



AL-SHODHANA

A Multi -Disciplinary Double Blind Peer Reviewed Research Journal

<https://sadupublications.com/journals/index.php/al-shodhana>

Open Access

ISSN(P): 2320-6221

ISSN (Online): 3049-3870

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY OF VERBS IN RIBEIRO'S VOCABULARIO OF THE OLD KONKANI LANGUAGE

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 19-05-2025

Revised : 21-06-2025

Accepted : 17-07-2025

Published : 30-07-2025

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Keywords

Old Konkani,
Diogo Ribeiro,
Lingoa Canarim,
historical linguistics,
Indo-Aryan languages,
Marathi-Konkani
comparison,
verb morphology,
missionary linguistics.

Abstract

This article explores the significance of studying verbs in Vocabulario da Lingoa Canarim (1626), compiled by Diogo Ribeiro and his Jesuit companions, as a means of understanding the structure and evolution of Old Konkani. Through a historical-linguistic approach, the work traces the emergence of Konkani from Maharashtri Prakrit, its early literary culture, and the influence of missionary contributions in the 16th and 17th centuries. The diachronic changes in Konkani verbs, such as phonological simplification and loss of inflectional diversity, are analysed against broader socio-political contexts like Portuguese colonization and later standardization efforts influenced by Marathi post liberation of Goa. The article asserts that while modern Konkani shows evidence of adaptation and convergence, the preservation and study of Old Konkani structures are critical for retaining the language's distinct Indo-Aryan identity. Ribeiro's Vocabulario thus emerges as a pivotal resource for linguistic reconstruction, offering valuable insights for contemporary efforts in language revitalization and typological studies.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70644/as.v13.i2.2>

1. Introduction

Konkani is an Indo-Aryan language spoken on the Western coast of India. It is the official language of Goa as per the Official Language Act of Goa, 1987. It was recognized as a literary language by the Sahitya Academy or the National Academy for Letters in 1975. It was given a Constitutional status in 1992, thus making it one of the 22 national languages of the Indian Union. The name Konkani, however, is of recent origin. It literally means the language of Konkani, which is a distinct geographical landmass on the West coast of India, stretching from Thane district in Maharashtra right up to Kasargod district in Kerala. Most of the Konkani speakers are present in this land mass (Da Cunha 1).

In history, the Konkani has been mistakenly considered as a dialect of Marathi with its social and political ramifications in Goa in the recent years. It is important to note that the earlier Marathi or Old Marathi was considered having two major dialects. The first being *Deshi* or *Dakhani*, spoken in the Deccan part of present-day Maharashtra, which is to the northward and eastward of Pune. And the second is the Konkani dialect which is spoken throughout North Konkani, till Malwan or the Southern district of the Ratnagiri Collectorate, which is the present day Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra. This dialect serves as a creole between Marathi and Konkani proper. It is also significant to note that the Portuguese missionaries studied both these dialects and composed literature in it. They named the former '*lingua canarina do norte*, which means the Canarese language of the north (Da Cunha 2) while the latter continued to be called '*lingua canarim*' for a long period. Such wrong appellations have created a lot of confusion not just in academic circles, but also in the present-day linguistic politics of Goa and in the adjacent districts of the neighbouring states of Maharashtra and Karnataka, where it continues to be spoken.

The Konkani language testifies to a unique social cultural milieu on the Konkani coast in its linguistic evolution within the Indo-Aryan family. The foreign missionaries who came to Goa in the 16th century composed a lot of grammars, dictionaries and religious literature to learn the language vis-à-vis evangelize the locals (Gomes *Manasagangotri* 26-33). Among them the *Vocabulario da lingua Canarim feito pellos Padres da Companhia de Jesus que residemna Christiandade de Salcete e novamentea cressentado com varios modos de fallar pello Padre Diogo Ribeiro da mesma Companhia* composed in the year 1626 (henceforth *Vocabulario Ribeiro*) is the most valuable resource for the study of Old Konkani. The reasons for which will be stated in the subsequent part of this essay.

