of vernacular public spheres [Isaka 2003; Naregal 2001; Orsini 2002]. The situation continued in the post-Independence era. Just after Independence, India went through a series of disputes over language policies and eventually reorganized states based on language [King 1998]. As a result, a hierarchy of languages came into existence, wherein a limited number of regional languages enjoyed a higher status than others. This brought about a dominance of these languages in the Indian media. As Jeffrey [2000] points out, the Indian newspaper revolution in the 1970s enabled the circulation of newspapers in those officially acknowledged languages to shoot up. Numerous spoken languages, on the other hand, still do not have their own printed media. It is possible for people to have access to the media in the dominant languages as long as they acquire a command over such languages. For this they need to be educated in the particular language. The same can be pointed out regarding the development of other types of media, i.e. radio, television and film. Even though audiovisual aspects of these media allow people to have access to them in a particular way, their availability is also confined to certain dominant languages.

This leads us to the second issue, the question of literacy and the power of the media. As I have pointed out above, the acquisition of a command over a language is necessary in utilizing the printed media. If people do not have recourse to the written media, what do they depend on? What kind of measures do they take in organizing and participating in their own public spheres? The use of performance and image is an alternative to the written media. Many recent studies have shown us various ways of forming “the public”, which are not dependent on literacy, i.e. the command over written language, but on images through the mass media and performance through which people connect themselves with “public culture” [Breckenridge 1995; Dwyer and Pinney 2001]. Diffusing images through the audiovisual media are often associated with nationalism and globalization today [Appadurai 1996]. One successful example of image appropriation in politics is the Hindu nationalistic campaigns for the construction of a new Ram temple in Ayodhya [Farmer 1996; Manuel 1996; Brosius 2002]. However, if we intend to keep a local perspective in our analysis, we should pay attention to the local media which can function as an alternative to the written
media, such as popular plays and songs in the vernacular. Our question is how such media (let us call them non-literary media in contrast to literary media, i.e. written media) can play a role in forming public spheres. We should also ask whether there is any interplay between the literary and non-literary media, and if so, how they interact. Some recent studies such as Hansen [2004] and Peterson [2004] also try to show the interaction between the literary and non-literary media in nineteenth century India.

Lastly, we should examine the issue concerning the formation of local identity through the development of vernacular public spheres with the aforementioned interplay of literary and non-literary media. We already have some insights into the growth of the vernacular printed media during the colonial period and their involvement in the production of local and national identities [Naregal 2001; Orsini 2002]. Besides these, considerable literature exists on the subject of the relationship between language and nationalism in India [Brass 1974 and 1991; King 1994; Rai 2000; Ramaswamy 1997]. However, these studies mainly emphasize the role of the elite and their literary sphere in the formation of identity. They present a picture of people with literary skills dominating the creation of local public spheres. We do not really know to what extent and through what channels the masses can participate in these spheres. In contrast, by paying attention to the interplay of the literary and non-literary media, we can suggest new implications for the notion of a vernacular public sphere where various types of media work and create local identity for both the elite and the non-elite.

In order to tackle the above three issues and show the complexity and dynamics of the formation of local public spheres in India, I would like to analyze the data from Goa, which was under the Portuguese rule between 1510 and 1961. Goa witnessed the official language movement in the 1980s. This movement attempted to promote Konkani, the local spoken language, to the position of the official language of the state. Konkani did not have an organized mass media at that time because of the language policies during Portuguese colonial rule. Thus, the leaders of the movement had to depend on two types of media, the literary and non-literary, in other words, print and performance, in order to circulate their political discourse and form the “Konkani public sphere”. The Goan case provides us with a good example of the interplay of different media in which the audience also varies.

In the first section, I will outline a history of Goan newspapers from the nineteenth century to the present day and show the existence of divided literary spheres of Portuguese, Marathi and Konkani. The divide originated from Portuguese colonial rule and their formation was influenced by religious, caste and class factors. When Goa became a part of India, Portuguese was replaced by English as the language of the public sphere. The principal question of this section is: “To what extent was the structure of colonial literary spheres inherited after 1961?” Secondly, there will be an ex-
amination of the strategies of Konkani activists for utilizing the media in Goa for organizing the “Konkani public sphere” as well as establishing a “Goan identity” during the official language movement between 1985 and 1987. Instead of publicizing their opinions in the Konkani media, they relied on the English newspaper Herald. Finally, I will focus on how the non-literary media, popular plays and songs, functioned to constitute the “Konkani public sphere” in tandem with the literary media.

2. The Formation of Multilingual Divided Literary Spheres under Portuguese Rule in Goa

Goa is located on the Western coast of the Indian sub-continent, about 375 kilometres south of Mumbai. It was a Portuguese colony for 451 years from 1510 to 1961. After Liberation, it became a part of India as a Union Territory. As will be explained below, Goa acquired statehood in 1987 after a series of turbulent agitations over the language issue. According to the 2001 census, its population is about 1.4 million. The main industries are mining, fishing and tourism.

Because of its Portuguese colonial legacy, Goa has a relatively large Christian population, most of whom are Catholics (26.7%, according to the 2001 census). This is a result of compulsory conversions in the sixteenth century. The Portuguese government encouraged Catholic missionaries to convert local Hindus to Catholicism. At that time, Portuguese territory was confined to the central talukas (districts) of present Goa, i.e. Ilhas (present Tiswadi), Bardez and Salcete (the area is now divided into two talukas, Mormugao and Salcete), which are called the Old Conquests. Hindu temples were demolished and those who did not comply with conversion fled to the surrounding areas called the New Conquests.

