

LANGUAGE SHIFT AND ENDANGERMENT OF MISING, A TANI LANGUAGE IN NORTHEAST INDIA¹

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Abstract

This study presents a qualitative evaluation of the endangerment level of Mising (ISO 639-3: *mrg*), a Tibeto-Burman language of the Tani branch, spoken predominantly in the Upper Assam region and parts of Arunachal Pradesh in Northeast India. This research employs the nine-factor language vitality assessment framework proposed by UNESCO (2003), with data collected through sociolinguistic questionnaires, community observations, and in-depth interviews. Findings indicate that intergenerational transmission, though still present, is increasingly threatened, with younger generations showing a worrying decline in fluency and consistent use.

Keywords: Mising, Tani, Tibeto-Burman, Vitality Assessment, Sociolinguistics
ISO 639-3 codes: *mrg*

1 Introduction

Since the 1990s, sociolinguistic vitality research has shifted from merely describing language shift to adopting an advocacy-driven framework aimed at preservation (Maitz 2011, as cited in Narayanan 2019). Despite a surge in empirical investigations, a consensus remains elusive regarding a predictive set of cross-linguistically valid factors for a language's future viability. This scholarly gap underscores the complexity of language maintenance. A central question, articulated by Bradley (2002), persists: "Why is it that one minority group assimilates and its language dies while another maintains its linguistic and cultural identity?"

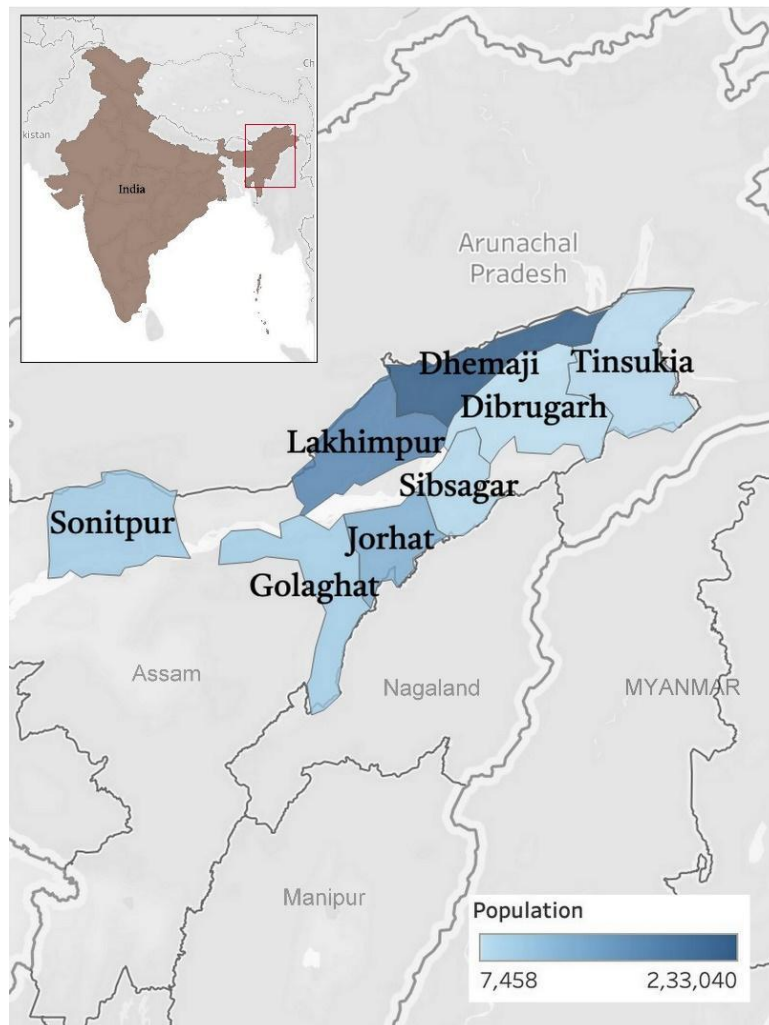
The state of Assam, and Northeast India more broadly, presents a complex linguistic tapestry dominated by languages of the Tibeto-Burman family, including the Bodo-Garo, Kuki-Chin, and Tani branches (Nicolas 2010). Within this context, Mising (ISO 639-3: *mrg*), a member of the Tani branch, offers a pertinent case study. The region's minority communities, including the Mising, have historically navigated a multilingual environment, utilizing their ethnic languages alongside Assamese, the regional lingua franca. Shared experiences of socioeconomic disadvantage and displacement have characterized their history (Doley 2019). The vitality of the Mising language is situated within this dynamic of contact and shift. Bilingualism with Assamese is a functional necessity, particularly in domains such as commerce and education, where Assamese is often the dominant medium of instruction. However, recent policy developments, such as the Assam government's initiative to introduce Mising as a medium of instruction in 200 schools in Mising-populated areas at the foundational stage (Danewsplus 2024), reflect a potentially more supportive institutional environment, aligning with India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

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The present study undertakes an assessment of the sociolinguistic vitality of Mising, spoken by a community of 687,836 individuals as recorded in the Census of India (2011). A distinction exists between the official nomenclature and the self-identification of the Mising people. While constitutionally recognized as 'Miri,' this term is an exonym, alongside 'Plains Miri,' used by the broader Assamese community (Bhandari 1984; Borah 2016). The group's endonym is 'Mising,' signifying *ami* /ami/ 'man' and *ansing* /ansin/ 'cool.'

The Bodo-Garo, Kuki-Chin, and Tani language groups have significantly contributed to the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Brahmaputra Valley in the state of Assam in Northeast India (Figure 1). According to Sun (1993:12), the Mising people have long resided in northern Assam, where their increased integration into the Indosphere has led to notable linguistic influences from Indic languages. This external impact has made Mising distinct from other Tani languages that are geographically removed from such influences.

Figure 1. A map depicting districts in Assam with a considerable Mising population



The Mising population is predominantly concentrated in the Upper Assam districts, including Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Tinsukia, Duliajan, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Majuli, Golaghat, and Sonitpur (Figure 1). Among these, Dhemaji has the highest concentration of speakers (Census of India 2011). However, these figures primarily account for residents of rural areas without assessing the frequency or proficiency of their language use. A significant proportion of villagers are now bilingual, with Assamese, the state language, serving as their second language. This bilingualism is primarily driven by the necessity to engage in market activities and access essential goods and services, which require a working knowledge of Assamese.

In Mising-majority areas, primary education is expected to incorporate the Mising language at the foundational level, although implementation has yet to be carried out. For example, in schools such as Ratanpur Government Elementary School, located in Ratanpur village, Jonai, Dhemaji, the instructional

environment is predominantly led by teachers who speak Assamese. These educators encourage Mising students to use Assamese, leading to a gradual shift in linguistic practice. The government of Assam, however, recently initiated the official recognition of Mising, Rabha, Karbi, Tiwa, Dimasa, and Deori as mediums of instruction at the elementary stage of education (Danewsplus 2024). Upon completing primary education, students from these villages must transition to secondary schools in nearby towns, such as Jonai, which necessitates a higher level of competence in Assamese.

