

A STUDY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN INDIAN UNIVERSITIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JAPANESE AND FRENCH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This research paper aims to study the current status and future prospects of foreign language learning in Indian universities, with a special focus on the Japanese and French languages. The research methodology adopted for this study involved conducting short surveys with professors from various Foreign Languages Universities in India. The surveys covered a range of questions related to the availability of language courses, the quality of teaching, the relevance of the languages in the Indian context, and the prospects of students pursuing these languages in terms of career opportunities. The survey showed that Japanese and French are popular foreign languages in India due to economic and cultural reasons. However, the quality of language courses and teaching in Indian universities is inadequate, which makes it challenging for learners to improve their skills. Policymakers, educators and students need to work towards improving the availability and quality of language courses, especially for Japanese and French, to meet the growing demand and support the country's global connections. The study emphasizes the need for multilingualism recognition in a rapidly changing world.

Key Words: *Foreign language learning, Japanese and French languages, Availability, language courses*

Overview of Language Education in India

Foreign language education in India dates back to ancient times, with Sanskrit being taught to foreigners as early as the 6th century BCE and later, Persian and Arabic became important languages of trade and scholarship and were taught in Indian centers of learning. Under British colonial rule, English was introduced as the language of administration and education, which led to its widespread adoption as a second language and domination in foreign language education in India. The Present day, India's language education system has traditionally focused on Hindi and English, but now there is a growing recognition of the importance of learning other languages due to India's diverse linguistic heritage and globalization. Foreign language education in India is inconsistent with varying levels of language proficiency among students and teachers and differing availability of language courses across universities. Although the National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes

multilingualism and encourages the teaching of regional languages, more work needs to be done to make language education in India accessible and of high-quality.

India's focus on promoting Indian languages and culture after independence declined in the teaching of foreign languages, but recent years have seen an increased recognition of the importance of multilingualism and learning foreign languages, especially for trade and diplomacy. Today, foreign language education in India is offered in a range of institutions, from primary schools to universities and covers a variety of languages, including French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, among others. Despite the challenges of developing language education in a multilingual and diverse country like India, there are efforts underway to improve language education and promote a more inclusive and globally connected India.

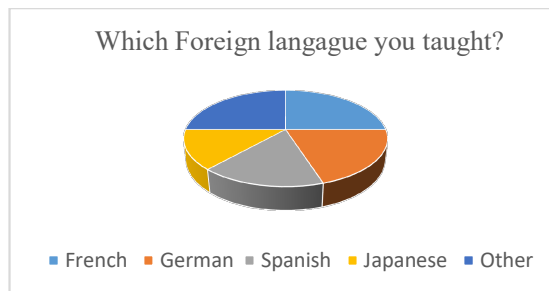
Research Methodology

A discussion was conducted among 100 Foreign Languages Faculties from various Indian University with the help of a short survey to determine the current status and future prospects of foreign languages in Indian universities. Special attention was given to the discussion of Japanese and French languages through specific questions.

Result and Discussion

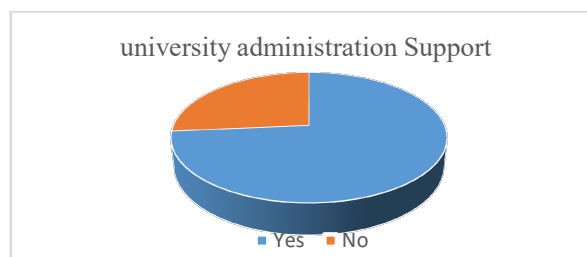
Survey Result of Close ended Questions

1. What foreign language you taught in your university?



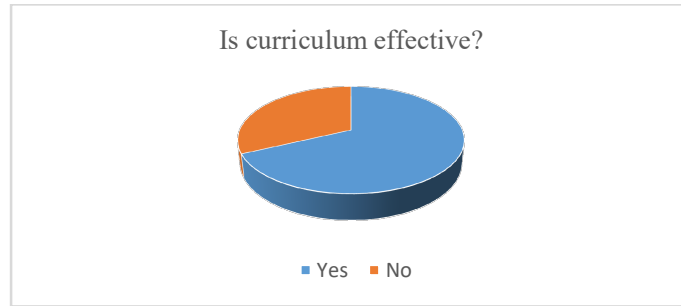
The foreign languages taught in the university are French, German, and Spanish, and Japanese, and others, with 30%, 24%, 20%, 16%, and 30% of teachers respectively.