2. Old Konkani Literature

For a period of over 100 years, i.e., around 1560 to 1670ACE, the Portuguese missionaries in Goa, cultivated a deep sense of language study. These languages included Marathi, Sanskrit and Konkani. Among them the Jesuit and the Franciscan missionaries made a significant contribution, by producing dictionaries, grammars and religious literature. The Jesuits in particular, compiled a series of vocabularies or dictionaries with almost six sets available in Goa. Each of them could be considered an enlarged version of the former. These are closely connected with the codex no. 771 and 772 which is available in the Public Library in Braga, Portugal (Rodrigues, *Tanjavari Kosh* 1-2). They contain handwritten manuscripts of missionaries composed in Konkani and Marathi.

As per Prof. L. A. Rodrigues, who was an eminent scholar on Old Konkani literature, the written sources of the above vocabularies or dictionaries are the said codices. They were composed so that the meanings of the words in the stories could be understood as well as the new learners could enrich their language with new words. It is also interesting to note that many of these words are redundant in existing Konkani, Marathi and Hindi dictionaries. A few of those words continue to exist among the Konkani dialects spoken out of Goa (Miranda 326). Another fact that is evident here is that among the Portuguese-Konkani and the Konkani-Portuguese vocabularies, the Portuguese words are almost archaic, and the orthography inconsistent. This helps one to know not just the development in the Konkani orthography, but also the development of Portuguese orthography, making the study of both languages as mutually complementary. One also finds that the Konkani orthography used in the codices was later better systematized in the vocabularies (Rodrigues, *Konkani and Portuguese* 2-3).

He further states with indisputable evidence, that in Goa the Konkani version of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* was composed before the 16th century and the language Konkani itself was so highly developed that its vocabulary was richer than both Portuguese and Marathi. The Konkani dictionary of *Junta de Investigações do Ultramar* of 1660 based on Diogo Ribeiro's lexicon of 16th century contains about 20,000 vocables, while the first Marathi dictionary compiled around 1670 contains only 10,000 vocables. Thus, in the 16th to the 17th century the Konkani language was much more advanced and coherent than Marathi. At that time, it had its own script which was the older version of the Kannada script, similar to the *Halekannada* script, which was known as *Kandevi*. This also led to the Portuguese nomenclature of referring to Konkani as "*lingua canarim*" as mentioned earlier (Rodrigues, *Tanjavari Kosh*, 1-2).

Thus, the Konkani language, emerging from a unique socio-cultural milieu of the Konkan coast, stands as a testament to the linguistic evolution within the Indo-Aryan family. Among the most reliable resources for studying the Old Konkani is the *Vocabulario* composed in 1626 by Diogo Ribeiro and his Jesuit companions. This monumental work provides a critical lens to understand, both the structure and the function of Old Konkani verbs as well. Further, it also helps to know the socio-historical and linguistic factors that shaped their evolution.

3. Significance of Ribeiro's work

Prof. L. A. Rodrigues was one of the foremost scholars to have studied Old Konkani literature. He had secured the manuscripts from Mr. Arvind K. Babladker, the then librarian of the Government Higher Secondary School, Panjim, Goa which is the Old Portuguese Liceu Nacional Afonso de Albuquerque de Nova Goa. He handed over to Rodrigues three volumes of the manuscripts for his scrutiny. Rodrigues then compared them with the Jesuit and Franciscan manuscripts of Konkani vocabularies which were existing in the Central Library at Panjim. In it he found the *Vocabulario da lingoa Canarim feito pellos Padres da Companhia de Jesus que residemna Christiandade de Salcete e novamentea cressentado com varios modos de fallar pello Padre Diogo Ribeiro da mesma Companhia* composed in 1626. The copy was the same as the one in the Central Library, with the same contents. However, the handwriting varied. Moreover, the Lyceum manuscript was not as well preserved as the one in the Central Library. These were both copies of the same text (Rodrigues, *Jnaneshwara and Ribeiro* 17-18). The second was the Diogo Riberio's Portuguese-Konkani vocabulary, which was the same as the Central Library copy. The third was the Portuguese-Konkani vocabulary in bad condition, with the initial pages covering the letters A, B, C, D and a part of E missing. The number of entries of the existing 170 pages were about 7700, while the missing pages would be around 300 entries. Thus, it can be concluded that the original composition had around 8000 entries.