This paper specifically aims to present a detailed assessment of the vitality of the Mising language within the Upper Assam region of Northeast India. Employing the established nine-factor language vitality assessment framework proposed by UNESCO (2003), this study undertakes a granular examination of language use patterns and attitudes. Crucially, the subsequent analysis will systematically explore how Mising's vitality is influenced by key social variables, specifically age, gender, and rural versus urban residence. Drawing extensively from the responses of interviewed community members, this research provides empirically driven insights into variations in language transmission and domains of use across these demographic and geographical distinctions. By presenting statistical insights into these patterns, this paper not only classifies the Mising language's current endangerment level but also illuminates the nuanced dynamics of language shift and maintenance within the community. Ultimately, this work aims to offer valuable, data-backed findings intended to directly inform targeted language revitalization strategies for Mising and contribute to the broader academic discourse on effective preservation efforts for other lesser-documented languages in linguistically diverse regions like Northeast India.

2 Previous Research

While comprehensive documentation of the Mising language remains an ongoing endeavor, the existing scholarly work forms an essential foundation for any contemporary assessment of its health and future. Notable among these is Grierson's (1903) *Linguistic Survey of India*, which provides a brief initial overview of numerous Indian languages, including Mising. Further foundational insights emerge from the now-extant grammatical sketches of colonial administrators and early linguists, such as Robinson (1849) and Needham (1886). These pioneering efforts captured snapshots of the language during significant periods of cultural contact and change. The advent of missionary-funded research also proved instrumental, yielding crucial resources like Lorrain's (1907) dictionary, which served as one of the first comprehensive lexical compilations for Mising.

More recent key contributions include Prasad et al.'s (1991) descriptive grammar, which offered a more detailed structural analysis, and Talukdar's (1992) study, further deepening linguistic insights. Sun's (1993) historical-comparative study of the Tani branch of Tibeto-Burman languages is crucial in contextualizing Mising within its broader linguistic family, illuminating its historical development and relationships with cognate languages. Taid (2016) describes Mising Phonology and Grammar.

Taid's Mising Gompir Kumsung dictionary (2010), a community-driven initiative, stands as a testament to indigenous efforts in language preservation. Furthermore, the advent of digital archives, such as the CoRSAL (Collection of Remote South Asian Languages) at the University of North Texas Libraries (2024), provides researchers with accessible platforms to deposit and retrieve linguistic data, thereby facilitating broader scholarly engagement and collaboration.

Building on the work of Acharya and Mahanta (2019), who assessed the vitality of Deori, the present research adopts their parameters for the Mising context. By doing so, this study aims to contribute a parallel set of data valuable to scholars working on Mising linguistics and language endangerment.

3 Methodology

The necessity for a systematic assessment of language vitality has driven the creation of various methodological frameworks. Notably, Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) stands as one of the earliest and most frequently referenced models. GIDS classifies languages into eight stages of endangerment, primarily determined by the degree of intergenerational transmission and societal usage. Although GIDS served as a fundamental heuristic tool for approximately two decades (Lewis 2005, as cited in Rustamovna et al. 2018), its linear approach has faced criticism for inadequately representing the complex and multifaceted realities of diverse language situations (Rustamovna et al. 2018).

The Ethnologue (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig 2024) employs a 13-level Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) (Lewis & Simons 2010), refined from GIDS, which offers a

more granular assessment of endangerment levels. However, for studying language patterns and assessing vitality, an assessment framework is employed that accounts for various relevant factors responsible for the endangerment of a language. This study employs UNESCO's (2003) Language Vitality and Endangerment Assessment Framework. UNESCO (2003) has provided a nine-factor assessment framework for determining the vitality of a language. The nine factors are accorded by considering local contexts and speakers' perspectives on the language, as follows.

- Factor 1 – Intergenerational Language Transmission (scale)
- Factor 2 – Absolute Number of Speakers (real numbers)
- Factor 3 – Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population (scale)
- Factor 4 – Trends in Existing Language Domains (scale)
- Factor 5 – Response to New Domains and Media (scale)
- Factor 6 – Materials for Language Education and Literacy (scale)
- Factor 7 – Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, including Official Status and Use (scale)
- Factor 8 – Community Members' Attitudes toward Their Own Language (scale)
- Factor 9 – Amount and Quality of Documentation (scale)

A comprehensive analysis of these factors contributes to assessing a language's vitality. UNESCO emphasizes that none of these factors should be evaluated in isolation. All nine factors are examined, and eight of these nine factors are assigned a six-point scale to be accorded to the language under research, considering local contexts and situations. The six-point scale based on endangerment helps in the quantification of the assessment of each factor.

To evaluate the vitality of the Mising language, data were systematically gathered from speakers utilizing both direct and indirect methodologies. Direct methods involved the administration of a structured questionnaire, while indirect methods encompassed observational practices and interactive engagement with community members. The study employed UNESCO's vitality assessment framework, and the relevant questionnaire was designed based on the parameters outlined in UNESCO (2003). The questionnaire was translated from English into Mising and Assamese, given the bilingual proficiency of all participants in Assamese and Mising. The questionnaire, developed via Google Forms, was strategically disseminated to ensure a thorough evaluation of the language's vitality. Around 80 participants were selected from Mising-speaking villages from major Mising-speaking districts of Assam, ensuring diversity across various social variables. The participants were categorized into three distinct age cohorts for analysis: 18-40, 40-60, and 60+. All respondents had received a formal education. Particular emphasis was placed on the younger demographic to gain insights into the language's status among the emerging generation. Most respondents within the 18-40 age group were primarily students or recent graduates actively pursuing employment opportunities. Participants aged 40 years and older were engaged in diverse professional, business, and agrarian roles. Female respondents formed a smaller segment of the sample, predominantly homemakers. Further, the urbanity of the participants' residences is also taken into account. In this context, two broad groups can be identified: Mising speakers residing in rural areas and those living in urban and semi-urban settings. These distinctions, such as gender, age, and residence, are critical for understanding the sociolinguistic dynamics and language maintenance strategies within the community.

The data underwent both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis entailed computing the percentage distribution of responses across various questionnaire items. Demographic variables, such as age, gender, and geographical origin, were meticulously considered throughout data collection and analysis to ensure a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the vitality and sociolinguistic dynamics of the Mising language. The collected data was analyzed manually using relevant tables and charts. The participants' responses were thoroughly evaluated from several social perspectives, including gender, age, and urban-rural residence.