This colonial history brought about the different use of languages depending on one’s religious affiliation, caste and class. The spoken language of Goa is basically Konkani. However, Christian higher castes, Bamons and Chardos, who are equivalent to Brahmans and Kshatriyas respectively, used Portuguese for purposes of writing during the colonial period. Most of the Christian elite resided in the Old Conquests and became civil servants in the colonial government after being educated at higher educational institutions in the Portuguese medium. Some of them, though few in number, identified themselves with colonialist culture, living in Portuguese-style houses and speaking Portuguese at home. Even today we find such “Portuguese people”, especially among the older generation.

On the other hand, Hindus of the New Conquests, especially higher castes such as Saraswat Brahmans, regarded Marathi as the high language of culture and politics. The language was used in the courts of the Maratha kingdom of the time and as the political language in neighbouring areas of the New Conquests [Mhamai 1984]. Marathi was also the language of ritual as it had been developed in the bhakti move-
ments. Maharashtrian Brahmans were often called to preside over rituals after the re-establishment of Hindu temples in the New Conquests. Just as only higher caste Christians had access to Portuguese, only higher caste Hindus attained the privilege of mastering the reading and writing of Marathi. After the annexation of the New Conquests to Portuguese territory, some Hindus, who were competent in both Portuguese and Marathi, were hired by the colonial government as translators of official documents. They later became mediators between the Hindus of the New Conquests and the Portuguese [Pinto 2003: 95]. In contrast with those who occupied the higher stratum of Goan society, low caste Christians and Hindus, whether they lived in the Old Conquests or New Conquests, spoke Konkani and knew only the rudiments of how to write. They constituted the largest part of Goan society.

In Goa, the aforementioned linguistic divide between the Christian and Hindu elite echoes the development of newspapers, which contributed to the further consolidation of each literary sphere. To outline the history of Goan newspapers, the first printing press in India was set up in Goa in 1565 and was used by missionaries to publish religious material, including Francis Xavier’s catechism in 1567, for the evangelical cause. Franciscan and Jesuit priests studied the local languages, Konkani and Marathi, in which many texts were printed. Missionary printing presses, however, started to dwindle in the late seventeenth century. Priolkar [1958: 23–25] assumes that this happened due to a decrease in the utility value of local languages, while Barros ascribes the cause to the ban on printing activity issued by the Portuguese government in 1754 [Barros 1970: 93]. Moreover, the situation was aggravated by the reforms of the Marquis de Pombal, which resulted in the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1759.

After a century long slump, the printing press was back in Goa in the form of regular publication of printed texts in parallel with the emergence of newspapers in British India. The first “newspaper”, a weekly called Gazeta de Goa, was started in 1821 by the colonial government. This governmental publication changed its name several times and continued until 1961 under the name, Boletim Oficial. The first commercial newspaper, O Ultramar, was launched in 1879 by Bernardo Francisco da Costa. He was later elected to the Portuguese Parliament. Following O Ultramar, other newspapers such as India Portuguesa and An Indian were published. According to Pinto, the rivalry between Bamons and Chardos, who constituted the elite section of Christians, was expressed in those Portuguese newspapers [Pinto 2003: 130–133]. While O Ultramar represented the voice of the Bamons (the founder of the paper, da Costa, belonged to the Bamon caste), India Portuguesa supported the position of the Chardos and accused the Bamons of plotting conspiracies against the colonial government.

The constitutional change in 1821 and the establishment of Portugal as a republic in 1910 enabled Hindus to acquire more freedom as the result of the abolishment of Catholicism as a state religion. A large number of Hindus of the New Conquests
started to move into the Old Conquests in search of job opportunities. An increase in
the Hindu population, however, did not lead to the launching of many Goan Marathi
newspapers. An appendix to da Cunha’s article on the development of Goan journalism
gives us an insight into the conditions of Marathi periodicals in the early 1920s.
We find 32 titles in the list between 1872 and 1922, whereas 84 titles are included
for regular Portuguese publications between 1859 and 1922 [da Cunha 1923: 555–
594]. Most of the Marathi papers were published in the New Conquests. This implies
that the Marathi literary sphere was formed among the Hindu elite independently in
the New Conquests. To cater to Hindus who knew both Portuguese and Marathi, bi-
lingual newsprints were also published.

The strength of the Portuguese literary sphere can be observed by the fact that most
Marathi periodicals were weekly or monthly, while Portuguese publications included
popular dailies of those times, such as O Heraldo (1900–), Heraldo (1908–1962) and

Since Portuguese was the language of the elite, there were some attempts to estab-
lish Konkani papers or periodicals for those who could understand only that language.
This move was initiated by the Christian higher castes and was targeted at Christian
lower castes in Bombay where many of them worked as sailors, cooks and music-
cians.12) Eduardo Bruno de Souza launched the first Roman Konkani monthly,
Udentechem Salok, in 1889. It later became a fortnightly and lasted until 1894
[Raposo 2003]. Other weekly or monthly Konkani publications were mostly bilin-
gual or trilingual with English and Portuguese. There were also Konkani dailies in
Bombay such as Sanjechem Noketr (Evening Star, started in 1907) and Konkani Bul-
letin (started in 1932). But they could not sustain themselves for a long time due to
financial difficulties [Raposo 2003]. It was not until the 1930s that Konkani periodi-
cals were published in Goa: Porjecho Adar (Workers’ Help, started in 1931) and
Vauranddeacho Ixtt (Workers’ Friend, started in 1933). They were both bilingual pe-
riodicals in Konkani and Portuguese. Vauranddeacho Ixtt still exists today as a popu-
lar Konkani weekly among Goan Christians.

All the Konkani papers mentioned above were in the Roman script. The Konkani
literary sphere was dominated by the Roman script before 1961, even though some
Goan Hindu writers, for instance, Shenoy Goembab, who is now known as the “Fa-
ther of Konkani” among Konkani writers, began to engage in Konkani writing in the
Devanagari script. This was mainly because Hindu literary intellectuals considered
Marathi as the language for writing. Besides, as Pinto points out, Konkani was, after
all, not very “literary”. There was no uniform orthography to write in the language.
The number of vocabularies was limited to everyday use. Thus, people did not un-
derstand most of the vocabulary in the Konkani dictionary compiled by a then distin-
guished linguist, Fr. Dalgado [Pinto 2003: 148–150]. This situation changed as more
Hindu writers turned to Konkani and began their attempts at forming the Devanagari
Konkani sphere after 1961. We will deal with this aspect later.

