

## Table Of Content

<b>Journal Cover</b> .....	2
<b>Author[s] Statement</b> .....	3
<b>Editorial Team</b> .....	4
<b>Article information</b> .....	5
Check this article update (crossmark) .....	5
Check this article impact.....	5
Cite this article .....	5
<b>Title page</b> .....	6
Article Title .....	6
Author information .....	6
Abstract .....	6
<b>Article content</b> .....	7

**ISSN (ONLINE) 2598-9936**



**INDONESIAN JOURNAL OF INNOVATION STUDIES**  
PUBLISHED BY  
UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SIDOARJO

## Originality Statement

The author[s] declare that this article is their own work and to the best of their knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the published of any other published materials, except where due acknowledgement is made in the article. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom author[s] have work, is explicitly acknowledged in the article.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The author[s] declare that this article was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

## Copyright Statement

Copyright © Author(s). This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/legalcode>

## EDITORIAL TEAM

### Editor in Chief

Dr. Hindarto, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

### Managing Editor

Mochammad Tanzil Multazam, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

### Editors

Fika Megawati, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Mahardika Darmawan Kusuma Wardana, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Wiwit Wahyu Wijayanti, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Farkhod Abdurakhmonov, Silk Road International Tourism University, Uzbekistan

Bobur Sobirov, Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service, Uzbekistan

Evi Rinata, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

M Faisal Amir, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Dr. Hana Catur Wahyuni, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

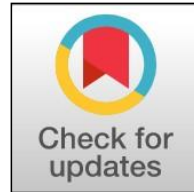
Complete list of editorial team ([link](#))

Complete list of indexing services for this journal ([link](#))

How to submit to this journal ([link](#))

## Article information

**Check this article update (crossmark)**



**Check this article impact (\*)**



**Save this article to Mendeley**



(\*) Time for indexing process is various, depends on indexing database platform

## Role of Language in India's Cultural Diplomacy

*Dr. Mukesh Kumar Srivastava*

*Senior Consultant*

*Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)*

*New Delhi*

Linguistic antiquity and diversity of this country have been major attractions for the people across the world and language has been an integral part of cultural diplomacy. Almost every country strives towards teaching their own language to foreigners and disseminate and propagate their own culture. India, as the land of one of the most ancient languages and largest number of languages and dialects, has appealed to foreign people with long lasting consequences. The fact that many western scholars studied Sanskrit to delve deeper into Indian culture is a testimony to such attraction. Realising this fact, Indian government has prioritized teaching Indian languages to propagate Indian culture in the international arena and has endeavoured to promote language as part of its cultural diplomacy. In this context, the paper is an effort to unfold to what extent language is important to India's cultural diplomacy and how language as a resource is utilized to promote Indian culture abroad.

### India's Cultural Diplomacy

India, since its independence, has recognised the importance of cultural diplomacy as an instrument to connect with the world. For centuries, Indian arts, culture, tradition and languages have fascinated people from around the world. It has aroused curiosity among people, and in the process attracting them towards Indian culture and traditions and in promoting linkages among people across countries.

'Unity in diversity' has been a *sine qua non* of India's global image reflective of the wide mosaic of cultures, languages and civilizations which has, and continues to, intrigued many across the world. As such, Sanskriti evam Sabhyata (Cultural and civilizational links) is considered one of the five pillars of Indian foreign policy under the Modi Government

spoken by more than 10,000 people in India.

## Role of language in advancing diplomacy

To present the age-old culture and traditions in the international arena, language becomes a potent instrument of cultural diplomacy. As such, language is a two-way process whereby it acts as a mode of communication as well as dissemination. The most plausible reason for this is that a particular language represents the culture of a particular social group and thus helps in promoting cultural diplomacy of a country at large. Language, manifested in the 'soft power' element of cultural diplomacy, enables to transcend geographical borders and build new relationships to foster mutual interests between the countries.

Since time immemorial, India has been a melting pot of religions, languages and cultures. Concomitantly, other languages also find its presence in Indian culture and traditions. The two most important languages that have far-reaching impact are Sanskrit and Hindi. Both Sanskrit and Hindi have come to be included in curriculum of recognised universities and institutions across countries.

### *Sanskrit*

Sanskrit has been playing an important role in building the identity of India and its soft power. Sanskrit language has found resonance across the globe. Dr. David Frawley emphasized that Sanskrit is another important aspect of India's soft power via both language and communication. In fact, we could call Sanskrit the language of India's soft power.<sup>1</sup> Sanskrit has not only dominated the landscape for significant part of Indian history, but its contribution, not just to literature, but to the understanding of human history and the science of language, is unparalleled.

---

<sup>1</sup> Frawley, David, "What Is Indic Soft Power And How Can India Leverage It In The Twenty-First Century?". Accessed on 14 April 2022.