4 Results

This study employs UNESCO's framework to provide a comprehensive assessment of the vitality of Mising, evaluating the nine assessment factors mentioned in Section 3. All nine factors are discussed below.

4.1 Factor 1 - Intergenerational Language Transmission

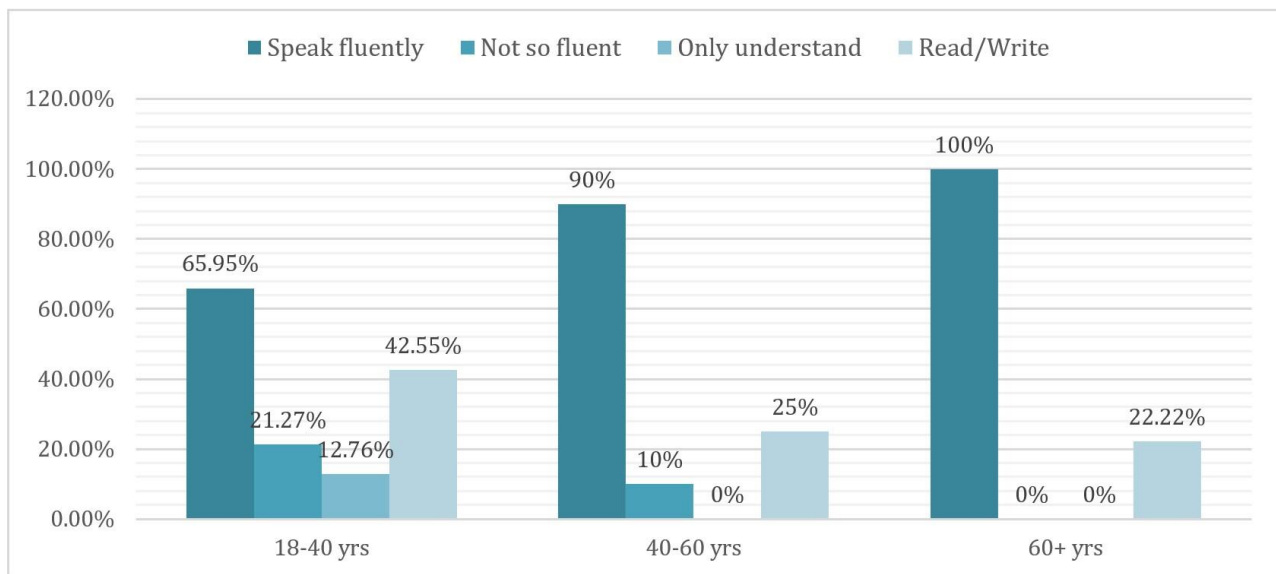
Among the criteria for assessing language vitality, the first factor, Intergenerational Language Transmission, is widely regarded as paramount. This factor critically examines the extent to which a language is actively being transferred from ancestral generations, including parents and grandparents, to descending generations, specifically children. A higher grade on this scale indicates sustained linguistic continuity within the speech community.

4.1.1 Fluency Across Different Age Groups

In the Mising community, children typically acquire the language at home prior to formal schooling. Language transmission patterns are variable, influenced significantly by inter-community marriage and the linguistic backgrounds of parents. For instance, children of Mising women who marry outside the community and reside in non-Mising households are more likely to acquire Assamese as their first language. Conversely, children of non-Mising women who marry Mising men and settle in Mising villages generally learn Mising as their first language. Parental preference largely dictates the language transmitted.

The fluency data (Figure 2) indicate high proficiency among older age groups, with 100% fluency reported for the 60+ age group and 90% for the 40-60 age group. A significant decrease is observed in the 18-40 age group, where 65.95% reported speaking the language. Further analysis of this younger group reveals that 21.27% are “not so fluent,” while 12.76% “only understand” the language. These findings point to a clear decline in active speakers among the younger generation. Conversely, literacy among the 18-40 age group has risen to 42.55%, a trend possibly linked to ongoing governmental efforts in education.

Figure 2. Fluency in Mising based on different age groups



4.1.2 Perceptions of Children’s Fluency

In response to an inquiry regarding whether children in the Mising community can speak and understand Mising fluently, a consensus emerged indicating that not all children attain full fluency. Specifically, 100% of respondents from the 60+ age group, 68.75% from the 40-60 age group, and 67.24% from the 18-40 age group affirmed that not all children are fluent in the language (Table 1).

Parents actively nurture Mising in their children through early childhood verbal interaction. However, Assamese becomes dominant in formal settings once children enter the education system. Most children attend Assamese-medium schools, though families with greater financial means, especially in urban or semi-urban areas, may opt for English-medium education. Integration into the school environment often leads to Assamese becoming the primary language for peer communication, resulting in a shift in language preference. Consequently, even if many young speakers maintain fluency in both Assamese and Mising, the influence of Assamese in educational and social domains often leads to a decline in Mising use over time.

Table 1. Perceptions of Intergenerational Language Transmission

Age → Questions ↓	18-40 yrs			40-60 yrs			60+ yrs		
	Yes	No	Maybe	Yes	No	Maybe	Yes	No	Maybe
Do young people in the Mising community speak Mising as well as older people?	43.1%	41.37%	15.51%	18.75%	68.75%	12.5%	12.5%	75%	12.5%
Can all children in the Mising community speak and understand Mising fluently?	17.24%	67.24%	15.51%	6.25%	68.75%	25%	0%	100%	0%
Do you think that parents in the Mising community are not teaching their children Mising deliberately?	43.1%	10.34%	46.55%	43.75%	18.75%	37.5%	62.5%	25%	12.5%
Do you think in the coming years, an even smaller number of Mising children will be speaking Mising?	70.68%	1.72%	27.58%	68.75%	6.25%	25%	87.5%	12.5%	0%

4.1.3 Comparison with Older Generations

Regarding the deliberate transmission of the Mising language to children, responses from the 18-40 age group were divided, with 43.1% affirming and 41.37% negating such efforts. Concurrently, older respondents expressed a clear view that the proficiency of the younger generation in Mising does not match that of previous generations. Specifically, 68.75% of the 40-60 age group and 75% of the 60+ age group indicated that younger individuals do not speak the language as well as their elders.

Monolingual Mising speakers (mostly 60+) are increasingly rare, with most individuals using Assamese daily for interactions with neighbors or in marketplaces. While younger speakers report using Mising at home, their frequency of use is lower than that of older generations, who demonstrate a stronger commitment to Intergenerational Language Transmission (ILT). A noticeable pattern involves speakers using more Mising with elders and more Assamese with younger individuals (Table 1). Despite these trends, community conversations indicate that Mising ILT remains intact, supported by a collective awareness of its importance for language preservation.