The dailies enjoyed commercial success only in the early twentieth century and all the successful papers were in Portuguese. In addition to the aforementioned three dailies, *O Heraldo, Heraldo* and *Diário da Noite, Diário de Goa* (1953–1964) and *A Vida* (1963–1967) are worth mentioning. Among these five dailies, *Diário da Noite* and *Diário de Goa* were evening papers. Publication centres were divided between Panaji (*O Heraldo, Heraldo* and *Diário da Noite*) and Margao (*Diário de Goa* and *A Vida*).

In this way, the literary spheres of Portuguese, Marathi and Konkani were formed independently of each other through the printed media during the colonial period. The Christian elite (*Bamons* and *Chardos*), the Hindu elite (*Saraswat Brahmins* and Maharashtrian *Brahmans*) and the Christian lower castes respectively, were active in each sphere.

After Liberation in 1961, Goa went through radical transformations politically, economically and linguistically during the period of integration into India. The status of the Portuguese language diminished as all the administrative activities began to be conducted in English once Goa became a Union Territory [Fernandes 1997; 2000]. The outflow of a number of Portuguese-speaking Christians to Portugal and other Portuguese colonies such as Mozambique and Angola accelerated the process of the replacement of Portuguese with English. Many of those who remained in Goa shifted to English and started to talk to their children in English. In the midst of this transformation, *Navhind Times*, Goa’s first English daily began publication in 1963. It was financed by the Dempos, one of the big business houses in Goa. All the Portuguese dailies, except *O Heraldo*, closed down by 1967. Even *O Heraldo* began a fresh start as an English paper in 1983, under the name of *Herald*. Another Goan English daily published after Liberation was *Gomantak Times*. In addition to these three Goan newspapers, national English dailies such as *Indian Express, Times of India* and *The Hindu* are also available in Goa today.

As mentioned above, the separate and independent literary spheres of Portuguese, Marathi and Konkani were created through newspapers between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After 1961 English replaced Portuguese and became the status language of higher caste Christians. As will be explained below, these Christians became the readers of English dailies after Liberation in 1961. Some Goan Christians had already been exposed to English in the nineteenth century, since they were aware that competence in English was necessary for better job opportunities outside Goa. So, even non-elite Christians learned English to some extent [Pinto 2003: 83–86]. Although the Hindu elite who acquired higher education in cities outside Goa such as in Bombay and Belgaum were fluent in English, they were more attached to Marathi.

After 1961, the strength of Marathi too, began to grow. This was mainly due to the
increase in the number of Marathi schools. Goa’s first chief minister, Dayanand Bandodkar, devoted himself to spreading education among people who had no access to it earlier [Esteves 1986: 71–74]. Bandodkar was a staunch supporter of the merger of Goa with Maharashtra and this seemed to be the main reason why Marathi was chosen as the medium for newly-opened primary schools. Another reason was the location of these schools. They were set up in the New Conquests where Marathi was historically acknowledged as the language of ritual and education.

Just after Liberation the first Marathi daily, Gomantak, was launched in 1962, followed by Navprabha in 1970, which like the Navhind Times is published by the Dempos. However, the largest selling Marathi daily in Goa today is not a Goan paper but the Belgaum-based Tarun Bharat.

A small survey I conducted in M Village, which is located in Tiswadi taluka (district), gives us an insight into the status of newspaper readership today. M Village is located near an urban area and the educational level is relatively high. Christians, men as well as women, mostly confine themselves to English newspapers whereas Hindus read both English and Marathi papers. As seen in Table 1, only two Christian women said that they read Marathi papers. But they also pointed out that they usually read English newspapers. They can read Marathi since they were originally from Ponda, one of the talukas in the New Conquests, and were educated in Marathi medium schools. In the case of Hindus there is a tendency towards men reading more
English papers than women. Young Hindus (under thirty) read both English and Marathi newspapers. It can be pointed out that although we can basically see a divided newspaper readership between Christians (English) and Hindus (Marathi), the latter are shifting to English newspapers today. This is parallel with a growing consciousness among Goan Hindus, particularly those of the lower middle class, about the usefulness of competence in English in the job market.

Even though most interviewees, except one Hindu woman originally from Mangalore and Muslims from Belgaum, answered that they speak Konkani in daily life, the language does not seem to be accepted as the language of newspapers. After Liberation, as more lower caste Christians became educated in English, the Roman Konkani sphere weakened. Roman Konkani became confined to the religious sphere, as the Goa Church initiated the localisation of church services and rituals after the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) and transformed the liturgy from Latin to Konkani. Even though a new literary sphere of Devanagari Konkani appeared among Hindu writers, it rarely affected Christians.

This section, by tracing the history of Goan newspapers, showed the formation of separate literary spheres in Goa, i.e. those of Portuguese, Marathi and Konkani, in connection with religious, caste and class factors. Due to Portuguese colonial rule, the Christian and Hindu elites acquired different languages, Portuguese and Marathi, as their language for writing and reading. Portuguese was predominantly the language of newspapers before Liberation in 1961. Marathi papers independently formed their own literary sphere in the New Conquests. As Portuguese papers ceased publication in the 1960s, English and Marathi papers began to flourish. A linguistic divide between Christians and Hindus began to be visible, as English came to be considered more as the written language for the former and Marathi was acknowledged as the written language for the latter. This was partly because the Goan educational system failed to unify the medium of education into a single language after Liberation. In short, English and Marathi came to establish their respective literary spheres in the post-Liberation era.

