

Research Article

Conceptualizing Language Ideologies about Education: Exploring Perceptions of Multilingualism among Marathi Speakers from India

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Perceptions of multilingualism have an impact on the educational choices of urban Indians and larger policy decisions around language in education in the Indian state of Maharashtra. By surveying 150 speakers of Marathi, the official language of the state and mother tongue, or first language of survey respondents, perceptions of multilingualism reveal conceptual assumptions and biases that can be uncovered through cognitive-linguistic analysis. Unprompted, survey respondents drew connections between multilingualism and education, underscoring language ideologies, or beliefs about languages which motivate urban Maharashtrians' educational decisions. Education is the stage upon which multilingual speakers in India express their aspirations

and anxieties about connections between language, identity, and community. Through an analysis of the conceptual metaphors about language, we explore the conceptual frameworks associated with and assigned to language that shape positive or negative attitudes towards urban multilingualism. Overall, we see how conceptual metaphors of utility, inevitability and success describe multilingualism as the basis of the increasing demand to learn English, whereas Marathi as a mother tongue language is associated with a person, purity, and moral superiority. By connecting respondents' conceptual metaphors to their thoughts on multilingualism, we can identify the frameworks shaping their ideologies and actions.

Keywords: conceptual metaphors; language ideologies; language in education; mother tongue; multilingualism

1. INTRODUCTION

For middle-class urban residents in India, multilingualism is a fact of everyday life. Expectations of and about multilingualism frame the decisions families and learners make about education, and shape the multilingual pedagogical practices displayed in classrooms (Bakshi, 2022; Khubchandani, 2003; Mohanty, 2019). In this study, we examine the attitudes of adult multilingual speakers towards multilingualism in India, with special reference to urban Maharashtra, a state in western India. We explore conceptual metaphors about multilingualism (Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) as a means to understand a foundation for language ideologies, or beliefs about language which motivate behavior, which in turn shape educational decisions (Vivanco, 2018; Woolard, 1998). If we connect the specific conceptual metaphors observed in the

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responses to the overall thoughts expressed about multilingualism, we see the underlying conceptual mappings that frame their ideologies and actions (Bhattacharya, 2017; Geeraerts et al., 2010; Kövecses, 2005).

Maharashtra is the second largest state in India and Marathi is the official language of the state. A standardized variety of Marathi is used in education and governance, written using the Devanagari script. There are several dialects of Marathi spoken across thirty-six districts of Maharashtra, and the Survey of Dialects of Marathi Language or SDML (2017) documents great regional variation in Marathi across the state. The state of Maharashtra has also sustained years of geographical and sociopolitical contact with languages like Persian, Gujarati, Telugu, Kannada, and English. As a result, Marathi shares morphology and features with these languages (Nemade, 1990; Pandharipande, 1997). This combination of language contact and variation coupled with large-scale internal immigration across Indian states leads to linguistically diverse populations represented in urban Indian education. Multilingual interactions are a daily and mundane fact of urban Maharashtrian life, with Hindi as another commonly used language in daily interactions.

As a result, the language of instruction in school plays a key role in children's language socialization and eventually, family languaging. English language in education has steadily spread as a desired language for students to learn in school, especially for urban middle-class families, since the early 2000s (Annamalai, 2001; LaDousa, 2014; Mathew, 2018). When English was once introduced into government or public-school curriculum in the fifth grade, state language policy has shifted in recent years to implement English language courses and English immersion schools from the pre-primary school levels. This is due to the belief that English fluency ushers in greater opportunities for educational and occupational success later in life, and that learning English as early as possible leverages greater chances at success (Annamalai, 2013, 2004; Mathew, 2018).

The preference for early exposure to English has had unintended side effects of creating a learning disadvantage for students from low socioeconomic and marginalized caste backgrounds (Mohanty, 2019). While the reality is that teachers do still use languages other than English for instruction and discipline, such moments are often not recognized as formal pedagogy and looked down upon as a necessity due to the failure of English (Anderson, 2022; Anderson & Lightfoot, 2018; Chandras, 2024). Regardless, it is not uncommon to find middle-class urban families seeking out an education entirely in English for their children, significantly altering a multilingual landscape where English becomes a language of school, and later, of professions with high social status, while Marathi is relegated to a home language as a mother tongue, which is defined as both one's primary language spoken at home and an important social construct for community identification in India.

With this backdrop, this article explores the results of an open-ended survey inviting urban Marathi speakers' thoughts on language and multilingualism conducted following the Marathi Language Pride Day, celebrated annually on February 27. This day was

originally introduced by the Government of Maharashtra in 2013 in an effort to promote the use of Marathi, the official state language not only in education but in broader society as well (Pallavi, 2024). In urban areas of the state, a proliferation of English, especially English medium education, induces anxiety over a shift away from Marathi and towards English in educational and occupational spaces, while at the same time it is recognized that English is a language of power and success (Annamalai, 2013; Bhattacharya & Jiang, 2018, 2022; Kachru, 1983; Vaish, 2008). The anxiety, rather than the shift, signals a significant connection between Marathi language and identity for Marathi mother tongue speakers in the region.

The main aim of the study is to examine the respondents' unconscious use of language using a cognitive-linguistic lens to uncover their underlying beliefs about multilingualism, which inform decisions made about language in education. Multilingualism is inextricably linked to education in the lives of urban Maharashtrians, as evidenced by a significant amount of survey responses referencing education without any mention of education in survey prompts. Conceptual metaphors help us to see an implicit order, hierarchy, and domain of languages (Kövecses, 2010) with varying ideological connections to identity. This study therefore contributes to further understanding the motivating power of language ideologies by teasing out underlying conceptual mappings used to make sense of abstract ideas which motivate behavior and structure orientations to different languages and their use in daily life.

Language ideologies can be built into discourse at even the semantic level, and conceptual metaphors illuminate these conceptual blind spots (Grady, 1997; Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). To explore these connections, we first discuss how conceptual metaphors relate to language ideologies to motivate decisions and attitudes about language in education. We then explain how mother tongues provide a powerful ideological vehicle through which to understand implicit distinctions between conceptual metaphors for language. The following section delves into specific examples of the conceptual metaphors used by urban multilingual Marathi speakers in the survey responses. Finally, the concluding discussion summarizes the significance of implicit distinctions between conceptual metaphors about multilingualism and Marathi to understand a shifting linguistic landscape in education in urban Maharashtra.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Conceptualizing Language and Language Ideologies

Conceptual metaphor is the use of systematic mappings to understand an abstract concept using a concrete physical and sensorimotor source domain of experience (Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For instance, statements like 'We have come a long way,' or 'His life took a wrong turn' illustrate the LIFE is a JOURNEY metaphor, represented in cognitive linguistic convention using small capital letters (Kövecses,

2010). Here, the complex source domain of JOURNEY is used to understand and conceptualize the abstract target domain of LIFE.