4.1.4 Concerns about Future Transmissions

When questioned about the intergenerational transmission of the Mising language to future generations, respondents expressed a strong conviction that the number of Mising-speaking children will decrease in the years to come. This perspective was shared across age groups, with 70.68% of the 18-40 cohort, 68.75% of the 40-60 cohort, and 87.5% of the 60+ cohort anticipating a decline in child speakers. The data, as detailed in Table 1, indicate a significantly high proportion of affirmative responses to the proposition that fewer children will speak the language in the future.

4.1.5 Assessment of Factor 1

The presented data reveal a notable shift in the patterns of intergenerational language transmission. While older generations have maintained high levels of fluency, they also report a concurrent decline in proficiency among younger individuals. This observation aligns with a general consensus that the fluency of children is declining when compared to that of previous generations. The pronounced apprehension regarding the future linguistic development of child speakers further accentuates the inherent vulnerabilities in the transmission process. Although Factor 8 (Community Members' Attitudes toward Their Own Language) reflects a strong collective desire to support the language, Factor 1 (Intergenerational Language Transmission) points to substantial obstacles in ensuring its effective passage to the succeeding generation.

4.2 Factor 2 - Absolute Number of Speakers

This factor pertains to the absolute number of individuals who speak the language. It is recognized that a language spoken by a relatively small number of individuals, even in the order of a few thousand, may still be classified as vital if intergenerational transmission remains robust. Generally, a larger speaker population is conducive to more effective language maintenance. Conversely, languages with a limited speaker base are inherently more susceptible to decline, particularly when this small speaker number exists within a context of a larger overall population associated with the language (Lewis & Simons 2010).

The Census of India (2011) records the total Mising community population at 737,836 individuals. Of this total, 680,424 reside in Assam, with an additional 57,412 in Arunachal Pradesh. The decadal variation in the number of Mising language speakers within Assam, as documented by the Census of India (2011), is detailed subsequently. Specifically, Tables 2 and 3 present the decadal differences for Mising speakers in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh covering the period from 1991 to 2011.

Table 2. Decadal difference in population of speakers by mother tongue (Mising - Assam)

Census Year	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2011	619197	314801	304396	608017	309146	298871	11180	5655	5525
2001	517170	263779	253391	510083	260112	249971	7087	3667	3420
1991	381562	194797	186765	379537	193606	185931	2025	1191	834

Table 3. Decadal difference in population of speakers by mother tongue (Mising - Arunachal Pradesh)

Census Year	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2011	10402	10402	10402	7872	3990	3882	2530	1258	1272
2001	5248	5248	5248	29663	14929	14734	3680	1889	1791
1991	5154	5154	5154	8421	4296	4125	495	263	232

An analysis of factor 2 through the lens of absolute speaker numbers indicates a condition of robust health and significant growth, positioning it favorably against standard metrics of linguistic endangerment. The Census of India (2011) serves as a foundational data point, documenting a substantial speaker population of 619,197 in Assam, the community's principal state of residence. This demographic scale provides the language with an inherent resilience to decline. While population size is not the sole determinant of vitality, it establishes a critical mass that supports sustained linguistic use across diverse social domains and facilitates effective language maintenance initiatives. The most definitive evidence of the language's strength is its positive demographic trajectory over recent decades. An examination of census data from 1991 to 2011 reveals an unequivocal and impressive pattern of expansion. The speaker population grew from 381,562 in 1991 to 517,170 in 2001, a notable increase of 35.5%, and continued this upward trend to 619,197 by 2011, representing an additional 19.7% growth. This consistent and substantial expansion over the twenty-year period counters any suggestion of decline, pointing instead to a dynamic and thriving linguistic community. Such growth serves as a reliable proxy for successful intergenerational transmission, suggesting that Mising is not only being passed to subsequent generations but is also being fully acquired and retained as their primary language.

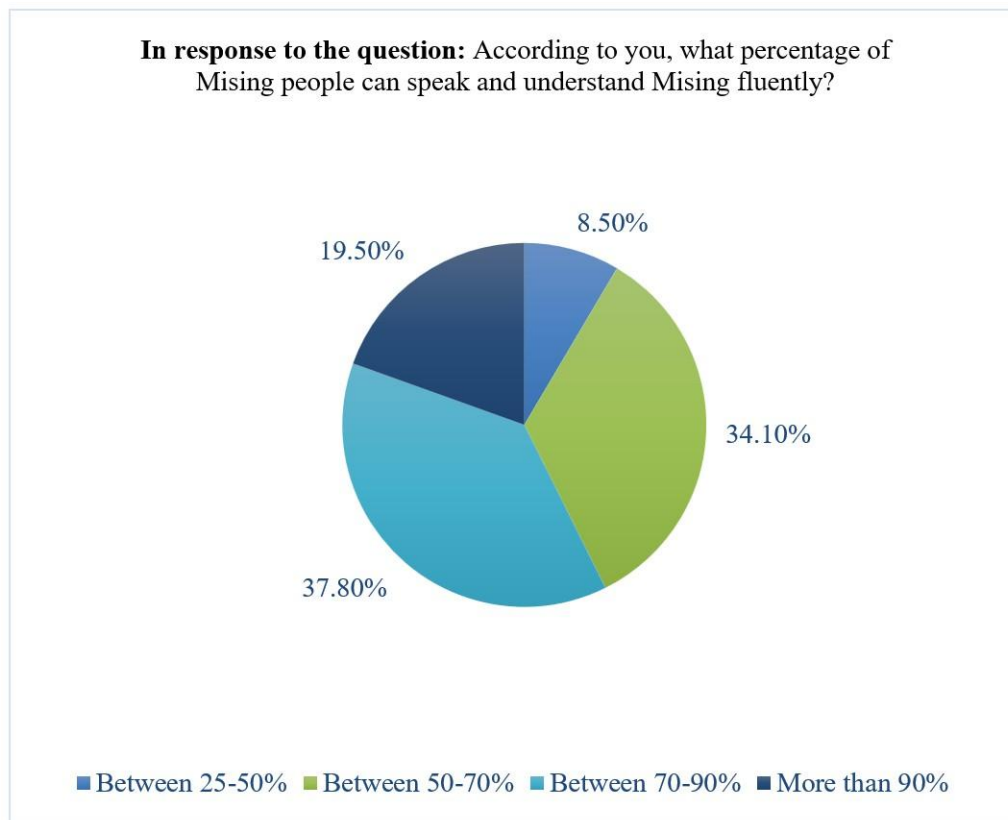
This positive assessment is further substantiated by the high ratio of language speakers to the total population of the ethnic community. In 2011, with 619,197 speakers within a total Mising community of 680,424 in Assam, approximately 91% of the community reported Mising as their mother tongue. This high degree of language loyalty is a cornerstone of linguistic vitality, indicating that the language remains central to the community's cultural identity and cohesion. It suggests that, even within a broader multilingual context, the Mising community has effectively preserved its distinct linguistic heritage. The sociolinguistic environment of the speaker base also contributes significantly to its maintenance. The data indicate a predominantly rural distribution, with 608,017 speakers (nearly 98%) located in rural areas versus only 11,180 in urban centers in 2011. This concentration in rural settings, where community ties are often more substantial and the language is more integral to daily life, likely provides a protective buffer against the assimilatory pressures frequently associated with urbanization. In summary, the confluence of a large and

expanding speaker base, strong evidence of intergenerational transmission, a high degree of language loyalty, and a supportive rural demographic context provides a comprehensive picture. Based on the criterion of absolute speaker numbers, the Mising language is not merely surviving but is demonstrating vigorous health and considerable resilience.