Next, we will move on to a discussion about the strategies employed by Konkani supporters during the official language movement between 1985 and 1987, which included the utilization of the English literary sphere to generate a “Konkani public sphere”. They were compelled to do so to overcome the opposition from the Marathi sphere.


As discussed in the previous section, Goa’s spoken language, Konkani, did not fully establish its own literary sphere in Goa during the colonial era, compared to its
Portuguese and Marathi counterparts. When the official language movement started in 1985, Konkani supporters did not really have a means of circulating their voice in the form of the print media in their language, namely, in Konkani in the Devanagari script.¹⁹

Let me first outline the official language movement in Goa.²⁰ Its origin can be traced to the merger issue which was provoked by the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) just after Liberation in 1961. The MGP, which won the first democratic election of Goa, tried to achieve the merger of Goa with the neighbouring state of Maharashtra. Its members claimed that Goa had been historically under Maharashtrian influence for a long time. The utilization of Marathi for written purposes among Goan Hindus, according to the MGP, also proved their point. The United Goans Party (UGP), on the other hand, was against the MGP in advocating that Goa had always been historically distinctive. They asserted that Goans had always spoken Konkani, not Marathi, and the use of Konkani is the evidence of Goa’s cultural independence. Goans cast their vote in the opinion poll in 1967 in order to decide whether they should be independent as a Union Territory or be merged with the state of Maharashtra. The anti-merger front won by a slight margin and the problem seemed to have settled down.

However, the question of whether Goa was under Maharashtrian culture or culturally independent arose again in 1985. A group of Konkani writers, who formed the Konkani Porjecho Awaz (KPA, Konkani People’s Voice), worked together with several politicians and raised their voice for Konkani, their mother tongue, to be acknowledged as the official language of Goa. Marathi writers, who were alarmed by the actions of Konkani activists, began a counter-movement for the Marathi cause. Tensions mounted towards the end of 1986 and several people were killed as a result. Finally the central government intervened. The Official Language Act was issued on 4 February 1987 and Konkani was acknowledged as the sole official language of Goa. On 30 May in the same year, Goa was accorded statehood.²¹

In the course of developing the movement, the KPA, which was founded in 1985 by young writers, initiated a series of agitations. Its principal members were the new generation of Hindu Konkani writers. The first generation of these writers started to appear in Bombay at the turn of the nineteenth century. The most prominent of them was Shennoi Goembab. Instead of using the Roman script, in which most Konkani periodicals were published at that time for Goan migrants in Bombay, these writers employed the Devanagari script. They had used the script for writing Marathi stories, but discovered that they could not produce vivid dialogue in the language they did not speak at home, and thus turned to Konkani writing [Sardessai 2000: 120]. Many of the second generation of Hindu writers also shared the same point of view as their forerunners about their language. For example, Ravindra Kelekar (born in 1925), who was the first awardee of the Sahitya Akademi Award in Konkani and a freedom fighter
for the liberation of Goa from Portugal, once told me about how he came to realize that he was “Konkani”.

“My father was a doctor and moved to Diu, now in Gujarat, when I was two years old. At the age of thirteen, I was sent back to Goa for higher education and I entered a school of Marathi medium. It was very hard for me to study in Marathi because outside school everybody spoke Konkani. But after three years I could use Marathi without any difficulty. When I turned sixteen, I went back to Diu. I stopped at Pune, Bombay and Ahmedabad. I wanted to eat Goan food but I found only Maharashtrian dishes at restaurants (in Pune and Bombay). I was with a Gujarati family on the trip. I spoke Gujarati for the first time after three years and could not express myself very well. I started to question myself, ‘Who am I?’ I came to realize that I am ‘Konkani’”.

Those who were active as the members of the KPA also pointed out that the awkwardness of studying in Marathi led them to start writing in Konkani. Pundalik Naik (born in 1952), the convenor of the KPA, said:

“When I was a student of the fifth or sixth grade at a Marathi medium school, we were taught about the cattle festival of Maharashtra, pola. My father is a farmer and I used to take care of our cattle. But I felt that pola was not mine. Then I started to ask the question, ‘Where is my pola?’”

The efforts for organizing the Konkani literary sphere among Hindu writers had started on a full scale only after 1961. Before Konkani was acknowledged as an independent language by the Sahitya Akademi (National Academy of Letters) in 1975, Konkani writers, many of whom were poets and novelists, formed a circle led by the Konkani Basha Mandal (Konkani Language Association). Although they published some periodicals in Konkani, their activities were limited to the literary genre such as short stories and poems. They did not have a popular print media to spread their political opinions among a wider audience when they became engaged in the official language movement.

It was journalists who helped the members of the KPA to secure a print forum. Some Konkani writers, such as Chandrakant Keni and Uday Bhembre, had worked in journalism since Liberation. They worked for the Marathi paper Rashtramat, which supported the anti-merger front during the opinion poll campaign in the late 1960s. This time, they decided to make use of the English media in addition to Rashtramat. This was mainly because they intended to reach out to Christians who constituted most of the readership of English newspapers.

The newspaper Herald functioned as a vehicle for the voices of Konkani activists. The paper was originally published in Portuguese as O Heraldo, and was restarted as an English paper in 1983. According to the first editor of Herald, Rajan Narayan, the
paper began to take up the Konkani issue mainly to increase its circulation.25) By the
time Herald was launched, another English daily Navhind Times had already secured
its position in Goa. As a latecomer, the editorial board of Herald was “looking for an
issue to grasp people’s mind”.26)

Narayan closely cooperated with the leading members of the KPA, such as its
convenor Pundalik Naik and secretary Dilip Borkar. As mentioned above, they were
the young and active Konkani writers who entered the literary sphere of Konkani in
Devanagari script after Liberation. Besides them, Uday Bhembre and Wilfred
D’Souza, both of whom were members of the Goan legislative assembly at that time,
contacted Narayan very often. It is interesting to see that Narayan played a pivotal
role in bridging different spheres. Wilfred D’Souza was from a Christian higher caste
and connected the Hindu writers to the English sphere. Narayan frequently had meet-
ings with these Konkani activists in church. This connection with the Goa Church
and Catholic priests, as will be argued in the next section, played an essential role in
circulating the voice of the Konkani activists among Christians. The Goa Church had
acknowledged itself as the protector of Konkani since it changed the liturgy into Ro-
man Konkani. Therefore, many Catholic priests became active participants in the
movement. All camps converged into creating the “Konkani public sphere” and their
political discourses were given a vent in Herald, with Rajan Narayan’s help.