The interpretation of conceptual metaphors has been found to be deeply influenced by the physical, social, and cultural context in which they occur (Kövecses, 2008). Metaphorical source domains operate at an unconscious level, making them powerful tools that can reveal biases that may not be readily apparent in explicit language, behavior, or conscious thought. They therefore become a lens to understand the cultural and social contexts underlying their usage. Conceptual metaphors have often been used to analyze politics (Charteris-Black, 2011; Otieno et al., 2016; Pilyarchuk et al., 2018) and war (Lacković, 2021; Nytspol & Kobuta, 2022).

Studies of Indian languages also use conceptual metaphor analysis to explain how speakers' culturally imbued contexts reflect in the language they use to articulate abstract concepts (Ahmed et al., 2020; Mishra, 2021, 2023; Sharma, 2017; Shinohara & Pardeshi, 2011). For instance, Mishra (2023) analyzes the representation of the color 'black,' which often occurs in conceptual metaphors of adversity, but is conceptualized as PROTECTION in Hindi, signaling that certain deeply-rooted Hindu religious and cultural identity associations may influence the semantic workings of this metaphor in Hindi.

Language, as a concept, is made up of both abstract and concrete domains. On the one hand, language has visible, physical elements, such as our speech organs, hand gestures, and written texts. At the same time, it is an abstract mental system or even a social construct. Consequently, there are several conceptual mappings for language. Language families represent one such metaphor that conceptualizes LANGUAGE RELATIONS as a BIOLOGICAL FAMILY. An ancient or proto-language is framed as an 'ancestor,' languages with similar features are 'sisters,' and an evolved form of a language is considered the 'daughter' of an older 'parent' language (Seargeant, 2009). Language is also seen as an object that someone owns, described as the LANGUAGE is a POSSESSION metaphor which underlies specific framings such as a language 'borrowing' or 'loanwords', 'linguistic capital', and 'acquisition' (Seargeant, 2009).

The LANGUAGE is a TOOL metaphor is also common, with language considered a physical tool that impacts our perception, a cognitive tool structuring our thought processes and a social tool that underpins our interactions within a community (Borghi, 2020). In the same vein, Ruíz (1984) also suggests various orientations of language within the social context, such as the mapping of LANGUAGE as a RIGHT or as a RESOURCE. Graedler (2014) also discusses language conceptualizations in a sociopolitical context, using corpus-analysis to examine the negative attitudes towards English in Norwegian newspapers that are discursively constructed through the metaphor of LANGUAGE as an INVADING FORCE.

Some conceptual metaphors are embedded in the syntax of the language, such as the LANGUAGE IS A CONDUIT metaphor outlined by Reddy (1979), wherein all of

language is conceptualized as a container of our thoughts, expressions, and structures. This is evidenced in many English phrases, such as ‘in English,’ ‘medium of expression,’ ‘transmit ideas.’ The conduit metaphor also exists in Marathi. Similarly, Sweetser (1992) writes about LINGUISTIC EXPRESSION as a JOURNEY. This metaphor underlies phrases like ‘get a point across’ or ‘reach a conclusion.’

Marathi has its unique cases of conceptual metaphor instantiation. Nouns in Marathi have a grammatical gender and ‘भाषा’ that is ‘*bhāṣā*’ or ‘language’ is a feminine noun, taking the pronouns ‘she’ and ‘her,’ with the adjectives and verbs carrying the corresponding grammatical gender markers. Grammatical gender may influence perceptions about words (Mishra, 2020; Sera et al., 2002) and so, it may contribute to the conceptual representation of LANGUAGE as a PERSON that occurs in Marathi. Therefore, while conceptual metaphors are often universal, their individual conceptual framing may be language-specific, influenced by and indicative of the particular contexts present in that language and speech community.

Language ideologies, therefore, move the attitudes and connotations implicit to conceptual metaphors into action. Where language can be a tool, right, or resource, language ideologies about English and Marathi among urban middle-class Maharashtrians motivate specific decisions, pedagogies, and policy about languages in education, specifically Marathi as a mother tongue and regional official language, and English a language of global power and success. Language ideologies attribute meaning to languages which reveal motivating behavioral organization in society as a “mediating link between social forms and forms of talk” to connect identities to speakers (Woolard, 1998, p. 3). Language ideologies also represent shared beliefs about language within a linguistic community while also reflecting politically charged, purposeful, and directed ways of using language (Blommaert, 1999; Gal & Irvine, 2019).

In regions such as urban Maharashtra, where multilingualism is commonly utilized and expected, ideologies about language index various aspects of identities (Schieffelin et al, 1998; Woolard, 1998) and language ideologies play a role in the indexical process (Blommaert, 1999; Lee & Su, 2019). In this study, we explore the ways that language ideologies that emerge through discourse are founded on conceptual metaphors and relate to multilingual classrooms where they are not only reproduced and perpetuated, but also shape avenues for academic success. Language ideologies provide a framework for understanding how Maharashtrians navigate and make decisions about language use in their daily lives, and how those decisions extend through their conceptions of identity (Chandras, 2023).

2.2 Conceptions of Mother Tongue

The term ‘mother tongue’ is used freely in India. Mother tongues are powerful and ideologically driven social constructs which organize linguistic communities in India.

They also often refer to the language one speaks at home ‘without formal training’ as a first or primary language (Pattanayak, 1981, p. 50). Mother tongue identification is also used as an organizing socio-political demarcation in social, educational, and bureaucratic practices (Bhattacharya & Jiang, 2018, 2022; Chandras, 2024). In addition to being a language of comfort, mother tongues are an umbrella term for official state languages, like Marathi in Maharashtra (LaDousa, Davis, & Choksi, 2022; LaDousa, 2010, 2014). It is therefore important to note that mother tongues by which linguistic communities closely identify are commensurate with the educational and bureaucratic languages of the states where these languages are regional official languages as well.