4.3 Factor 3 - Proportion of Speakers within the total Population

Factor 3 addresses the proportion of language speakers relative to the total ethnic population. This factor was investigated through two specific inquiries posed to respondents: firstly, their estimation of the percentage of Mising people who can speak and understand Mising fluently, and secondly, whether any individuals in their village or town speak only Mising. A high proportion of speakers typically signifies robust daily use of the language. Conversely, a low proportion, especially within minority language contexts, often indicates pressure from dominant languages and may signal an ongoing language shift.

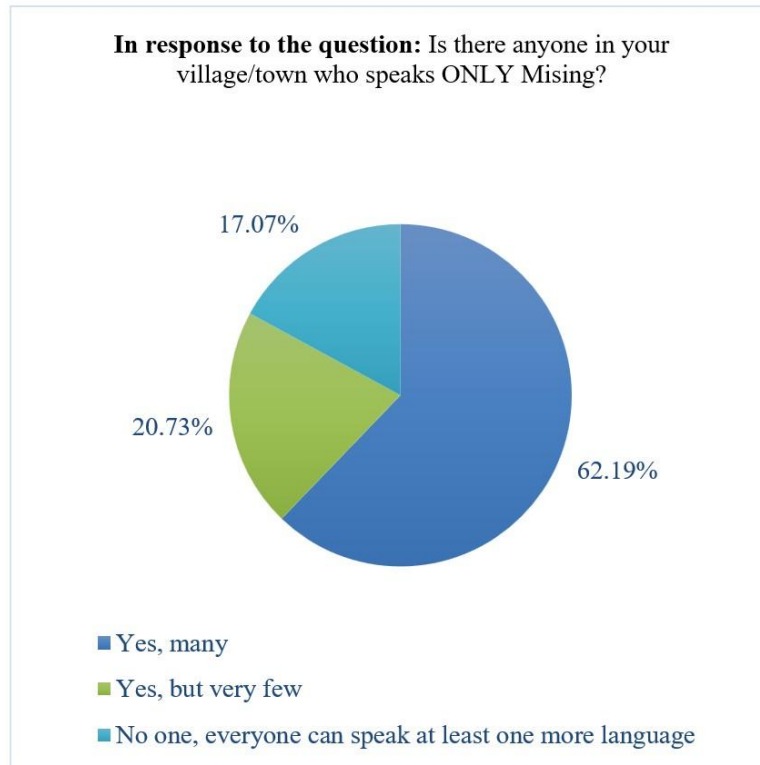
Figure 3. Perception regarding the percentage of Mising people who can speak and understand Mising



While direct comparative data on Mising speaker numbers relative to the total ethnic or regional population are unavailable, survey findings offer insights into perceived fluency and the prevalence of monolingualism within the community. Upon estimating the proportion of Mising individuals who speak and understand the language fluently, respondents indicated a generally high level of perceived proficiency: 37.80% estimated fluency at 70-90%, and 19.50% assessed it as exceeding 90%. A substantial segment of respondents (34.10%) estimated fluency levels at 50-70%, whereas a smaller proportion (8.50%) placed it in the 25-50% range (Figure 3).

Furthermore, the reported presence of monolingual speakers suggests areas characterized by high language density. Most respondents (62.19%) indicated the presence of "many" individuals in their respective villages or towns who speak only Mising, while 20.73% reported "Yes, but very few" such speakers. Only 17.07% of respondents believed that all community members could speak at least one additional language (Figure 4). Collectively, these perceptions suggest a notable proportion of Mising speakers within the community; however, corroboration with official census data is requisite for definitive confirmation.

Figure 4. Monolingual speakers of Mising



An evaluation of the proportion of Mising speakers within the total ethnic group suggests a high degree of language vitality, according to community-based perceptions. In the absence of direct census data correlating speaker numbers to the ethnic population, survey findings offer qualitative insights into the language's perceived status and functional necessity. A prevailing perception of high linguistic competence exists within the community; a significant majority of respondents (over 57%) estimated that fluency levels among Mising people exceed 70%, with nearly 20% assessing this proficiency at above 90%. This widespread view of high-level fluency implies that the language is actively and competently utilized as a medium for daily life.

Further evidence supporting the language's vitality is the reported incidence of monolingualism. A substantial majority of survey participants (62.19%) affirmed the presence of "many" individuals within their local communities who speak only Mising. This finding indicates a high language density in certain areas, where Mising functions not just as a cultural identifier but as an essential vehicle for communication. The presence of a significant monolingual speaker base suggests that the language has not been relegated to a subordinate role and that a complete shift to a more dominant language has not occurred. It is essential to note, however, that these conclusions are drawn from perceptual data.

4.4 Factor 4 - Trends in Existing Language Domains

Factor 4 addresses the application of the language across diverse communicative domains, encompassing both private and public spheres. In this context, private domains refer to environments such as the home and interactions within the family unit. Public domains include, but are not limited to, marketplaces, official workplaces, educational institutions, and media channels. The home is identified as the most crucial domain for maintaining language use. Consequently, a contraction in language use within this primary domestic sphere is considered a precursor to inevitable language loss.

Table 4, given below, illustrates the patterns of language use among Mising speakers across different age groups and social domains. The data reveal a clear diglossic situation, where language choice is determined by the context of the interaction. The findings indicate that Mising is the dominant language in private and community-internal domains, such as at home (over 87% across all age groups), during private prayer, and during social gatherings with other Mising people. This high level of usage, particularly at home, is a strong indicator of successful intergenerational transmission and language vitality. Conversely, Assamese is the preferred language for public, official, and inter-community communication. Its use is highest in official places (such as banks, post offices, and government offices), in the market, and when

interacting with people from outside the Mising tribe. This demonstrates a stable bilingualism where speakers adapt their language choice for wider communication, while reserving Mising for more personal and community-focused functions.