Herald made its first move just after the rejection of “The Goa, Daman and Diu
Language Bill, 1985” on 19 July 1985. On the day after the failure of the bill, a col-
umn entitled “R.I.P. Konkani” by Narayan made the front page of the paper. It tar-
geted Goans, especially Christians, who were the main readers of English papers, by
claiming that they had to take action in order to give a rightful place to their mother
tongue. Narayan’s argument caused a great emotional stir. The Christian ratio of the
population in Goa had been steadily decreasing since 1961. Since then they had al-
ways felt threatened by their minority status in Goan society. The editor was very
conscious about appealing to “the Christian people’s mind”.27)

Two types of rhetoric were employed by Herald. The first reminded the readers of
the threat from Maharashtra. The rhetoric was the same as the one used when the
merger issue turned vehement in the 1960s. Take the editorial dated 30 October 1986,
for example. The editor attacks the resolution passed by the Marathi literary conven-
tion held in Bombay that Marathi should be made the official language of Goa. He
concludes that it was part of a “Vishal Gomantak conspiracy”. According to him, the
pro-merger lobbyists were trying to create “Vishal Gomantak” i.e. Greater Goa with
Marathi as its official language by putting the union territory of Goa and some of the
disputed territories of Karnataka together. But, the editor proclaims, Goa has “an in-
dependent identity”. Since the conspirators were “defeated and frustrated by the his-
torical verdict of the opinion poll” they “(were) trying to achieve the same goal
through the backdoor”.28) MGP politicians were often the target of the editorials’ criti-
cism, particularly Ramakant Khalap who became the president of the MGP at the culmination of the language problem in November 1986. He was fiercely attacked because of his remarks in which he equated Hindu culture of Goa with Maharashtrian culture. This attitude was labelled as “Marathi colonialism”.29)

The second rhetoric was the identification of Konkani with “mother”. To impart a powerful imprint to this rhetoric, Herald made use of cartoons to deliver the message of the Konkani literary intellectuals effectively to the masses. For instance, on 23 July 1985, the front page of Herald showed a cartoon in which a mother puts a hand on her son and talks gently to him, “... and remember son, a time will come and I will leave this world... and my only link with you will be Konkani ... the language that united us ...i.e. unless you grow up to be a member of the Local Congress Party”. This image was clearly produced out of the phrase, “mother tongue”. The implication of the cartoon was that the language spoken by the mother is apparently the language of her child (unless the child becomes a member of the Congress, whose MLAs opposed the introduction of the Official Language Bill which was tabled on 19 July).30)

In the issue of 3 November, a huge cartoon of a lady with a small boy leading a group of Konkani supporting politicians and writers appeared, occupying the whole page. The caption read “KONKANI BHAS GOEMCHI BHAS, TICH KORUM-IA RAJBHAS”, which means “Konkani language is the Goan language. Let’s make her the official language of the state”. This overlaps with the figure of the goddess in the famous painting by Eugene Delacroix, “Liberty Leading the People”, in which the goddess wields a flag of the French Republic, encouraging people to stand up for liberty. In this sense, the woman in Herald who leads the masses could also be interpreted as a lady fighting for the cause of Konkani. However, compared to Delacroix’s
goddess, she looks more like a mother giving a hand to her son, who holds a small flag on which it can be read: KONKANI BHAS AMCHI RAJMAI BHAS (Konkani language is our official language).

As the language agitation escalated towards the end of 1986, Konkani was more often termed Konkani mai (Konkani mother). Phrases such as “She has been receiving step-motherly treatment” and “She should be placed as the mistress of her own house” were frequently used. As will be explained below, this representation of the “mother” was also utilized by the pro-Marathi side in circulating their position of making Marathi the official language of Goa. The use of the same idiom by the Marathi activists, constituting of Marathi writers and politicians, can be considered as a direct response against the Konkani activists and an attempt to secure the Marathi sphere in Goa.

One of the Goan Marathi dailies, Gomantak, started a campaign of supporting Marathi. Since Marathi was the religious and educational language of Goan Hindus, the paper tried to spread the opinion of the Marathi side by utilizing Hindu myths. At the same time it evoked the image of “mother” in the same way as Herald did. The editor of the paper at that time, Narayan Athavle, was not Goan, but a Maharashtrian Chitpawan Brahman, whose mother tongue was Marathi [Noronha 2003: 37–38]. Athavle was somehow in the same position as the editor of Herald, Rajan Narayan, who played the role of mediating between activists and newspaper readers as an outsider.

Some of the cartoons in Gomantak were more provocative and sensational than those in Herald. Its 5 August issue shows a cartoon of a lady whose sari is being torn off by a king. The woman is termed Mai Marathi (Mother Marathi). To prevent her from falling into shame, Lord Krishna appears and provides cloth to cover her. This was obviously taken from the story in the Mahabharata, in which the wicked Duhsasana attempts to disrobe the wife of the Pandavas, Draupadi, in public.
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Duhsasana, in the cartoon, is shown in the form of a Konkani protagonist, implying that a mother is being harassed by the Konkani movement.\(^{33}\)

In another cartoon (in the issue of 1 August 1986, Fig. 2), “Mother Marathi” is depicted as suffering physically from the weight of a throne and a woman with a baby on her lap. The woman on the throne is explained as “Konkani in Devanagari script” and her baby as “Konkani in Roman script”. Beside this spectacle, Marathi supporters shouting, “Don’t suppress our mother!” can be seen on the left; and on the right, Konkani supporting politicians are shown as uttering words of agreement with the action in the centre of the picture.