This vocabulary was an earlier composition of his Jesuit predecessors, who kept on adding words and giving Konkani meanings to the previous compiled Portuguese words. It has about 3500 more entries, phrases, idioms and proverbs. This is the first Jesuit Konkani vocabulary, compiled probably before 1570. But this Portuguese-Konkani volume was preceded by a Konkani- Portuguese one, which is yet to be discovered (Rodrigues, 17). All the above facts point out to the significance of the *Vocabulario* of Diogo Ribeiro. It not only gives a glimpse of the Old Konkani language, but also the pain-staking effort

made by these missionaries to study the language. These manuscripts are, therefore, an important tool in contemporary times to study the language and know about its intricate past. A lot of simplistic narratives like the Portuguese burnt all indigenous literature, sometimes even by erudite scholars in good faith, but with loose references, has created a prejudiced vision about the study of Old Konkani and the composers of that literature (Kulkarni, *Konkani Bhasha* 58). An attempt is made here to make a comprehensive study of the same and enrich the language, which today is at crossroads.

4. Origin and spread of Old Konkani

The Konkani language emerged as an independent language from Maharashtri Prakrit around the 8th century (Pereira, *Literary Konkani* 2). From the 11th century onwards, its oral forms were reflected in its characteristic vocabulary, sayings and discourses. There is a disputed claim that at the foot of the Jain Gomateshwar Bahubali of Sravanabelgola in Hassan district of Karnataka, in the 11th century there are two lines in Konkani along with Tamil and Kannada. Gomes further proposes that using the unique tradition of Konkani, Marathi writers in the 13th century wrote works like *Dnyaneshwari* and *Lilacharitra*. The reason for this belief is because there are some forms of Old Marathi still found in other dialects of Konkani, which have now disappeared from modern Marathi. We find many such evidences in Anand Nadkarni's book *Dnyaneshwaritil shabdancha Konkani bolit shodh* (Discovery of Words from the Konkani dialect in Dnyaneshwari) (Gomes, *Manasagangotri* 23). According to Jose Pereira's research, the folk songs of the Konkani people are found in the 12th century work *Abhilashitarthachintamani* during the reign of Somshekara III of the Kalyani Chalukya dynasty. In the poetical works of Namdev, which dates between the 13th and 14th centuries, there is a mention of a Konkani speaking cowherd. Hence it is not a surprise that even the stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharata may have been written by Konkani scholars after this century (Gomes 5).

In 1510, Goa came under the Portuguese rule. First they conquered the city of Goa and the neighbouring islands with the help of local chiefs and then in 1543, the Sultan of Bijapur ceded Bardes and Salcete to the Portuguese under a peace treaty (Da Cunha 12). With this began the Portuguese rule in Tiswadi, Bardes and Salcete region which are the Old Conquest areas. There is no strong evidence to say how much Konkani literature in that region existed at that point in history. Even in Konkani speaking areas outside the Portuguese territory there have been no strong evidences of Konkani till date.

5. Missionary contribution to Konkani

The fact that Christian missionaries secured the help of Konkani scholars of Salcete to learn the language is evident from the dialect used by them. These scholars narrated stories from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, which they wrote down in the Roman script. In 1556 the Portuguese established the first printing press in Asia, in the present day Old Goa and published books in Konkani. These works include both foreign as well as native Konkani scholars. A young Goan named Andre Vaz is supposed to have developed the first grammar of Konkani for teaching Konkani to foreign missionaries. Based on this, the Jesuit priest, Thomas Stevens then composed a second grammar book, which was printed by the missionaries after his death (Gomes 27). Henrique Henriques, Juan de San Matthias, Karel Prikryl, Simon Alvarez of Goa, Gaspar de San Miguel, have contributed immensely to the Konkani language. Subsequently, Jesuit, Franciscan and Dominican priests wrote many dictionaries, texts and literature in Konkani. There were about seven dictionaries during this period. They are in various libraries around the world (Gomes, *Konknni Sørøspõticho Itihas* 9). In addition, missionary writings often include catechism books in the form of questions and answers, lives of saints, a few loose translations of the Gospels, devotional essays, catechesis and sermons. They wrote these texts mostly in the Roman script. The only exception to the above is the *Flos Sanctorum*, which is the only missionary composition in *Halekannada* or Göykanadi, i.e, the Goan Kannada script of that time (Pereira, *Konknni Mandakini* 15).