<https://swarajyamag.com/magazine/what-is-indic-soft-power-and-how-can-india-leverage-it-in-the-twenty-first-century>

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the 'realisation' of Sanskrit by Western scholars is conceived as an event of great importance. In the words of famous Indologist William Jones, "the Sanscrit (Sanskrit) language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity."<sup>2</sup>

Sanskrit is certainly one of world's oldest languages, spoken continuously around the world. It has among the largest and richest bodies of literature, including the sacred texts of three major religions -Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The number of manuscripts in Sanskrit is over 10 million, which is 100 times of those in Greek and Latin combined. This is an achievement in itself as it constitutes the largest cultural heritage that any civilization has produced prior to the invention of the printing press.<sup>3</sup>

The global recognition of Sanskrit as a language can be understood from the fact that many countries including Russia and South and South-east Asian countries have come to teach Sanskrit in their respective universities. In this context, Dr. Peter M Scharf, the founder of the Sanskrit Library in Harvard University, acknowledged that Sanskrit "has the largest body of literature in the world and has seen continuous production of literature in all fields of human endeavour". Its influence is seen to have crossed geographical boundaries and reached South Asia, South east Asia, Tibet, China, Korea and Japan.<sup>4</sup> It is worth mentioning that former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee during his visit to Russia in 2003 explored the love of

---

<sup>2</sup> Scientist of the Day - William Jones (September 28, 2017). Accessed on 17 April 2022.

<https://www.lindahall.org/william-jones/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20Sanskrit%20language%2C%20whatever%20be,could%20possibly%20have%20been%20produced>

<sup>3</sup> Goyal, Pawan et al. "A Distributed Platform for Sanskrit Processing". Accessed on 17 April 2022.

<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.304.4827&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Kamdra, Seema, "Sanskrit has had profound influence on world languages", 24 November 2016. Accessed on 17 April 2022.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/%E2%80%98Sanskrit-has-had-profound-influence-on-world-languages%E2%80%99/article16689576.ece>



Russians towards Indian languages since the time of I.P. Minayev, first Russian Indologist, who had a rich repository of Sanskrit and Pali manuscripts.<sup>5</sup>

## *Hindi*

Hindi is also one of the widely spoken languages across the globe. Akin to Sanskrit, the influence and importance of the Hindi language have been so much that people have started to study it in various countries all over the world. Speaking on the role of Hindi on the occasion of World Hindi Day on 10 January 2022, PM Modi underlined that “Hindi language plays an important role in spreading our knowledge and culture. The increasing use of Hindi in the field of information technology and literature on technology and its popularity among the youth present a bright future for it.”<sup>6</sup>

It is the fascination towards Hindi language that Bulcke of Belgium and Barannikov of Russia visited India and devoted themselves to Hindi language. A.P. Barannikov translated Saint-Poet Tulsidas’ Ramcharitmanas into Russian.<sup>7</sup>Hindi is also being taught in Mauritius, Fiji, Norway, Finland, Hungary, Belgium, Nepal, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Suriname, USA, Russia, China, Japan, Italy and many other African countries. Hindi has a large number of readers and writers in these countries.

## **Role of ICCR**

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) mandate is to promote Indian culture abroad. The work of ICCR in promoting cultural diplomacy is notable, especially under the Modi government since 2014. Language is also part of culture and it is an important medium for the promotion of culture. In this regard, ICCR has been working by promoting

---

<sup>5</sup>The Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s address at the Russian Academy of Sciences (12 November 2003). Accessed on 17 April 2022.

<https://archive.pib.gov.in/archive/releases98/lyr2003/rnov2003/12112003/r1211200310.html>

<sup>6</sup> “Hindi plays key role in spreading India’s knowledge, culture: PM Modi”. Accessed on 15 April 2022.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/hindi-plays-key-role-in-spreading-indias-knowledge-culture-pm-modi/articleshow/88817166.cms?from=mdr>

<sup>7</sup>The Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s address at the Russian Academy of Sciences (12 November 2003). Accessed on 17 April 2022.

<https://archive.pib.gov.in/archive/releases98/lyr2003/rnov2003/12112003/r1211200310.html>

Sanskrit, Hindi and other Indian languages. As and when required, ICCR explores all possible options to promote Indian languages by providing training in Hindi, Tamil, Sanskrit and other Indian languages.

ICCR undertook several initiatives to boost India's cultural diplomacy, particularly promoting Indian languages. For example, establishing Chairs of Indian languages, instituting Indologist Award, Sanskrit Award among others. For the promotion of Hindi abroad, the Council sends Hindi teachers to teach Hindi at Indian Cultural Centers abroad. Also, ICCR sends Hindi teachers and Professors at various foreign Universities as ICCR Chairs. Apart from this, a number of scholarships are being provided to foreign students to study Hindi courses in India. Sanskrit and other language Chairs are also established in abroad.

Language is an unbroken expression of history of culture of any society. There is no denying the fact that Indian language, Sanskrit, considered among the oldest languages in the world, has inspired many other languages. Considering the global support and growing interest in Indian languages across countries, there is no denying the fact that language has been a potent instrument for advancing India's cultural diplomacy. This ubiquitous influence can be best encapsulated in Sanskrit phrase "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्)" which says, the whole world is one family, and Indian language has been instrumental in building a world family.

**(Views expressed are of the author)**