The cartoons which appeared in both Herald and Gomantak built up the same kind of images, that is, a circle of intellectuals, who were politicians and writers, protecting their “mother”. However, we can also see the difference: while the cartoons in Gomantak emphasized religious symbols, obviously targeting Hindus, those of Herald did not carry clear religious messages even though they were targeting Christians, as Rajan Narayan has said. We can assume that this was mainly because many Konkani intellectuals were Hindus. This complex situation, with Hindu writers delivering messages to Christians, later caused problems when Konkani attained its status as Goa’s official language.\(^{34}\) This will be discussed at the end of this article.

In this section we looked at how Konkani intellectuals tried to form the “Konkani public sphere” by utilizing an English newspaper in the official language movement. They had to depend on the English media because Konkani did not have its own paper to spread political opinion. The Marathi sphere responded against the formation of the Konkani sphere. Marathi writers and politicians made use of Marathi papers in the same way as Konkani supporters tried to reach out to the public. They both relied on cartoons and employed the images of the “mother”.

In the next section, we will analyze how non-literary media functioned in the official language movement to create the “Konkani public sphere”.

4. The Functioning of Non-Literary Media: Performance and Song

As explained above, a part of the “Konkani public sphere” was organized through the English media. However, the non-literary media was even more effective in transforming the official language issue into an important political problem of identity for all sections of Goan people in society. These channels or media were the words of Catholic priests, plays and songs. They were all in Konkani, delivering powerful messages to the people, the elite as well as the common public.

The Goa Church embraced Konkani as the language of its liturgy after the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) permitted the use of the vernacular language in the celebration of mass. The Novus Ordo (New Order of Mass) was established in 1970. In line with this change, Konkani hymn books and the Bibles were produced in the Ro-
During the official language movement, the meetings of Konkani leaders, constituted by the principal members of the KPA, Rajan Narayan, the editor of Herald and politicians such as Uday Bhembre and Willy D’Souza, were often held at church. Even though the Goa Church did not officially declare its support for the KPA, the priests individually declared their support for Konkani. It was maintained that “If Marathi becomes the official language of Goa, you will have to use Marathi in church and wear saris.”

This kind of propaganda drew many Goan Christians to the Konkani cause.

Some informants remember that as well as the sermons by the priests, plays functioned as a powerful channel for spreading the message among people. College students, who belonged to student unions, went out into the streets and organized various activities. A college lecturer, who was an active member of the Progressive Students Union, claimed that it was the only union that did not split up on the basis of the language issue and that everybody supported Konkani. They handed out leaflets and performed street plays with themes related to Konkani, which were very effective.

The popular Goan stage called tiatr also played an essential role in sending political messages to the people. Tiatrs are Goan musical plays which are very popular especially among Christians. Generally speaking, they are domestic melodramas or soap operas with a couple of sub-plots. The dialogues contain political messages and often criticize government policies. Kantars, which are sung in Konkani between the acts of a tiatr, frequently adopt themes such as an undying love for Goa, her mother tongue, Konkani, and other aspects of its culture. CDs and cassette tapes of kantars are circulated widely. Tiatrs used to be performed by amateurs during special occasions such as village feasts. But today some troupes stage them in theatres in Panaji and Margao and are commercially very successful.

Tomazinho Cardozo points out that “(w)henever Goa, Goans, their language and identity were at risk, tiatr became the most important instrument to awaken the people of Goa” [Cardozo 1994: 101]. When the merger issue was at stake in the late 1960s, tiatrs trumpeted anti-merger messages among Christians. During the official language movement, the same ploy was used. For example, a tiatr writer, Fr. Freddy da Costa, penned one called “Utth Goenkara (Stand up Goans)” in 1985. Its message, “Konkanni Goenchi raj-bhas korpachi, Goeank ghottok raj melloupachi (Make Konkani the state language of Goa, give Goa the status of a state)” was very popular among the audience and the tiatr was staged as many as fifty times [da Costa 1994: 80]. The strength of tiatrists, who were actors-cum-singers, lay in their direct connection with the people by sharing the same space and time.

Not only kantars in tiatrs, but other Konkani songs were also widely circulated. One of the most popular songs among people between 1985 and 1987 was “Konkani” composed and sung by the Goan musician, Remo Fernandes. The lyrics read:
We can assume how seriously the issue of Konkani was taken from the advertisements of tiatrs and cassettes published in Herald. For example, an advertisement of a tiatr titled “Göykaranchem Rogot” (“Goan People’s Blood”) contained a drawing of angry-looking people standing with their arms held up.39) William De Curtorim, a Konkani singer, in an advertisement of his cassette declares: “It’s the final fight by William in favour of Konkani and against the mal-functioning of the Government”.40) These non-literary media—priests’ messages, plays and songs—complemented the literary media in English in forming the “Konkani public sphere”, which can be seen as the arena for producing a sense of “Goan identity”. The English newspaper Herald went on a persistent campaign, publicizing the moves of the KPA and Konkani-supporting politicians. The messages were not confined to the literary sphere. They were communicated through the non-literary media as well and produced very strong driving forces.