Outside Goa, the “*Hortus Indicus Malabaricus*” authenticated by the three Konkani scholars in Kochi between the year 1678 and 1693 under a Dutch botanist, Henriques van Redan is a significant Old Konkani text. A Goan priest living in Mangalore, Joaquim de Miranda, wrote a poem called *Riglo Jezu møllyant* around 1780. According to Jose Pereira, this is the end of the Old Konkani era (Pereira 16). One significant observation here is that the grammar of the Konkani language is almost identical over all the three centuries, that is from the 16th to the 18th century. Several of the morphological characteristics of Konkani can be understood by comparing it with the Marathi language, which is very close to Konkani.

6. Old Konkani and Old Marathi – A Comparison

As stated earlier, Konkani emerged in the 8th century from one of the branches of Maharashtra Prakrit, while Marathi developed from another branch. The Konkani language evolved from the language of the tribes who came from North India and amalgamated with the speech of the people who lived in the Konkan. From her very

birth Konkani came into contact with the Dravidian languages and then with Persian, Arabic and Turkish (Rodrigues, *Jnaneshwara and Diogo* 5). The first classical text form in Marathi is the *Dnyaneshwari*. It was composed by Saint Dnyaneshwar who wanted to give the essence of the *Bhagavad Gita* to the local people. It is worth noting here that the Marathi language flourished more rapidly, as it received political patronage and began to grow in its own land (Rodrigues 6). According to Dr. V. P. Chavan, Dnyaneshwar used many Konkani words of that time which are not used in modern Marathi today. It should be noted here that Ribeiro began compiling his dictionary about three centuries after Dnyaneshwar's work. Yet we find many similarities in terminology. Comparing the Marathi and Konkani languages of that time, Prof. L. A. Rodrigues offers three possibilities. The first possibility is that Konkani and Marathi originated from two different Prakritis. First, Konkani emerged and then Marathi emerged three centuries later. Second, Konkani and Marathi originated from the same Prakrit, but at two different levels. Third, Marathi language was born out of the Konkani language (Rodrigues 15).

To comprehend the Konkani and Marathi languages of the 17th century, one can refer Ribeiro's dictionary and the Tanjavari dictionary written by the Portuguese in the village of Tanjavari in present day Tamil Nadu. The Tanjavari dictionary is claimed to be the first dictionary of the Marathi language composed in 1670. On the other hand the first dictionary in Konkani was composed by the Portuguese in 1570. Ribeiro's dictionary contains over fifteen thousand words. But there are only about ten thousand words in the Marathi dictionary. Both these dictionaries contain about one and a half thousand words common to both the languages (Rodrigues, *Konkani Verbal Constructions* 23-25). There is a three century difference between 13th century Marathi and 16th century Konkani. However, the vocabulary closely matches and these ancient forms still exist in morphology. So when Dnyaneshwar created *Dnyaneshwari* in the 13th century, Konkani language must have been existing for at least three centuries. Also, when the Portuguese composed their dictionaries after a period of seven centuries, they found the morphology of the Konkani language as it is. This shows the richness and uniqueness of the Konkani language (Rodrigues 27). Thus, although Marathi and Konkani are homologous languages, there are many differences between them. This becomes more evident when one looks at the characteristics of the Old Konkani language with a special focus on verbs.