India witnessed a heightening of politicizing mother tongues and mobilizing linguistic communities for political gain in the mid-20th century (Mitchell, 2009). Mother tongues serve not only as indicators of kin connections or household communication but also as instruments in broader nation-state construction efforts driven by linguistic nationalism (Bonfiglio, 2010). In the Indian context, mother tongues demarcate communities by not only distinct lived experiences but also categories of identification within the broader nation (Mitchell, 2009). Linguistic theorist, Thomas Paul Bonfiglio (2010) explains how the categorization of individuals as 'native speakers' based on their mother tongues stems from concerns regarding national or regional identity. Historical anthropologist, Lisa Mitchell (2009) explores the initiation of state formation in India six years after the subcontinent’s independence from the British. This process began in 1953 with linguistic reorganization, through the prolonged struggle of the south Indian state of Andhra Pradesh with a majority of Telugu mother tongue speakers to separate from Madras State with a Tamil mother tongue speaking majority. Throughout this struggle, the concept of mother tongues became further entrenched with a gendered idea of personhood, not only as a woman, but as a nurturing mother who cares for and protects her kin. Mother tongues influence categorization, organization, and definition of communities adhering to ethnopolitical and ethnolinguistic boundaries such as Indian regions and states.

When considering language and language ideologies in educational spaces in many cases, “the mother tongue gains its institutional recognition through its juxtaposition with English,” as mother tongues operate as identity markers (LaDousa, 2010, p. 613). It is no surprise that implicit connections to mother tongues emerge in mental frameworks, explored here through conceptual metaphors, when such a concept is closely tied to identity. Conceptual metaphors illuminate ways that speakers implicitly attach value to languages which symbolize and are associated with various aspects of identities and motivate daily practices.

2.3 Marathi Language in Education

There are primarily three types of schools in urban Maharashtra based on the language of instruction. Some schools have English as the primary medium of instruction, while

others have an Indian language as the medium of instruction (primarily Marathi, followed by Urdu, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada). The vast majority of schools across Maharashtra, especially ones which are funded by the government, use Marathi as the medium of instruction. However, Marathi-medium schools have steadily lost popularity with a rise in English education, especially in urban areas (Singh, 2018; Sharma, 2023). In response to the popularity of English as the medium of instruction and its prominence in higher education, Maharashtra has introduced a type of curriculum labeled ‘semi-English medium’ schools, where starting from middle school, subjects like Science and Mathematics are taught in English with other subjects taught in Marathi (Sardana, 2020). This effort to promote the use of the regional language mirrors efforts made in other states of India, where the use of English in education has led to growing anxieties around the loss of the state language, which is considered to be a mother tongue closely associated with the Maharashtrian identity.

Here we explore implicit attitudes towards Marathi reflected in decisions made about the language medium of education of Marathi language speakers in urban India. Implicit attitudes about language and multilingualism are analyzed through survey respondents’ use of conceptual metaphors. We consider LANGUAGE as the abstract target domain that represents communication as a whole. These attitudes form the basis of language ideologies about multilingualism, mother tongues, and the values of languages for success. For middle-class Maharashtrians, these attitudes and ideologies circulate in popular discourse and motivate decisions about children’s education and notions of future success aided by language.

In the following sections, we outline the method for surveying how attitudes and orientations towards multilingualism, in daily life and education, are underlined by implicit conceptual associations. We explain the use of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to understand overt views of multilingualism and the Metaphor Identification Procedure (The Pragglejaz Group, 2007) to identify the different source domains that Marathi speakers use to structure the concept of LANGUAGE as a foundation for language ideologies which undergird decisions about the medium of instruction in education. In the findings, we first discuss the overall overt statements about multilingualism rendering mixed attitudes towards multilingualism revealed in the responses. Following the exploration of the foundation of language ideologies of utility and inevitability around multilingualism, we evaluate the conceptual metaphors that contribute to and ground these overt linguistic ideological distinctions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Survey

We selected a text-based survey format to understand respondents’ beliefs about language and multilingualism (Schleef, 2013) by focusing our study on the conceptual

metaphors expressed in the written modality, and not on non-verbal metaphors found in spoken discourse (Cienki & Müller, 2008). A text-based survey also allowed for a uniform distribution to a large survey population. The anonymous survey was designed on Google Forms and initially posted on LinkedIn, a professional networking platform, leveraging the first author's professional connections who shared it further through their own social media networks to reach a broad volunteer audience added through referrals. The survey was circulated in March 2023, following the Marathi Language Pride Day, a day of heightened attention to pride and identity for the Marathi mother tongue.

We provided the questions in both Marathi in the Devanagari script and English in the Roman script. We gave respondents the following prompts to elicit a single text response without a character limit:

भाषेविषयीचे तुमचे विचार मांडा. मदतीसाठी खाली काही मुद्दे दिले आहेत. / Please share your thoughts on the topic of 'Language.' Some points below to help you.

- आपण २७ फेब्रुवारी हा 'मराठी भाषा गौरव दिन' म्हणून साजरा करतो. यावर तुमचे काय विचार आहेत? / We celebrate 27th February as 'Marathi Language Pride Day.' What are your thoughts on this?

- 'भाषा', 'मातृभाषा' आणि 'बहुभाषिकता' या संकल्पनांवर तुमचे काय मत आहे? / What do you think about the concepts of 'language,' 'mother tongue' and 'multilingualism'?

- भाषेमधल्या कोणत्या गोष्टी तुम्हाला रंजक, आशादायक, उत्साहजनक, किंवा विचित्र वगैरे वाटतात? / What are some things in language that you find interesting, hopeful, exciting, strange?

Respondents were asked to type their response in English or Marathi using the Devanagari or the Roman script, the latter for ease of typing. The survey also consisted of a set of multiple-choice questions translated from the Bilingual Language Profile or BLP (Birdsong et al., 2012).

3.2 Participants

150 adult multilingual Marathi speakers responded to the survey that was posted across social media platforms. All respondents were living in urban areas at the time, both in and outside the state of Maharashtra. The survey was anonymized, and respondents did not disclose their gender. Table 1 shows the age distribution of respondents.

Table 1. Age distribution of survey respondents

Age (in years)	18-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80
Respondents	1	14	21	19	41	50	4

With over 60% of our respondents being over the age of 50, many of these respondents are likely to have completed their school education through Marathi-medium schools. Based on responses to the Bilingual Language Profile (Birdsong et al., 2012), we determined that all respondents used multiple languages in their daily lives, in various contexts, with family, friends, and at school or work. All respondents also reported to have first learnt Marathi at home, before the age of 3, prior to attending any formal schooling.