In the course of the development of both the literary and non-literary channels, the strength of the “Konkani public sphere” culminated at the end of 1986. On 18 December 1986, a day before Goa Liberation Day, the KPA called for a massive agitation in Azad Maidan in Panaji. The notice was published in Herald. Two days after the event, a young man called Floriano Vaz was shot to death by a police constable who was reportedly trying to calm the agitating and barricaded crowds in Margao. The KPA declared Floriano Vaz as a “martyr” for the cause of Konkani and published the notice of his funeral along with strong exhortations in Herald.41) Another six
people (all Christians) were killed in a clash in Dongri Village of Tiswadi on 21 December. They too were hailed as martyrs. People started to resort to violence to express their anger. They burnt buses, broke water pipelines and blocked the main roads. In the end, the army was called to deal with the chaos. Meanwhile, tiatrs were dedicated to the “martyrs” and patriotic Konkani songs were sung. For instance, one tiatr called “Govai” (“Singer”) was staged in aid of the Konkani martyr fund on 3 January 1987. This illustrates how effective the combination of the literary and non-literary media was in forming the “Konkani public sphere”.

5. Concluding Remarks

Konkani is the spoken language of most Goans in which they communicate with each other in daily life, irrespective of their religious affiliation. In contrast, the literary sphere for Goans was divided during the Portuguese period and the situation continued even after Goa became a part of India in 1961. As we have examined above, the “Konkani public sphere” came into existence during the official language movement between 1985 and 1987, which resulted in the materialization of the Official Language Act. However, this act, which approved Konkani written in the Devanagari script as the official language of the state, brought the flaws of the Konkani literary sphere to light and had the effect of shaking up the “Konkani public sphere”.

The main problem was the use of different scripts in writing the language. Whereas Hindu Konkani writers, who initiated the formation of the “Konkani public sphere”, utilized the Devanagari script, Christians, who supported the movement, employed the Roman script for writing. The disparity was somehow hidden when the “Konkani public sphere” was created by the combination of literary and non-literary media.

The Roman Konkani literary sphere existed to some extent at the time of Liberation, especially among lower caste Christians. But as more people became educated in the English medium, Roman Konkani was restricted to the religious sphere where the Goa Church became its protector. The church now plays an essential role in the maintenance of Roman Konkani. Some Goan priests are active writers and devote themselves to the publication of Konkani texts in the Roman script. For example, the late Fr. Freddy da Costa was the former editor of Konkani monthly Gulab (Rose), and Fr. Moreno d’Souza is a Jesuit priest who publishes Dor Mhoineachi Rotti (Monthly Bread). The Society of Pilar too plays its part having published Vauraddeancho Ixt (Workers’ Friend) since 1933.

On the other hand, Hindu Konkani writers have continued their efforts to establish an orthography in the Devanagari script after the passing of the Official Language Act. Institutes such as the Goa Konkani Akademi, Konkani Basha Mandal and Goa University have been working hard to publish books and an encyclopaedia in the script. A daily newspaper in Devanagari Konkani, Sunaparant, was even launched in
1987. However, it seems that the use of Devanagari Konkani has not taken root in Goa, though the number of children who study Konkani in Devanagari at primary level has increased over this decade. There are three other scripts in Konkani: Kannada, Malayalam and Arabic. The first two are used in Karnataka and Kerala respectively, while the last is employed by Muslims. Agreement has not been reached on the question of which script Konkani should be written in. After all, English and Marathi are still much more influential and stronger as written languages than Konkani in Goa. Many Goans think that Konkani is their spoken language and some of them claim that it is not worthy of study as a written language.

Even with the failure to integrate the Konkani literary sphere, the non-literary media still cater to people in the organization of the “Konkani public sphere”. Different tiatr troupes stage their shows every week, often to a houseful capacity. Cassettes and CDs of Konkani kantars have brisk sales. Konkani writers have awakened to the power of performance. For example, the Konkani Basha Mandal organized the First All India Konkani Music Festival in Margao on 9 and 10 February 2002. They invited performers in various genres for the occasion: classical Indian musicians, tiatrists and performers of folk songs. These performances were considered to have consolidated a distinct Goan identity. Konkani singers based in Mangalore, Karnataka also participated. The event was a big success and the second music festival was held in Panjim in February 2004.

How multilingual settings affect the relationship between language and the media—which language is strong in which media—should be considered when we apply Habermas’s thesis to India [Joshi 1999]. Besides, the problem of scripts is also important. We are already aware that the written form of a language can drive a wedge between people. The formation of Hindi and Urdu nationalisms is a good example [King 1994; Rai 2000]. The speakers of these two languages can communicate in daily life. But once they are written in different scripts, Devanagari and Arabic, they are separated and considered different from each other. We should further examine this dividing force of the written language in the formation of different public spheres under the influences of religious, caste and class factors [Brass 1974; Khan 1999].

Today more Goans, whether they are Christians or Hindus, have become increasingly fluent in English and the literary sphere of English seems to be growing stronger [Kurzon 2004]. I would like to observe how this factor will influence the formation of Goan public spheres in the future, as well as its relationship with the Konkani non-literary sphere.

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Notes

1) Awaya [2002] gives us a clear overview of recent research trends in the “public sphere” and “civil society” in South Asian Studies. As she says, a collection of essays edited by Sandria Freitag which appeared in South Asia in 1991 was one of the first attempts to examine the implications of “the public” in colonial South Asia [Freitag 1991].

2) 22 languages have been acknowledged in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution until today. They are Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Maithili, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. The latest addition was approved in December 2003 (Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santhali). Most languages in the list are the official languages of states, though some of them (Kashmiri, Santhali, Sindhi and Sanskrit) are not. Konkani, as will be discussed below, does not have the dominant power as the language of the printed media in Goa. About the Eighth Schedule and concerned issues, refer to Gupta et al. [1995].

3) For the development of newspapers in India, see Ahuja [1988], Aggarwar [2002], Mazumdar [1993], Natarajan [1997] and Vil’anilam [2004]. We can see a radical increase in regional language newspapers of India in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>No. of Dailies in 1951</th>
<th>No. of Dailies in 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannada</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayalam</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marathi</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) We should also be aware of the rapid growth of the Internet and its uneven distribution among people.