2. Do you believe that foreign language education is important for Indian students?



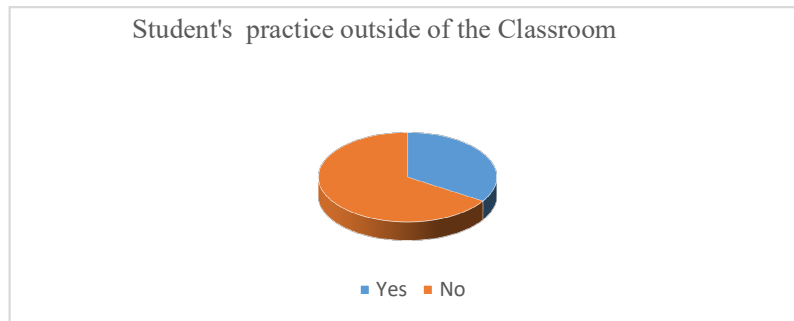
The 78% of the foreign faculty agree that foreign language teaching is important, while the remaining percentage hold the opposite view.

3. Do you believe that the current curriculum for foreign languages courses is effective?



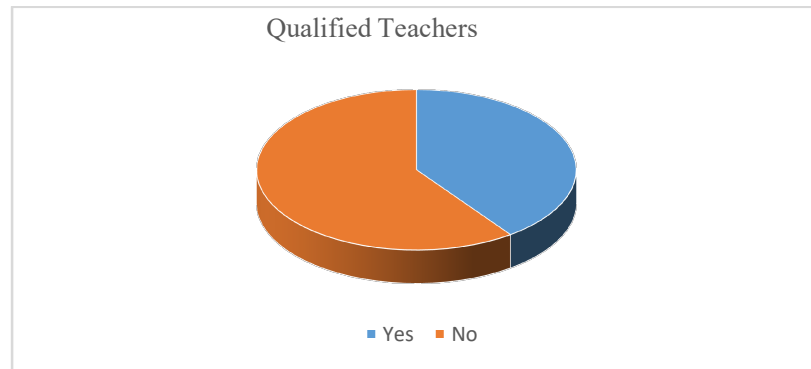
The majority (68%) of the foreign faculty members believe that the current curriculum for foreign language courses is effective, whereas the remaining percentage holds the opposite view.

4. Do you think that there are enough opportunities for students to practice and use their foreign language skills outside of the classroom?



According to a survey, a significant portion (66%) of foreign faculty members holds the belief that students do not have opportunities to practice and apply their foreign language skills beyond the classroom. Conversely, the remaining percentage holds an opposing view.

5. Do you feel that there are enough trained and qualified teachers for teaching Foreign Language in Indian universities?



Based on a survey, a considerable proportion (60%) of foreign faculty members believe that there is a shortage of trained and qualified teachers for teaching foreign languages in Indian universities. On the other hand, the remaining percentage holds a contrasting viewpoint.

Discussion on Open-ended Questions

Comparison of Language Learning in Indian Universities and Abroad

Discussion: Both Indian universities and foreign institutions have strengths and weaknesses in language learning. Indian universities excel in emphasizing multilingualism and have a strong understanding of the cultural and social context of languages which can be advantageous for learners. However, Indian universities often face a shortage of resources, such as well-trained teachers, modern teaching methods and up-to-date learning materials, which can hinder the level of proficiency among learners and limit available courses.

In contrast, foreign institutions typically have a more advanced infrastructure with modern teaching methods, technology and a wider range of resources that can lead to higher levels of proficiency and greater course specializations. Foreign institutions may lack the cultural and social context that is essential to understand the nuances and subtleties of languages and may not offer courses in the specific dialects or regional variations that are relevant to Indian learners.

Analysis of the popularity of Japanese and French language learning in India

Discussion: Japanese and French have become two of the most popular foreign languages for learners in India in recent years, driven by a range of economic and cultural factors. The strong economic ties between India and Japan have led to a growing demand for professionals who can speak Japanese and navigate the cultural nuances of doing business in Japan. At the same time, the popularity of Japanese popular culture, including anime and manga, has helped to generate interest in the language among Indian learners. French is also popular due to its status as an official language in many countries, making it important for trade and diplomacy. Additionally, French culture has a strong influence in India, particularly in the fields of fashion, cuisine and the arts.

The availability of language courses and programs in India has contributed to the popularity of Japanese and French with many universities and private institutions now offering courses in these languages, as well as opportunities for students to study abroad in Japan or France. However, challenges still exist in language learning in India including lack of resources such as well-trained teachers, modern teaching methods and up-to-date learning materials. Furthermore, the emphasis on English as a second language can hinder learners' ability to practice and improve their skills in other languages.

Despite these challenges, the growing popularity of Japanese and French language learning in India reflects the country's increasing global connections and the recognition of the importance of multilingualism in a rapidly changing world. However, more support and investment are needed to further the development of language education in India and overcome the existing barriers to language learning.