7. Verbs in Old Konkani Language

Verbs are the dynamic core any language, shaping its grammar and expressing tense,

aspect, mood and agreement. Since they are deeply integrated into a language's grammatical system, verbs are among the least likely lexical items to be borrowed. Unlike nouns, which are readily borrowed with minimal structural adjustments, verbs conform to complex morphosyntactic rules. As such, even when borrowed, verbs are often adapted through native grammatical structures. This is done typically by combining the foreign verb root with a local auxiliary or light verb. This strategy is seen in several language families, including Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and East Asian languages. The disinclination to borrow verbs in a language highlights their role in preserving linguistic identity and structure. As Bernard Comrie observes, verbs resist borrowing because of the typological depth they represent in a language's grammar (Comrie *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology* 69). Similarly, Thomason and Kaufman point out that when verbs are borrowed, they must be restructured to fit the recipient language's syntactic framework, often through periphrastic constructions (Thomason and Kaufman *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics* 78). This resistance demonstrates that while lexical borrowing can enrich a language, the grammatical backbone—anchored in verbs—remains remarkably conservative.

In Old Konkani dictionaries the verbs are given in the first person present tense. In order to know the root verb, it is necessary to delete the stem -tã from the headword, which is the first person present tense maker. Thus we find Old Konkani verbs in root form ending in ã, ā, i, u, e, ãi, ai and oi. Today in standard Konkani, all infinitives end in -unk, -pak and -chyak. However, in the Salcete dialect, which is very closely linked to Old Konkani, many infinitives still end in -onk. These infinitives are usually intransitive, while those ending in -unk are transitive. Some examples of these are, *bõsonk* (to sit), *põddonk* (to fall), *disonk* (to see), *võchonk* (to go), *uttonk* (to get up), *xikonk* (to teach), *mellonk* (to meet), *ravonk* (to wait), and so on (Borges, *Kristapurannant Saxttintli Konknni utravõll ani boli XLVII*).

For studying the verbs, the Old Konkani root form, still prevalent in Salcete and the GSB Mangalore and GSB Cochin dialects are used here as headwords. Here it is in the T-L-N-I pattern preceded by the Old Konkani verb, the verb root and the modern Konkani verb.

T: -TA, -TALO, -TØLO and the like make the verb incomplete

L: -LA, -LØLO and the like make the verb complete

N: -NAM and the like make the verb negative

I: Infinitive form in -unk and -onk (also for reflexive verbs)

7.1. Monosyllabic Verbs

Ending in ‘ø’

XXX – There are no monosyllabic verb roots in Konkani ending in ø.

Ending in ‘a’

khâtã (Miranda, *Vocabulario* 230) : khâ- : kha: khata, khalo (khelo), khaynam, khanvk
zâtã (Miranda 549) : zâ- : za : zata, zalo, zaynam, zanvk (zaunk)

Ending in ‘i’

ditã (Miranda 125) : di- : di : dita, dilo, dinam, dinvk (diunk)

Ending in ‘u’

dhutã (Miranda 136) : dhu- : dhu : dhuta, dhulo, dhuynam, dhunvk (u here is long like dhuunk)

Ending in ‘e’

yetã (Miranda 193) : ye- : ye : yeta, aylo (irregular), yenam, yenvk (yeunk)

Ending in ‘øy’

XXX – There are no monosyllabic verb roots in Konkani ending in øy.

Ending in ‘ay’

laytã (Miranda 257) : lay- : lay : layta, laylo, laynam, lavunk > lanvk (‘y’ is dropped)
gatã (Miranda 152) : ga- : gay (‘y’ is added) : gayta, gaylo, gaynam, gavunk > ganvk (‘y’ dropped)

Ending in ‘oy’

choitã (Miranda 133) : choi- : choy : choyta, choylo, choynam, chovunk > chonvk

7.2. Bisyllabic Verbs

Ending in consonants

âdãllãtã (Miranda 5) : âdãllã- : adøll : adøllta, adøll’lla, adøllnam, addøllunk (transitive verb)

vissãrãtã (Miranda 510) : vissãrã- visør : visørta, visørta, visørnam, visrunk

Ending in ‘ø’ (all infinitive forms take in -onk)