From the total responses collected, 8 blank or irrelevant responses were discarded. 12 responses were written in only English in the Roman script or a combination of English with some Marathi in the Roman script. The remaining 130 respondents made the choice to respond to the survey in Marathi, evidencing a cognitive attachment to the language and preference for communication about language in that language. To ensure methodological consistency and account for the language-specific realizations of conceptual metaphors from Marathi, we have only considered the Marathi responses for this analysis, either in the Roman script (9 respondents) or Devanagari (121 respondents).

3.3 Data Annotation

The data was annotated in two ways to understand the overt and implicit attitudes towards multilingualism and language. First, we used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to gauge the respondents' opinions on multilingualism where the themes used to analyze the data were ones which emerged from responses. Then, we used the Metaphor Identification Procedure (The Pragglejaz Group, 2007) to identify the underlying conceptual mappings structuring the responses.

3.4 Thematic Coding

Following an inductive coding approach for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), we first familiarized ourselves with all the responses. Then, we coded 20 responses, such that each individual response was independently coded with descriptive labels. These initial codes were applied to the remaining responses and any new codes were reviewed, with modifications made where needed.

We then grouped together related codes into broader categories to form primary themes that were reviewed in the context of the responses to ensure that they accurately reflected respondents' viewpoints towards multilingualism. We iteratively identified three primary themes: (1) multilingualism is desirable, (2) multilingualism is inevitable, and (3) multilingualism is necessary. Table 2 demonstrates the samples that most exemplify the primary themes that emerged from the open coding process.

Table 2. Primary themes and exemplar responses

Primary Theme	Code	Response
multilingualism is desirable	enables literary and artistic engagement	जास्ती भाषा समजल्यास जास्त साहित्यकृतिंचा आनंद घेता येतो jāstī bhāṣā samajalyāsa jāsta sāhityakṛtiṃcā ānaṃda ghetā yeto 'if you understand more languages, you can enjoy more literary works'
multilingualism is inevitable	enforced in educational policy	सध्या तरी सर्व उच्च शिक्षण इंग्रजीत आहे आणि ती सर्वांना येण अनिवार्य झाल आहे sadyā tarī sarva ucca śikṣaṇa iṅgrajīta āhe āṇi tī sarvāṃnā yeṇa anivārya jhāla āhe 'for now, all higher education is in English, and it has become inevitable for everyone to know it'
multilingualism is necessary	facilitates global communication	जग जवळ येते आहे त्यामुळे संवाद साधण्यासाठी अनेक भाषा बोलता येण्याची गरज आहे sadyā tarī sarva ucca śikṣaṇa iṅgrajīta āhe āṇi tī sarvāṃnā yeṇa anivārya jhāla āhe 'as the world comes closer, it is necessary to know multiple languages for better communication'

The aim of this first level of analysis was to understand the overt views expressed by the respondents on the role of multilingualism in their lives. A second level of annotation was used to uncover the underlying conceptual frameworks.

3.5 Metaphor Identification Procedure

Two independent annotators who were speakers of Marathi and English, and identified Marathi as their first language, used the Metaphor Identification Procedure or MIP (The Pragglejaz Group, 2007) to manually code the responses to identify metaphorical mappings related to language. First, they identified the strings that contained items related to language, such as the stem 'भाषा' or 'bhāṣā' meaning 'language,' or the names of languages, like 'इंग्रजी' or 'iṅgrajī' meaning English. They then considered the contextual meaning of the lexical string, followed by its original meaning. This original

or literal meaning is typically physical, sensorimotor, concrete, or historically older. Then, the annotators compared the original and the contextual meanings to identify whether the usage was metaphorical, i.e., if the contextual meaning was different from the original meaning. If the lexical string was coded as metaphorical, the original meaning was used to mark the source domain of the metaphor. Any metaphors introduced in the prompt were not coded. Table 3 demonstrates MIP coding for two responses.

Table 3. Sample coding using the metaphor identification procedure

Lexical String	Contextual Meaning	Original Meaning	Metaphor
मराठी शी नाळेचं नातं marāṭhī śī nālecaṃ nātaṃ 'an umbilical cord- relation with Marathi'	Marathi is important or close to us	The umbilical cord physically connects us to our mother	Yes; we're connected to Marathi as if she's our mother Source domain: MOTHER
भाषेवर चांगली पकड bhāṣevara cāṅgalī pakaḍa 'a good grip on the language'	good fluency in the language	To grip is to clutch or hold an object firmly in one's hands	Yes; to hold language like an object Source domain: OBJECT

Newspaper articles on the 'Marathi Language Pride Day' were used as initial training data and annotators referred to a digital dictionary for Indian official languages (Khandbahale, n.d.) to resolve meaning ambiguities. There was a robust inter-rater reliability of 87.7% and all inconsistencies were resolved through discussion after the annotation of every 20 responses and once at the end of the annotation process. 602 lexical strings were marked as metaphorical with 32 independent source domains.

4. RESULTS

The aim of this study was to uncover the motivating beliefs about multilingualism through conceptual metaphors displayed by adult multilingual speakers in urban Maharashtra in the survey responses. These conceptual metaphors about multilingualism and the Marathi mother tongue underscore language ideologies that frame decisions about the medium of language in education and attitudes towards the

languages in education when considered for future success. Overall, thematic analysis revealed that the respondents seem convinced of the need for multilingualism in education and society, accepting it either graciously or reluctantly. Connections to Marathi as a mother tongue rendered attitudes that Marathi is both a language with heartfelt connections to an authentic Maharashtrian identity, while also a porous and vulnerable language threatened by a growing need for multilingualism. The underlying assumptions for this impression were revealed through an analysis of the conceptual metaphors in the responses and the varying conceptual associations of Marathi and English as a PERSON, RESOURCE, POSSESSION.

We have presented the metaphorical units from Marathi responses in the original language using the Devanagari script along with its transliteration in italics using the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) script as well as an English translation below it. Following the style commonly seen in cognitive linguistics, we have used small capital letters to represent the conceptual metaphors.