Cultural and economic factors contributing to the popularity of Japanese and French language learning in India

Discussion: The popularity of Japanese and French language learning in India has cultural and economic roots. Understanding these factors is crucial to gaining insight into why these languages have become so popular in India. The cultural influence of Japan and France in India has contributed to the popularity of their languages. Japanese pop culture and French cuisine, fashion and architecture have generated interest in learning these languages. French is also an important language for trade and diplomacy as it is an official language in many countries around the world. The growing economic ties between India, Japan and France have played a significant role in the popularity of these languages as well. Japanese companies have invested heavily in India and French businesses have significant investments in key sectors. However, there are significant challenges that must be addressed, such as lack of resources, including trained teachers and modern teaching methods. Additionally, the emphasis on English as a second language in India can make it difficult for learners to find opportunities to practice and improve their language skills. To ensure that Indian learners have access to high-quality language resources and opportunities, these challenges must be addressed. By doing so, India can continue to strengthen its cultural and economic ties with Japan and France and prepare its citizens for success in the global economy.

Teaching methodologies and pedagogy for foreign Languages instruction in Indian universities

Discussion: Foreign language instruction in Indian universities has undergone significant changes in recent years, with traditional teaching methods giving way to more communicative approaches that focus on real-world language use. Task-based, project-based, and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) are now commonly used to engage students in authentic language use and integrate language learning with other areas of study. Technology is also playing an increasingly important role, with digital resources enhancing language learning experiences. These developments are creating more engaging and effective language learning experiences for students in India, as pedagogy and teaching methodologies continue to evolve in response to changing theories and advancements in technology.

The role of technology in foreign language learning in Indian universities

Discussion: The integration of digital resources and tools has played a significant role in foreign language learning in Indian universities, providing learners with access to authentic language resources and facilitating communication and collaboration. However, there are also concerns about technology's potential to be a distraction that may undermine the importance of human interaction and exacerbate existing disparities in access to language learning resources. Therefore, language instructors should carefully consider the potential benefits and drawbacks of technology in language learning and strive to strike a balance between the use of technology and traditional teaching methods to ensure that it supports rather than hinders language learning outcomes.

Challenges faced by Indian students in learning foreign languages, with especial focus on Japanese and French

Discussion: Indian students learning foreign languages, such as Japanese and French, face a range of challenges that are both unique to India's educational system and cultural context and some are experienced by language learners worldwide. The primary challenge for Indian students is the limited exposure to the target language outside of the classroom due to the widespread use of English in India. Additionally, there is a shortage of qualified language instructors and teaching resources in many Indian universities and cultural differences and language-specific linguistic difficulties can also pose challenges. However, Indian students can overcome these challenges by using various language learning strategies and resources, including immersive experiences, digital resources and multimedia platforms to achieve success in their language learning endeavors.

The employment prospects for Indian students proficient in Japanese and French language

Discussion: Indian students who possess fluency in Japanese and French can expect to have promising job prospects in both domestic and international markets. They can work as translators and interpreters catering to the high demand for these services. Many multinational corporations in India require employees who can communicate in these languages to conduct business with counterparts in Japan or France. Proficiency in Japanese and French can also lead to opportunities in tourism, hospitality, education and government agencies that have business or diplomatic relations with Japan or France. As the demand for proficiency in these languages is likely to increase in the future, Indian students investing in developing their language skills can secure a prosperous future.

Future prospects and recommendations for foreign language education in Indian universities with a focus on Japanese and French

Foreign language education in Indian universities has made significant progress, but there is still much to be done to improve proficiency especially in languages like Japanese and French. The future prospects for these languages are promising as proficiency in them will provide students with a competitive advantage in the job market and the tourism industry. To improve foreign language education in Indian universities, several recommendations can be implemented including increasing the

number of qualified language instructors, improving teaching materials and resources, offering study abroad and language exchange programs, fostering collaboration with universities in Japan and France and emphasizing practical language skills in professional settings.

To address the shortage of qualified language instructors, Indian universities should invest in recruiting more qualified instructors, especially native speakers of Japanese and French to provide students with authentic language instruction and cultural insights. Investing in the development of high-quality language teaching materials and resources such as textbooks, multimedia materials, language learning apps and online courses can enhance students' language learning experience. Offering study abroad and language exchange programs will enable students to immerse themselves in the target language and culture and gain practical experience using the language in real-world settings. Indian universities should also foster collaboration with universities in Japan and France to provide students with access to a wider range of language learning opportunities and resources. Finally, placing greater emphasis on the practical application of language skills in professional settings such as offering internships and job placement services, can prepare students to succeed in a globalized world. By implementing these recommendations, Indian universities can provide students with the language skills and cultural insights they need to succeed in the future.

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