bãissãtã (Miranda 53) : bãissã- : bøsø : bøsta, bøsøla, bøsønam, bøsønck

pãddãtã (Miranda 327) : pãddã- : pøddø : pøddta, pøddlo, pøddønam, pøddonck

sãmãzãtã (Miranda 401) : sãmãzã- : sømzø : sømzøta, sømzølo, sømzønam, sømzonck

sikātã (Miranda 427) : sikã- :xikø : xikta, xiklo xikønam, xikonk

âicâtã (Miranda 15) : âicã- :aykø : aykøta, aykølo, aykønam, aykonk

bhâzâtã (Miranda 71) : bhâzã- :bhazø : bhazta, bhazlo, bhazønam, bhazonk (intransitive verb/ reflexive)

bhägässâtã (Miranda 62) : bhägässã- :bhøgsø : bhøgsøta, bhøgsølo, bhøgsønam, bhøgsonk (intransitive verb/ reflexive)

bhärässâtã (Miranda 67) : bhärässã- :bhørsø : bhørsøta, bhørsølo, bhørsønam, bhørsønck (intransitive verb/ reflexive)

Ending in ‘a’

XXX - There are no bisyllabic verb roots in Konkani ending in a.

Ending in ‘i’

kãritã (Miranda 214) : kãri- :køri : kørta, kelo (irregular), kørinam, kørunk

hãdditã (Miranda 172) : hãddi- :haddi : haddta, haddlo, haddinam, haddunk

zeuitã (Miranda 552) : zeui- :jevi : jevta, jevlo, jevinam, jevunk > jenvk

bhâzitã (Miranda 71) : bhâzi- :bhaji : bhazta, bhazlo, bhajinam, bhazunk (transitive)

bhägässitã (Miranda 62) : bhägässã- :bhøgxi : bhøgxita, bhøgxilo, bhøgxinam, bhøgsunk (transitive)

bhärässâtã (Miranda 67) : bhärässã- :bhørxi : bhørxita, bhørxilo, bhørxinam, bhørsunk (transitive)

Ending in ‘u’

XXX - There are no bisyllabic verb roots in Konkani ending in u

Ending in ‘e’

zitã (Miranda 555) : zi- :jiye : jiyeta, jiyelo, jiyenam, jiyenvk (jiyeunk)

Ending in ‘øy’

bãrãitã (Miranda 59) : bãrãi- : børøy : børøyta, børøylo, børøyenam, børønck (børøunk)

sikãitã (Miranda 427) : sikãi- :xikø : xikøyta, xikøylo, xikøynam, xikonck (xikøunk)

Ending in ‘ay’

ghũuãddãitã (Miranda 171) : ghũuãddãi- : ghunvdday : ghunvddayta, ghunvddaylo, ghunvddaynam, ghunvddanck

dhãddãitã (Miranda 15) : dhãddãi- :dhadday : dhaddayta, dhaddaylo, dhaddaynam, dhaddanck

ãddãitã (Miranda 8) : ãddãi- : adday : addayta, addaylo, addaynam, addanck

7.3. Trisyllabic Verbs

nikhepitã (Miranda 316) : nikhepe- :nikepi : nikepita, nikepilo, nikepinam, nikepunk
pâtiyetã (Miranda 346 : pâtiye- :patiye : patiyeta, patiyelo, patiyenam, patiyenvk

In the present orthography of Konkani in Devanagari script, when examined scientifically, some of the above intricate details of Konkani verbs and other patterns are ignored. In many places where a vowel is required, the vowel is omitted which has led to the deletion of schwa. The schwa is an important aspect in Old Konkani and Old Marathi which is still preserved in some of the modern dialects of Konkani. A standard dialect is used mainly in education, administration and communication. In literature multiple dialects could be used. To meet such needs, the Antruji dialect was introduced along with the Devanagari script in Goa (Kulkarni 75). However, some of the most important aspects of the Konkani language are apparently compromised, making it unscientific and at times even incomprehensible for the readers. But if the same is changed with the above characteristics of Old Konkani, it can add to the beauty of the Konkani and ensure that those characteristics will still be preserved. Otherwise, Konkani is being Marathicized day by day, paradoxically making it seem like a dialect of Marathi.

8. Findings and Observations

Based on the above study the following observations can be made. They have been arranged as syntactic features, diachronic changes, typological characteristics and social implications.