5) The proportion of other religious populations in Goa is as follows: Hindus are 65.8% and Muslims are 6.8%.

6) I owe much to Rochelle Pinto’s work [Pinto 2003] on the formation of the divided Goan public sphere in the nineteenth century to write this section.

7) Those who converted to Christianity retained their caste. It was basically varna, not jati. An equivalent to Vaishas cannot be found among Goan Christians. Shudras are called Sudirs [D’Costa 1977; Shirodkar and Mandal 1993].

8) The Portuguese educational system was developed in Goa only in the nineteenth century. Primary school education was established first and the development of secondary schools followed. Primary education up to the fifth grade was compulsory. After primary school, a limited number of students proceeded to secondary school, which was called liceu. For more detailed information, see da Costa Rodrigues [2000; 2002], de Menezes Bragança [1923], de Menezes Rodrigues [2002] and Varde [1977].

9) One of my informants in Goa, who was a Muslim, once used this expression “Portuguese person” to introduce me to a Christian doctor TS, who was in his seventies in 2000. TS was educated in Portuguese medium schools and spoke Portuguese at home. His attachment to Portugal was so strong that he once told me “Goa was ‘raped’ when the Indian army drove the Portuguese people out”.

10) There have been a series of arguments about which language, Konkani or Marathi, was first established as a written language in Goa. Olivinho Gomes [1999] asserts that Konkani was the first language in which prose was written in India since the Ramayana was written in Konkani in the twelfth century.

11) Pinto [2003], in Chapter 7, shows us a function of governmental periodicals through which Christians elites justified their political position.

12) Many Christian men went to Bombay to seek job opportunities due to the lack of industries in Goa. People from the same village lived in village clubs where they could find cheap accommodation [Larsen 1998].

13) A Vida was basically a Portuguese paper, but one page was written in English. It had a special concern for Konkani and published an English and Konkani supplement on Sundays to increase its readership [da Costa 2000; 603].

14) According to Vasco Pinho, who is a researcher of Portuguese education before Liberation, many Christian elites sent their children to English-medium secondary schools in the early twentieth century and their number was more than those who studied at Portuguese medium schools. It was easier for such people to shift from Portuguese to English after Liberation.

15) Other big families are the Chowgles and the Salgaokars. They, together with the Dempos, made their assets from mining and are still very influential in the Goan economy today. See Newman [1984].

16) According to Press in India 2002, Navhind Times has a circulation of 34,482. Information about the circulation of Herald and Gomantak Times is not available. But one of the employees of Herald told me that the paper has a circulation of about 25,000.

17) This is based on my own observation at several newspaper stalls. The circulation figure of Tarun Bharat is not available in Press in India 2002. Goan Marathi newspapers, Gomantak
and Navprabha, have a circulation of 19,074 and 7,246 respectively.

18) According to the census of 1991, in the urban areas of North Goa, 11.83% of the age group of 20–29 completed primary education, 22.86% finished secondary school, and 24.67% passed the matriculation examination.

19) There was a Konkani weekly paper Vauranddeacho Ixtt in Roman script. But the circulation was very limited.

20) I have tried to investigate the socio-cultural aspects of the language problem by drawing attention to religious, caste and class factors in Goa in another article [Matsukawa 2002].

21) For a detailed description of the language problem, see Suzuki [2001].

22) From an interview with Mr. Ravindra Kelekar on 4 August 2000.

23) From an interview with Mr. Pundalik Naik on 31 January 2001.

24) Although Konkani Basha Mandal was founded in 1939, its activities had been mainly outside Goa before Liberation due to the Portuguese rule.

25) From an interview with Mr. Rajan Narayan on 18 November 2000. Mr. Narayan is originally from Tamil Nadu. Because his father was an employee of the government and was transferred across India, he had moved from one place to another before he finally landed in Bombay. There he started to work as a journalist. When the owner of Herald (Mr. Fernandes) decided to introduce an English version, Narayan was called to Goa as the editor of the paper. He left the post in 2003 because his relationship with the present owner was strained.

26) From an interview with Mr. Rajan Narayan on 18 November 2000.

27) Narayan clearly indicated that 80 percent of the readership of Herald is Christian.


31) Herald, 3 November 1986. An explanation of the language problem by the KPA also appeared in the same issue in order to enlighten readers.

32) Due to my incompetence in the Marathi language, I relied on the translation of Naik [1987].

33) It is interesting to see that the same kind of religious motifs were utilized to identify the Tamil language with “mother” in Tamil nationalism [Ramaswamy 1997].

34) Besides this religious factor, we also need to pay attention to caste elements in the language problem. Many Hindu Konkani writers, who belonged to the first and second generations, were Saraswat Brahmans, higher caste and the landlord class of Goan society. Hindu masses, who were mostly lower castes such as Bhandaris, backed the Marathi cause since they regarded the Konkani side as a group of Saraswats and Christians. We also need to be aware that members of the new generation of Hindu writers were not only Saraswats but also from the lower castes.

35) From an interview with Dr. Bernedette Gomes on 17 February 2001.

36) From an interview with Dr. Bernedette Gomes on 17 February 2001. We can find some photographs of student activists in the 19 December 1986 issue of Herald.


38) The song is in “Old Goan Gold” (1985).
41) The notice was published in the front page of *Herald*, 23 December 1986.
43) Fr. Freddy da Costa was killed in a car accident in May 2004. Since then his brother, Fausto V. da Costa who is based in Mumbai and edits the Konkani-English bimonthly *The Goan Review*, have acted as the editor of *Gulab*.
44) For further details of the development of Roman Konkani, see Raposo [2003].
45) Suzuki [2004] points out that the rise in the use of Konkani at primary schools was the result of governmental policy. The Goa government declared in the early 1990s that it would stop subsidies for schools unless they introduced Konkani classes.

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