Table 4. Language use based on age

Age → Domains ↓	18-40 yrs			40-60 yrs			60+ yrs		
	Mising	Assamese	Others	Mising	Assamese	Others	Mising	Assamese	Others
At home	93.1%	53.44%	17.24%	93.75%	56.25%	25%	87.5%	62.5%	12.5%
In the market	53.44%	96.55%	37.93%	43.75%	87.5%	56.25%	25%	62.5%	87.5%
Social gatherings (with friends, relatives, neighbors)	84.48%	89.65%	81.03%	93.75%	81.25%	50%	87.5%	75%	50%
Official places (bank, post office, govt. offices)	6.89%	89.65%	17.24%	12.25%	81.25%	81.25%	12.5%	62.5%	62.5%
Private prayer	79.31%	58.62%	24.13%	87.5%	37.5%	18.75%	100%	12.5%	25%
During work time	25.86%	63.79%	17.24%	37.5%	75%	56.25%	62.5%	75%	50%
With people from the Mising tribe	72.41%	67.24%	37.93%	87.5%	25%	12.5%	87.5%	12.5%	12.5%
With people from outside the Mising tribe	6.89%	93.10%	86.20%	12.5%	87.25%	81.25%	0	87.5%	62.5%

Table 5 presents a gender-based analysis of language use among Mising speakers across various social domains. The data indicate that both male and female speakers exhibit similar patterns of diglossic bilingualism, selecting their language based on the social context. For both genders, Mising is predominantly used in private and community-centric domains, such as at home (94.11% for males, 90.32% for females) and in private prayer. This reinforces its role as the language of the heart and a symbol of community identity. In contrast, Assamese serves as the primary language for public, formal, and inter-group interactions. Its use is highest in official settings, in the marketplace, and when communicating with individuals outside the Mising tribe. While the overall pattern is consistent, there are minor variations; for instance, female speakers report higher usage of Assamese in the market and in social gatherings compared to their male counterparts, whereas males report slightly higher usage of Mising at home.

Table 5. Language use based on gender

Gender → Domains ↓	Male			Female		
	Mising	Assamese	Others	Mising	Assamese	Others
At home	94.11%	47.05%	13.72%	90.32%	67.74%	25.80%
In the market	54.9%	84.31%	33.33%	38.70%	100%	67.74%
Social gatherings (with friends, relatives, neighbours)	88.23%	80.39%	72.55%	83.87%	96.77%	67.74%
Official places (bank, post office, govt. offices)	11.76%	82.35%	88.24%	3.22%	90.32%	67.74%
Private prayer	82.35%	49.01%	27.45%	83.87%	51.61%	9.67%
During work time	35.29%	64.70%	80.39%	25.80%	70.96%	70.96%
With people from the Mising tribe	78.43%	54.90%	31.37%	74.19%	51.61%	9.67%
With people from outside the Mising tribe	11.76%	88.23%	86.27%	0	96.77%	80.64%

Table 6 compares language use patterns between Mising speakers residing in rural and urban areas across various social domains. The data reveal a consistent pattern of diglossic bilingualism in both settings, though

with notable differences in degree. In both rural and urban areas, Mising is overwhelmingly the language of the home (94% and 90.62% respectively), indicating its strong position as the primary language of intra-community and family life. This is a key indicator of language vitality and successful intergenerational transmission.

However, the influence of Assamese is more pronounced in urban settings. While rural speakers also use Assamese for public functions (e.g., 96% in official settings), urban speakers exhibit a higher reliance on Assamese across a broader range of domains, including social gatherings and work. The use of Mising remains strongest in rural areas, where it is more prevalent in social gatherings and prayer. This suggests that while Mising's core function as the language of the home is secure in both environments, the pressures of the dominant language are greater in urban centers.

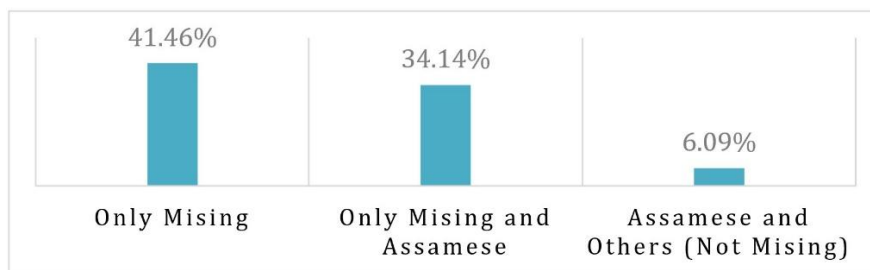
Table 6. Language use based on place of residence

Residence → Domains ↓	Rural			Urban		
	Mising	Assamese	Others	Mising	Assamese	Others
At home	94%	64%	14%	90.62%	40.62%	28.12%
In the market	50%	98%	64%	46.87%	78.12%	71.87%
Social gatherings (with friends, relatives, neighbours)	94%	92%	60%	75%	78.12%	87.5%
Official places (bank, post office, govt. offices)	12%	96%	76%	3.12%	78.12%	67.5%
Private prayer	86%	56%	22%	78.12%	40.62%	28.12%
During work time	34%	80%	68%	28.12%	62.5%	87.5%
With people from the Mising tribe	76%	56%	38%	78.12%	50%	18.75%
With people from outside the Mising tribe	8%	96%	80%	6.25%	84.37%	90.62%

4.4.1 Strong domains (high usage across groups)

Home domain: Within the home domain, the use of Mising varies depending on generational interactions. Among older speakers, Mising is predominantly used. However, in conversations that include younger generations, code-switching and code-mixing between Mising and Assamese (and occasionally Hindi) are common. Additionally, when children below the age of five are involved, exposure to Hindi and English language cartoons influences their linguistic input, leading to increased use of Hindi and English in their speech. Mising is predominantly utilized within the home, with reported usage rates consistently exceeding 87% across various demographic categories (age, gender, residence), as detailed in Tables 4, 5, and 6. This underscores the retention of the language in the domestic sphere. However, a more detailed analysis indicates that exclusive Mising use at home is reported by 41.46% of respondents. A significant proportion (34.14%) indicated bilingual practices within the home, speaking both Mising and Assamese. A smaller cohort (6.09%) reported using Assamese and/or other languages in this domain (Figure 5). Therefore, while Mising demonstrates a high degree of usage in the home, its exclusive application is not universal, and Assamese maintains a considerable presence.

Figure 5. Language(s) spoken in the home domain, across all categories.



Private prayer: The use of Mising in private prayer is reportedly quite high. This practice is particularly prevalent among older speakers, reaching 100% for the 60+ age group, and remains generally strong across both genders (over 82%) and in both rural (86%) and urban (78%) settings. It is noted that a substantial portion of the Mising population adheres to Donyi-Po:lo, an animist faith, and there is a belief that prayers offered in Mising are more directly received. In the religious domain, Mising is widely used.