4.1 Positive and Negative Impressions on the Prevalence of Multilingualism

Overall, the responses recognize multilingualism as an integral part of today's society. Though many of our respondents speak Marathi, English, and Hindi, Hindi is not seen as a big part of their social lives, something that shines through in the responses that frame multilingualism as a Marathi vs. English dichotomy with the exclusion of Hindi, which is the second prevalent spoken language in this region after Marathi (Census of India, 2011). The impressions can be categorized into three broad themes—multilingualism is desirable, multilingualism is inevitable, and multilingualism is necessary, which are discussed below.

4.1.1 Multilingualism is Desirable

Only 7 respondents outline the desirability of multilingualism, with 5 respondents pointing out that it is interesting to learn languages to discover different cultures.

(a) बहुभाषिक असणं हे उपयुक्त आणि आनंददायी आहे

bahubhāṣika asaṇam hē upayukta āṇi ānaṁdadāyī āhē

'being multilingual is useful and enjoyable'

(b) भाषा तुमच्या जीवनात वेगवेगळ्या संस्कृती आणि विचारांची ओळख करून देतात

bhāṣā tumacyā jīvanāta vēgavēgalyā saṁskṛtī āṇi vicārāṁcī ōlakha karūna dētāta

'languages introduce different cultures and ideas into your life'

Interestingly, 2 responses describe multilingualism as a sign of Indianness, with one respondent calling it ‘a great gift bestowed on us as Indians.’

4.1.2 Multilingualism is Inevitable

Several respondents (61 instances) express that multilingualism is inevitable. However, only one respondent points to language contact as the reason for multilingualism in Maharashtra, highlighting that Marathi has incorporated loanwords from other languages.

- (a) आपण बोलताना बरेच इतर भाषांमधील शब्द वापरतो, इंग्रजी असो किंवा फारसी, पोर्तुगीस, त्यामुळे आपण सगळेच बहुभाषिक आहोत
āpaṇa bolatānā bareca itara bhāṣāṃmadhīla śabda vāparato, iṅgrajī aso kiṃvā phārasī, tyāmuḷe āpaṇa sagaḷeca bahubhāṣika āhota
‘we use many words from different other languages when we speak, be it English, Persian, or Portuguese, so we are all multilingual’

The discourse on urban multilingualism appears to be inextricably linked with education, as 42 respondents emphasize the role of English in introducing multilingualism in their lives, even though the survey prompts did not directly address the topics of English or education. They attribute the prevalence of multilingualism in urban society to the increasing adoption of English at the school-level and the younger members of their family pursuing an education with English as the medium of instruction.

- (b) मुलं इंग्रजी माध्यमात शिकत असल्यामुळे बहुभाषिकता अनिर्वाय ठरते
mulam iṅgrajī mādhyaṃātā śikata asalyāmuḷe bahubhāṣikatā anirvāya ṭharatē
‘with kids studying in English-medium, multilingualism becomes inevitable’

Respondents point to the inevitability of this decision, while some seem resentful of the switch to English medium education. This resentment implies that the individual has little control over how and which kind of multilingualism is adopted in society (Song, 2012), highlighting the power that English holds in Indian society.

- (c) आपल्या मुलांना इंग्रजी माध्यमाच्या शाळेत घालतात आणि मराठी बोलण्याची लाज वाटणारे इंग्रजी मध्ये बोलतात
āpalyā mulāṃnā iṅgrajī mādhyaṃācyā śālēta ghālatāta āṇi marāṭhī bōḷaṇyācī lāja vāṭaṇārē iṅgrajī madhyē bōlatāta
‘put their kids in English-medium school and (those) ashamed of speaking in Marathi speak only in English’

Of these, 20 respondents suggest that primary schooling would be better or easier in the mother tongue, even expressing their hope in recent educational policy reforms which recommend ‘mother tongue’ or ‘home language’ instruction until Grade 5, where mother tongue refers to the official language of the state (NEP, 2020).

- (d) कुठल्याही गोष्टीचे आकलन हे मातृभाषेतून अधिक चांगले होऊ शकते
kuṭhalyāhī gōṣṭicē ākalana hē mātr̥bhāṣētūna adhika cāṅgalē hōū śakatē
'it can be better to understand anything through the mother tongue'

Respondents also seem uncertain about the degree of influence of English, with one response stating, for instance, that while their children can speak Marathi, they unfortunately cannot appreciate Marathi literature (having been educated and socialized in English).

4.1.3 Multilingualism is Necessary

A total of 55 respondents have stated that multilingualism is necessary and convenient in today's world, giving many reasons for this. One response written in the Roman script remarks, 'mala bhasha functional vatte' or '*malā bhāṣā functional vāṭate*' meaning 'language seems to be functional to me,' further adding that multilingualism serves a practical, communicative purpose for this respondent. 45 respondents describe English as essential at the workplace and multilingualism as the key to gaining upward social mobility.

- (a) बाजारात या भाषा उपयोगई पडत असत किंवा नोकरीच्या ठिकाणी
bājārāta yā bhāṣā upayōgāi paḍata asata kimvā nōkarīcyā ṭhikāṇī
'these languages were useful in the market or at the workplace'

- (b) तांत्रिक विषया संबंधी असलेल्या शब्दांना पर्यायी मराठी शब्द माहीत नसल्याने त्या ठिकाणी इंग्रजी शब्दांचा वापर करावा लागतो व तेच सोईस्कर पण होते
tāntrika viṣayā sambandhī asalēlyā śabdāmnā paryāyī marāṭhī śabda māhita nasalyānē tyā ṭhikāṇī iṅgrajī śabdāmcāca vāpara karāvā lāgatō va tēca sōiskara paṇa hōtē
'as we don't know any alternate Marathi words for technical words, we need to use the English words there and that is more convenient'

These overt attitudes indicate either a welcome or begrudging acceptance of multilingualism in the respondents' lives, which is recognized as both useful and inevitable. However, the selective usage of certain conceptual metaphors for languages (for instance conceptualizing English as a RESOURCE and Marathi as a PERSON) expose their underlying perceptions (Gentner & Gentner, 1983) of multilingualism and throw light on a kind of cognitive dissonance between the explicit views expressed in the survey and the unconscious assumptions and biases that underscore these opinions. In the following sections, we explain the conceptual metaphors that contribute to the overt expressed attitudes which then influence educational decisions.