8.1. Syntactic Features of Verbs in Old Konkani

8.1.1. Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) Order

The syntactic structure of Old Konkani, as recorded in *Vocabulario Ribeiro*, adheres predominantly to the SOV order, a characteristic shared with other Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages. This order is evident in sentences like *hẽ sate hoye* (this is true) (Miranda, *The Old Konkani Bhārata* 316). Such examples illustrate the language's typological alignment with its Dravidian substratum as well.

8.1.2. Rhetorical and Contextual Usage of Verbs

Old Konkani verbs often carried rhetorical weight, reflecting the social and religious contexts of the time. Expressions like *pãia pãddãtãv* (to prostrate) and *hãtim*

sâmpăddâtam (to submit) (Rodrigues, *Konkani Verbal Constructions* 14) highlight the cultural nuances embedded in verbal usage. These forms also demonstrate the interplay between verb morphology and syntax, as verb prefixes and suffixes give meaning based on context. This is also followed in modern Konkani dialects.

8.2. Diachronic Changes in Verbal Structure

8.2.1. Simplification of Verb Endings

The transition from Old Konkani to its modern dialects involved significant simplification in verb endings. Modern Konkani, influenced by Marathi, often drops final vowels, as seen in verbs like *kør* (to do) replacing “*kãri*” (Miranda, *Vocabulario* 214) or *hadd* (to bring) replacing *hãddi* (Miranda 171). This shift reflects the broader linguistic trends of phonetic economy, but also the overwhelming influence of Marathi in the proposed standard dialect.

8.2.2. Loss of Inflectional Diversity

Old Konkani’s rich inflectional system has diminished over time. For example, the use of distinct suffixes for intransitive and transitive verbs—such as *bhãzãtã* (intransitive – to be roasted), *bhãzitã* (transitive – to roast) (Miranda 71) is rare in modern standard Konkani dialects, barring a few. This reduction aligns with the language’s standardization under external influences which needs attention.

8.3. Typological Characteristics of Old Konkani

8.3.1. Uniformity and Regional Variations

Despite regional variations, Old Konkani maintained a remarkable uniformity in verb morphology and syntax. The Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries documented similar forms across Salcete and Bardes regions where they operated. However, some regional differences, such as the retention of mid-vowels in Salcete, but their loss in Bardes, indicate the beginnings of dialectal divergence which is prevalent even today.

8.3.2. Gender and Number Agreement

Old Konkani verbs exhibit an agreement with gender and number even in the negative form. This feature is less pronounced in the modern Konkani dialects. For instance, plural forms like *nøhoye* (negative plural) reflect grammatical concord, preserving syntactic clarity was an important feature in Old Konkani which is not prevalent today in the modern dialects of Konkani.

8.4. Sociolinguistic Implications of Verb Evolution

The evolution of Old Konkani verbs is deeply intertwined with socio-political changes. Portuguese rule did influence Konkani with loan verbs from Portuguese in the later part of their regime subtly altering verbal structures. However, in the earlier vocabularies one finds a lot of Kannada and Sanskrit loan verbs. Concurrently, it should also be noted that the decline in literary production under colonial rule led to the loss of many Old Konkani forms, a few of which survive in places outside Goa. Additionally, the efforts for standardization during the post-colonial times leaned towards Marathi-influenced Konkani, side-lining older forms preserved in Salcete and other dialects outside Goa. This shift underscores the tension between linguistic preservation and adaptation.

9. Conclusion

The study of verbs in *Vocabulario Ribeiro* reveals the linguistic richness of Old Konkani and its evolutionary trajectory. From its Dravidian substratum to its Indo-Aryan overlays, Old Konkani's verbal system reflects a dynamic interplay of cultural and linguistic influences. The diachronic changes—including simplification, loss of inflectional diversity, and regional variations—offer critical insights into the language's typological development. As modern Konkani continues to evolve, the preservation of its historical forms remains vital. By integrating findings from *Vocabulario Ribeiro* and related analysis, this essay highlights the importance of historical linguistics in understanding and validating Konkani's unique identity within the Indo-Aryan language family.

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