Social ceremonies such as marriages, birth rites, and death rites are traditionally conducted following Mising customs, with religious hymns sung in the Mising language. Mising priests perform all religious rituals in Mising, and community members compose songs in Mising for Ali-A:yé-Lígang, the most celebrated festival of the Misings. This demonstrates the significant role of Mising in the religious domain.

Social gathering: In the context of informal community social gatherings (with friends, relatives, and neighbors), Mising is predominantly used. High levels of usage were reported by respondents across all age groups (all >84%), by both genders (both >83%), and particularly within rural settings (94%).

Intra-group communication: Communication within the Mising community shows a strong preference for the Mising language. High usage rates were reported across all age demographics (all >72%), for both male and female speakers (both >74%), and irrespective of residence type (both >76%).

4.4.2 Weak domains (low usage across groups)

Official places: The use of Mising in official settings, such as banks, post offices, and government offices, is exceptionally limited. Reported usage across all age groups and genders falls below 13%. This figure is particularly low for female respondents, at 3%, and in urban areas, also at 3%. Assamese is identified as the predominant language in these domains, with its use frequently reported to be above 80-90%.

Inter-group communication: Communication with individuals outside the Mising community rarely, if ever, occurs in Mising. The utilization of Mising in such contexts is below 13% across all demographic categories. For inter-group interactions, Assamese and other languages are the definitive choices, often used in over 80-90% of such instances.

4.4.3 Variable domains (usage differs significantly between groups)

Market areas: In the marketplace, Assamese and Hindi are the primary languages of communication, as the majority of vendors are migrants from other regions. While a small number of Mising vegetable sellers participate in the weekly Sunday market, Mising-owned shops are relatively scarce. Consequently, most interactions in the marketplace occur in Assamese or Hindi. The utilization of Mising in market environments is moderate, exhibiting considerable variation across demographic categories such as age, rural-urban residence, and gender. Usage is reportedly higher in rural areas (50%) compared to urban settings (47%). Similarly, it is more prevalent among males (55%) than females (39%). A notable decline in usage correlates with increasing age, ranging from 53% for the 18-40 age group to 25% for the 60+ age group.

During work time: In office settings, Assamese is the predominant language of communication. The majority of official documentation is conducted in Assamese and English, which reinforces the use of Assamese as the primary language in the workplace. In professional or work settings, the use of Mising is generally low to moderate and displays demographic-specific variations. Reports indicate higher usage in rural areas (34%) than in urban locales (28%). It is also more frequently used by males (35%) compared to females (26%). A distinct age-related pattern emerges, with the lowest usage observed in the 18-40 age group (26%) and the highest among the 60+ age group (62.5%).

4.4.4 Assessment of Factor 4

The assessment of this factor reveals a distinct pattern of Mising language use. The language demonstrates robust vitality within private and intra-community domains, such as the home, prayer, and social gatherings involving Mising speakers. The home domain, identified as the most crucial, functions as a stronghold but also exhibits significant bilingualism, with both Mising-Assamese and Mising-only usage being prevalent. Conversely, Mising encounters substantial challenges in public, official, economic (including market and work environments), and inter-ethnic communication domains, where Assamese exercises overwhelming dominance. The observed decline in market usage among older speakers, coupled with lower utilization in urban settings and official contexts (particularly among women), suggests ongoing external pressures and a functional restriction of the language. Such developments signal a level of endangerment, even as the language maintains considerable strength within the domestic and intra-communal spheres.

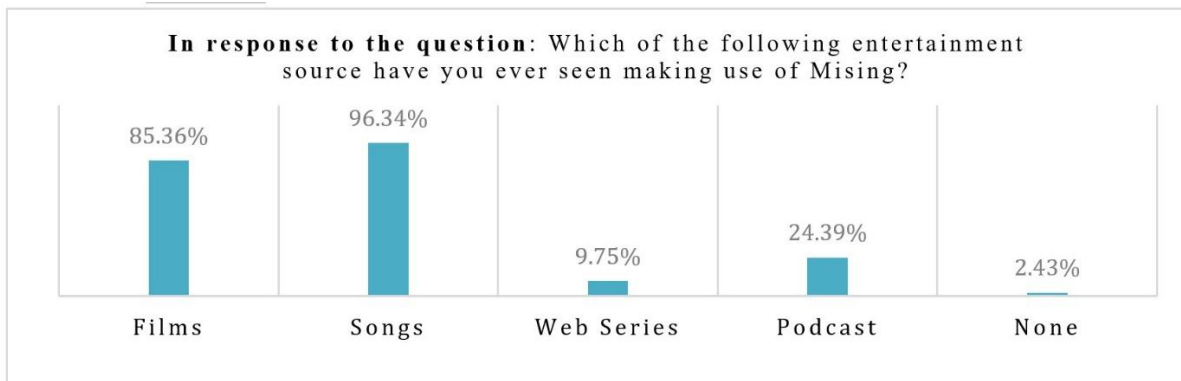
4.5 Factor 5 - Response to New Domains and Media

Factor 5 evaluates the language's engagement with various media, ranging from traditional formats like television, radio, and print, to contemporary platforms such as the internet, social media, and emerging technologies. The utilization of the language in these domains is critical for examining its maintenance within media contexts, particularly among younger generations, and for the expansion of its functional range beyond traditional spheres. The role of new media and digital platforms is an increasingly salient aspect of language vitality (Chen 2023). The available data indicate a varied profile concerning Mising's presence in these new domains and media.

4.5.1 Entertainment Media

The Mising language has achieved a significant presence in new media forms. Annually, at least two to three Mising language films are produced, garnering community appreciation. Regular releases of Mising songs also enhance the language's visibility on digital and entertainment platforms. Unlike some other indigenous languages, Mising maintains an active presence in audiovisual media. This visibility is notable in specific entertainment categories, with a vast majority of respondents reporting encounters with Mising in songs (96.34%) and films (85.36%). Exposure via podcasts (24.39%) is moderate, whereas web series (9.75%) demonstrate limited use (Figure 6). These findings suggest that music and film constitute important contemporary domains for the language.