4.2 Ontological Conceptual Metaphors and Attitudes about Language

The most commonly occurring concrete domains in the responses are CONTAINMENT, PERSON, POSSESSION, and SUBSTANCE. These domains form ontological metaphors that are so integral to our thinking that we do not notice or question them (Kövecses, 2010; Grady, 1997; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). The most common metaphorical expression in the responses (with 165 coded instances) was the LANGUAGE AS A CONTAINER metaphor which describes language as a container or a medium. This conduit metaphor (Reddy, 1979) is embedded in routine grammatical constructions like ‘मराठीत बोलणे’ or ‘*marāṭhīta bolāṇe*’ meaning ‘to speak in Marathi’ and मराठीतून बोलणे’ or ‘*marāṭhītūna bolāṇe*’ meaning ‘to speak through Marathi.’ Therefore, we have not considered the CONTAINMENT metaphor in our analysis of the implicit attitudes about utility, personification, and purity of language and how they relate to educational decisions. The focus of our analysis is on the next three most commonly occurring concrete domains, i.e., PERSON, POSSESSION, and SUBSTANCE. Our analysis of these metaphors provides an insight into the ideological values prevalent in society and the power structures shaping them.

4.2.1 LANGUAGE IS A PERSON

The grammatical gender of the noun ‘भाषा’ or *bhāṣā* may be one reason that the LANGUAGE IS A PERSON metaphor is a common occurrence in our survey. Following the MIP coding process, we have not coded the grammatical gender markers as conceptual metaphors when they do not have another meaning beyond the original meaning in that context. However, the representation of the LANGUAGE IS A PERSON metaphor goes beyond that. Respondents have frequently assigned human qualities to language as a whole, such as personality traits, emotions, and physical features. Specific languages have also been assigned grace, style, and beauty, described as being noble, beloved, harsh, and superior.

There are 116 instances of personification of language. These metaphorical expressions highlight different aspects of a language, such as its capacity to feel and to act on one’s feelings, its role as an experiencer and receiver of the speaker’s emotions, and its ability to form relationships with its speakers.

One of the common characterizations of the Marathi language is as someone worthy of pride (14 instances) and respect (9 instances). This metaphor is expressed in two ways, as a declaration of one’s own sense of pride as well as an obligation imposed on others to respect Marathi language, framing it as both ‘प्रत्येकाला अभिमान असतो’ or ‘*pratyekālā abhimāna asato*’ meaning ‘everyone feels proud’ and ‘प्रत्येकाला अभिमान असलाच पाहिजे’ or ‘*pratyekālā abhimāna asalāca pāhije*’ meaning ‘everyone must feel proud.’

Some respondents (5 instances) have also expressed the idea that no language should be discriminated against or treated as ‘inferior’ to another. Here, the word ‘language’ could represent not just communication, but the community of users and signals the need to safeguard the identity associated with one’s mother tongue.

The feelings evoked by Marathi are different from other languages. In 3 instances, the respondents refer to English as someone who is ‘influential’ and there is one instance of English having us firmly in its grasp. Hindi has been conceptualized by one respondent as an ‘invader’ with a growing influence on the Marathi-speaking community.

In 18 instances, the mother tongue Marathi is conceptualized as a mother. The frequently used and conventionalized term ‘mother tongue’ has not been annotated as metaphorical. We have only coded the respondents’ use of specific aspects of the mother-child relationship in reference to language.

(c) खोल गर्भित अर्थ असलेली
khōla garbhita artha asalēlī
‘carrying meaning deep in her womb’

(d) मातृभाषा आई आहे
mātrbhāṣā āi āhē
‘the mother tongue is your mom (‘आई’ is the familiar term to address one’s mother)’

(e) नाळेचं नातं असावं इतकी
nālēcāṁ nātāṁ asāvāṁ itakāṁ
‘as if attached (to the language) as if by an umbilical cord’

The respondents’ use of conceptual metaphors also reveals an awareness of the change and evolution of languages and language is represented as a dynamic force that has life and potential.

(f) आधुनिक तंत्रज्ञानाचा वापर करून वैश्विक भाषा होईल एवढी तिची क्षमता नाही
ādhunika taṁtraññānācā vāpara karūna vaiśvika bhāṣā hōila ēvaḍhī ticī kṣamatā nāhī
‘(she) does not have the capacity to use modern technology and become a universal language’

In 8 instances, respondents also express their worry that the Marathi language is dying and highlight the concern that speakers are adopting other languages at the expense of Marathi. This indicates that speakers perceive that there is a language shift from Marathi to other languages (particularly English) that may lead to language loss, and in turn, the complete replacement of Marathi as the language of choice in all sociolinguistic contexts.

(g) भाषा लोप होत चालली आहे
bhāṣā lōpa hōta cālālī āhē
‘language has been dying’

(h) मराठी भाषा जीवंत ठेवण्यासाठी
marāṭhī bhāṣā jīvaṃta ṭhēvaṇyāsāṭhī
'in order to keep Marathi language alive'

Going further, two respondents beseech the language to accept its own evolution.

(i) मराठी भाषेनी बदल स्वीकारायला हवे
marāṭhī bhāṣēni badala svīkārayalā havē
'Marathi language should accept changes'

Marathi has thus been afforded agency, and these pleas to the language could be interpreted as pleas to the community of speakers to safeguard and uphold the rights of Marathi as their mother tongue. Conversely, the only human trait afforded to English, which is primarily seen as a tool, need, and resource, is its ability to exert influence.

This selective personification of the Marathi language suggests that Marathi enjoys a different status than English, which does not invite the same emotional response. Through their attribution of human-like qualities to Marathi and the use of metaphors that denote relationships and connections, respondents express an attachment for the language, as if the language itself embodies the community.

4.2.2 LANGUAGE IS A POSSESSION

The abstract concept of communication and language is often conceptualized as an object, that is, as a material item that can be used, traded, given, shared, or held. And yet, none of the metaphors in our study represent Marathi as a TOOL or RESOURCE, restricting this usage to only English or 'foreign' languages such as French and German. What is more common in our study is the LANGUAGE IS A POSSESSION metaphor, that is, the conceptualization of language as belonging to its speakers or speech community. In this framing, language is not only something that can be held and used, but is an asset that brings forth a sense of proprietorship and the associated feelings of care, guardianship, and power. This ontological metaphor is widely present in English and Marathi and we think of language as not something that we do but something we possess. In the survey, there are 31 instances of language conceptualized as something that belongs to its users.

(a) भाषा ही मनुष्य प्राण्याची खास गोष्ट आहे
bhāṣā hī manuṣya prāṇyācī khāsa gōṣṭa āhē
'language is a special thing that belongs to human beings'

The LANGUAGE IS A POSSESSION metaphor has appeared most prominently (19 instances) in the distinction between a language that is 'आपली' or 'āpalī' meaning 'ours' and 'परकी' or 'parakī' meaning 'theirs.' The 'ours' here refers not to the individual, but the speech community that the respondents position themselves as part of. There is a

consistent sense of ownership evident in the metaphors about Marathi language, unlike English or Hindi. This is particularly interesting as all the respondents are multilingual, indicating that these speech communities are outlined in geographic terms based on where the individual respondents come from, or which mother tongues make up their collective identity.

(b) जी आपलं सर्वस्व असते ती भाषा
jī āpalam sarvasva asatē tī bhāṣā
'the language which is our everything'

(c) ही आपली हक्काची आहे
hī āpalī hakkācī āhē
'(Marathi) is our rightful possession'

(d) मराठी भाषा आपल्यासाठी आहे
marāṭhī bhāṣā āpalyāsāṭhī āhē
'Marathi exists for us'

The languages referred to as 'belonging to others' include standard languages of other Indian states like Telugu and languages of other countries, like French and German. English is also described by some respondents as an example of a foreign language.

This dichotomy of language as 'mine vs theirs' perpetuates the otherization of particular languages or dialects, including English. In fact, one respondent highlights this contrast between Marathi and English by alluding to the presence of both languages in different domains of experience, one natural and the other formal.

(e) मराठी मातीतून येते आणि इंग्लिश बूट-मोजातून येते
marāṭhī māṭitūna yētē āṇi imgliśa būṭa-mōjātūna yētē
'Marathi comes from the soil and English comes from the boots and socks'

The respondent then adds that 'kids cannot touch the soil through their boots and socks.' The reference to 'boots and socks' is particularly interesting, as the shift in clothing from the traditional Indian garb to the British attire was a colonial imposition and described as a 'hybridization' of the Indian identity (Gupta, 2016). This metaphor suggests that English originates in the restricted spaces of formal education, representing it perhaps as a colonial legacy. Such a characterization contradicts the view of English as being sufficiently Indianized (Kachru, 1983) and begs consideration that its widespread presence in our lives is not necessarily indicative of an acceptance.

4.2.3 LANGUAGE IS A SUBSTANCE

There are 33 instances of language represented as a substance. The conceptual metaphors in this category highlight the respondents' perception of how languages

interact in a multilingual mind. In 5 instances, acquisition is represented as ‘absorption’ as if LANGUAGE IS A FLUID SUBSTANCE that seeps into the speaker’s mind and life.

There are 6 instances of Marathi being called ‘flexible,’ a property that is identified as unique to this language. In 4 instances, it refers to the communicative and expressive potential of Marathi and works as evidence of the respondents’ comfort and ease of use with Marathi. In 2 cases, the flexibility of Marathi is also attributed to the way that Marathi has accommodated changes in itself through its coexistence with other languages, particularly English.

This metaphor is similar to the 14 metaphorical expressions that reveal the belief that Marathi language is a pure substance. Switching between English and Marathi, by extension, is a ‘jumble,’ or a sign of ‘contamination.’ While learning English has its place in society, the mixing of languages is deemed unnecessary, implying that it can and should be controlled.

(a) भाषेची शुद्धता राखावी

bhāṣēcī śuddhatā rākhāvī

‘protect the purity of language’

(b) इंग्रजी मिश्रित मराठी ऐकायला विचित्र वाटते

iṅgrājī miśrita marāṭhī aikāyalā vicitra vāṭatē

‘the English-mixed Marathi sounds weird to me’

(c) भेसळयुक्त भाषा किंवा विनाकारण इतर भाषेतले शब्द वापरणे

bhēsālyukta bhāṣā kimvā vinākāraṇa itara bhāṣētalē śabda vāparaṇē

‘contaminated language or needlessly using words from other languages’

Here, the domain of LANGUAGE is conceptualized not only as a SUBSTANCE, but further framed specifically as an INSOLUBLE SUBSTANCE. Any interaction with other languages is either a contamination or a flexible accommodation. The conceptualization of two languages as substances that are insoluble and contaminate each other suggests that respondents think of languages as not only contextually separate but also perhaps as cognitively separate entities that could interfere with one another. Perhaps one way this separation plays out is in the distribution of languages in semi-English schools, where the content of two subjects is delivered in English and the remaining three subjects in Marathi, instead of using both English and Marathi language instruction across subjects (Sardana, 2020).

Just as conceptual metaphors help us understand the abstract world, they make only certain features of an abstract entity salient, sidelining others. Conceptual metaphors can then inadvertently usurp our thinking, limiting the possibilities of understanding an abstract concept (Kövecses, 2010). The metaphor of LANGUAGES as INSOLUBLE SUBSTANCES draws borders around the experience of language contact and makes it difficult to conceptualize any integration. This conceptual metaphor stands in contrast to the idea of a multilingual mind as having an integrated linguistic repertoire (García &

Wei, 2014). An outcome of this is again reflected in language policy in education where subjects are not only separated by their language medium but also by strict rules around which languages should and should not be spoken in educational spaces. These rules are often directly and stringently enforced, demarcating physical, ideological, and conceptual boundaries among appropriate domains for the use of each language (Chandras, 2024; Menon & Pallavi, 2022).

The seemingly rigid boundaries are not limited to English and Marathi, with one respondent using the metaphor of ‘contaminated Marathi’ to describe language that incorporates peculiarities from different dialects. These dialects are classified as located in other places, i.e. ‘the Marathi of Pune,’ ‘the Marathi of Mumbai,’ and ‘the Marathi of Vidarbha-Marathwada.’ The respondent is from the city of Pune and positions the local variety as the ideal. This local variety of Marathi from Pune refers to the Brahmanical form of the language that was historically adopted as standard Marathi in school education as a consequence of the upper-caste monopoly on learning (Nemade, 1990), and is now upheld as the ‘pure’ form of the language by the urban middle-class (Chandras, 2024). No respondents indicated the notion of purity attached to other languages in their survey responses, reflecting once again the element of moral superiority of one’s primary language or mother tongue.

Linguistic purism as a political tool works on a misconceptualization of language contact and language change (Islampure, 2021; Seargeant, 2009). From this perspective, multilingualism is met with an implicit suspicion when linguistic changes occur, such as the process of language shift in education from Marathi to English.

5. DISCUSSION

Overall, the multilingualism of India is celebrated, but our findings suggest a more nuanced view. The resulting analysis indicates that while multilingualism is a favored and expected aspect of daily lives, conceptual metaphors and language ideologies associate multilingualism with a necessary utility. Alongside this, respondents’ mother tongue, Marathi, was naturally or divinely associated with purity and personified as a mother, overall embodying a closeness as a significant link to Maharashtrian identity. Our respondents conceptualize multilingualism as desirable, necessary, or inevitable. However, not every kind of multilingualism is valued equally by the respondents. Similarly, not all multilingual practices are viewed favorably. The conceptual metaphors suggest an underlying rejection of natural multilingual behaviors.

English is recognized as the medium of communication in urban multilingual India rooted in contemporary educational practices and as a language of jurisdiction and governance. Respondents in our survey recognize its status as a resource, a world language, and also deem it necessary in the modern world. The respondents repeatedly point to education as playing a pivotal role in the erosion of Marathi and the

introduction of English into their family languaging, especially through the prevalence and increasing pressures for schooling with English as the medium of instruction.

But even with its utility, there is a sense of detachment. The adult multilingual respondents of our survey see English as an outsider's language, not geographically located within the respondents' speech community and not recognized as having any personal value or identity attached to it. In fact, many respondents seem resentful of the pervasiveness of English in India, echoing Manu Joseph (2011), who wrote, 'English is the de facto national language of India. It is the bitter truth.' English is seen as useful, but does it truly serve as a uniting force?

Ideologies are structured on conceptual mappings that are often unquestioned. How respondents conceive of languages in relation to their identities, success, and necessity frame decisions centered around the proliferation of English in Indian educational settings (Bhattacharya, 2017; Sah, 2022). The notions of linguistic purity are based on the framing of the concept of multilingualism as a forced coming together of immiscible languages that create barriers for speakers' identity expression. The close associations of multilingualism with education found in survey responses indicate a prevailing notion that education ushers in multilingualism into urban middle-class Marathi speakers' lives and furthers ideological boundaries between the domains of Marathi as a mother tongue and home language and multilingual practices, including English and Hindi, in educational and occupational domains. A mother tongue, which is then closely associated with a regional identity, needs protection from a linguistically polluting education system. While English and multilingualism are spoken of as essential and necessary, there remains a moral superiority attached to notions of language purity. It may be this conceptual framing that underlies the feelings of guilt and disdain associated with language mixing in education (Anderson & Lightfoot, 2018) and this conceptualization may then pose a challenge in enacting truly multilingual pedagogies. Furthermore, the personification of Marathi hints at deeper anxieties about cultural identity and belonging. The conceptualization of the mother tongue Marathi as having a maternal bond with its community of speakers and an agency assigned to 'her' reflects a desire to maintain and nurture bonds within the community, particularly under what may be seen as the dominance of a globalized linguistic landscape (Sah, 2022).

A section of respondents described multilingualism as a good thing, even associating it with their Indianness. This is a utilitarian view of multilingualism that refrains from personifying any or all of the languages that the respondents use and conceptualizes them as only RESOURCES, not PERSONS or POSSESSIONS. As resources, the idea that one can "collect" or acquire multiple languages through education can be understood as a motivating force furthering support for English medium education.

It is also interesting to note that the utility of multilingualism is established through the conceptualization of English (and other languages) as inherently useful in a contemporary society. Marathi, on the other hand, is not represented through the LANGUAGE IS A RESOURCE metaphor. Marathi is represented as a beautiful,

respected, pride-inducing person, but not essential to the modern world. This impression that Marathi is not useful or essential can contribute to anxieties about language loss and the implications of language loss on identity loss. Therefore, the respondents' version of multilingualism is useful, because it provides access to education in English. Since Marathi and English are conceptualized as fundamentally INSOLUBLE SUBSTANCES, they do not assist one another. They remain essentially separate entities or entities that can be separated.

While Marathi is a PERSON, it is also conceptualized as vulnerable. There is no doubt that Marathi needs its speakers to mobilize and take care of it or Marathi personified needs to be urged to take care of herself. Marathi has some agency but needs help exerting it. While there are pleas addressed to Marathi, there are no words or thoughts addressed to English, which is seen as purely functional. When connected to the PERSON source domain, English is called out for the influence or hold it has on us, harkening to its colonial roots as a language of authority or dominance. Respondents do not conceptually address or speak to English with the familiarity reserved for Marathi.

Finally, a set of respondents express that multilingualism is inevitable. This takes away the individual's choice in the collective decision-making. The inevitability of multilingualism is reflected in comments noting its value and necessity for education. Education is often where individuals first encounter a formalized and structured multilinguality, which is experienced through their school setting and in their own emerging identities as multilingual. Using the 'mine vs. theirs' dichotomy that is driven by the LANGUAGE IS A POSSESSION metaphor, languages are also artificially located in their geographical spheres. English remains foreign, still bogged down by its colonial legacy and reputation as a language which opens doors to global interaction.

Through education, English contributes to the generational gap such that, while Marathi belongs to the elders in a family, English is a possession of the youngsters, highlighting yet another 'mine vs. theirs' framing. As members move away from their speech community, be it the state of Maharashtra, the country, or even simply from the home setting to the educational setting, this transition is also viewed as a rejection of something that is personal in favor of something that belongs to others. These educational and professional choices and the underlying conceptual framing may contribute to a loss of identity or community.

6. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This project was initiated around the Marathi Language Pride Day and findings show that attitudes about multilingualism and the Marathi mother tongue are tied to language ideologies, education experiences, and language education policies. Therefore, future research conducting surveys among students who are in the crucial stage of identity formation and language acquisition would shed further light on the impacts and

processes of cognitive change through conceptual metaphors while acquiring English or learning another language such as Hindi.

Exploring whether residents of different states share similar connections and connotations in their conceptual metaphors to mother tongues on various topics would additionally illuminate the breadth and scope of our findings explored here. Moreover, devising surveys tailored for both students and professional adults could uncover evolving conceptual metaphors and language ideologies, particularly considering the influence of identity formation through the differences in English language education and education policy across generations. By examining these aspects, researchers could gain deeper insights into cognitive processes impacting language acquisition, identity formation, and their association with educational decisions and experiences.

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