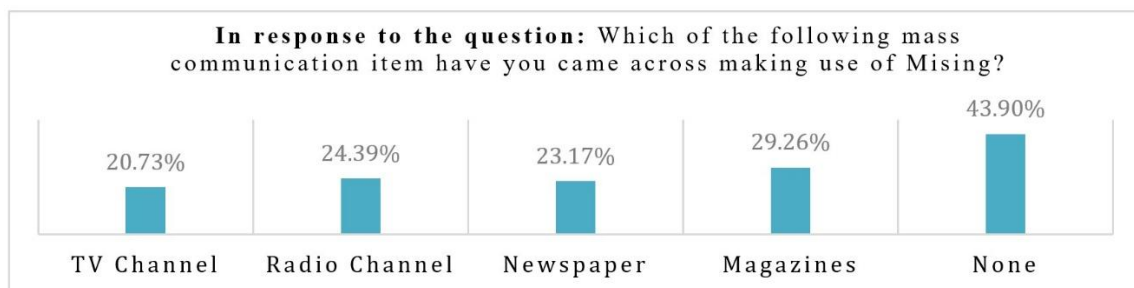
Figure 6. Medium of entertainment making use of the Mising language



4.5.2 Traditional Mass Media

Dedicated Mising language television programming remains restricted. Despite occasional efforts, state media houses have not undertaken sustained initiatives to promote Mising on television. Although radio programs aimed at raising awareness of the Mising language, culture, and traditions existed previously, they have not been maintained. Consequently, Mising appears to have a very limited presence in traditional mass communication channels. Respondents reported low levels of encountering Mising in magazines (29.26%), radio channels (24.39%), newspapers (23.17%), and TV channels (20.73%). A substantial proportion (43.90%) indicated encountering Mising in none of these traditional media (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Medium of mass communication and media consumption making use of Mising



4.5.3 Internet and Social Media

On social networking platforms, several pages initiated by Mising community members and organizations actively promote the language and culture; however, much of the content is bilingual. Efforts to popularize Mising have also been observed in print media through periodic publications and magazines, although long-term sustainability poses a challenge.

Table 7. Presence of Mising on the internet and social media

Age → Questions ↓	18-40 yrs				40-60 yrs				60+ yrs			
	Regul- arly	Some- times	Rarely	Never	Regul- arly	Some- times	Rarely	Never	Regul- arly	Some- times	Rarely	Never
How often do you use Mising to chat or text to anyone on social media, text message, or email?	27.58%	32.75%	37.93%	1.72%	18.75%	56.25%	18.75%	6.25%	62.5%	25%	12.5%	0%
How often do you use Mising to post or create content on social media or write blogs online?	3.44%	31.03%	39.65%	25.86%	12.5%	18.75%	43.75%	25%	50%	12.5%	25%	12.5%
How often do you come across posts or content on social media or online blogs/websites written in Mising language?	6.89%	50%	36.2%	6.89%	31.25%	31.25%	37.5%	0%	50%	25%	25%	0%

Personal communication (chat/text): The use of Mising for digital chatting or texting shows considerable variation with age. Older speakers (60+) report the highest regular use (62.5%), whereas younger speakers (18-40) use it less regularly (27.58%), often opting for 'sometimes' (32.75%) or 'rarely' (37.93%). The middle-aged group (40-60) most frequently uses it 'sometimes' (56.25%) (as indicated in Table 10 of the study). This pattern suggests moderate but potentially inconsistent use for personal digital communication, with a possible decline among younger adults.

Content creation: The creation of online content, such as posts or blogs, in Mising is infrequent across all age demographics. 'Regular' content creation is reported at very low levels (highest at 12.5% for the 40-60 group, with 0% reported by the 60+ group). Most respondents state they create content 'rarely' or 'never'.

Encountering content: Respondents report encountering Mising content online, though not predominantly on a regular basis. The 18-40 age group most often encounters such content 'sometimes' (50%), while older groups report encountering it 'regularly' more frequently (60+: 50%; 40-60: 31.25%) compared to the youngest group (6.89%).

The locally developed mobile application, *Mising TV*, available for Android devices, serves as a digital platform for promoting Mising language, culture, and entertainment. The application offers a diverse array of content, including Mising movies, music videos, folk songs, and documentaries, thereby aiding in the popularization of the language among both native speakers and a broader audience. A key contribution of *Mising TV* is its role in enhancing the accessibility of Mising-language media. With at least two to three Mising movies produced annually and a continuous release of Mising songs, the app provides a centralized venue for users to explore and engage with new content. *Mising TV* also helps bridge traditional and modern media by incorporating cultural programs, interviews, and other community-driven initiatives. This application plays a crucial role in language preservation and revitalization by utilizing digital platforms. It offers younger generations convenient access to Mising-language content, fostering continued usage and appreciation of the language in contemporary entertainment. The app exemplifies the community's efforts to maintain its linguistic and cultural heritage in the digital era.

4.5.3 Assessment of Factor 5

The assessment indicates that Mising demonstrates a notable presence in contemporary entertainment, particularly within music and film, suggesting an adaptation to these popular cultural domains. However, its penetration into traditional mass media, including television, radio, and print, remains very low. In the online sphere, while Mising is utilized for personal communication (with variations across age groups), its application for public content creation is limited. Community members do encounter Mising content online, although not consistently or frequently, a pattern particularly observed among younger users. This profile signifies a partial adaptation to new media, characterized by strength in entertainment sectors but comparative weakness in mass communication and online public discourse or content creation.

4.6 Factor 6 - Materials for Language Education and Literacy

The availability and utilization of materials designed for language instruction and the promotion of literacy are considered critical for maintaining language vitality. Such resources encompass a range of items including textbooks, grammatical guides, dictionaries, children's literature, and standardized orthographies. A deficiency in these materials impedes formal learning processes, the development of literacy skills, and the overall standardization of the language.

4.6.1 Pedagogical Presence in Schools

Perceptions regarding the teaching of Mising in elementary schools are notably divergent. While 32.92% of respondents affirmed its inclusion in the curriculum and 31.7% reported its absence, a significant segment (35.36%) expressed uncertainty ('Maybe'). The reported incidence of Mising language instruction is more pronounced in rural areas (42% Yes) than in urban centers (18.75% Yes) (Table 8). Such disparities and uncertainties suggest that formal pedagogical engagement with Mising is, at best, inconsistent or limited. In a recent development, the Government of Assam has proposed the integration of the Mising language into the foundational stage of the curriculum. Furthermore, Mising was reportedly introduced at the foundational stage in 200 schools within Mising-populated regions in 2025. A range of literary works, encompassing genres such as poetry, storybooks, novels, and encyclopedias, has been published by local publishers, predominantly in print format.

Table 8. Mising in educational settings

Residence → Questions ↓	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Yes	No	Maybe	Yes	No	Maybe	Yes	No	Maybe
Is Mising taught to kids in elementary schools anywhere?	16.46%	48.18%	35.36%	16%	50%	34%	18.75%	43.75%	37.5%
Have you ever seen/read rhymes' books for children in Mising?	52.43%	40.24%	7.31%	60%	30%	10%	40.62%	56.25%	3.12%
Have you ever seen/read alphabet or grammar books for teaching Mising?	47.56%	46.34%	6.09%	56%	36%	8%	34.37%	62.5%	3.12%
Have you ever heard of any school that uses the Mising language to teach other subjects to students of any level?	19.51%	58.53%	21.95%	24%	52%	24%	12.5%	68.75%	18.75%

4.6.2 Availability of Basic Literacy Materials

Exposure to fundamental literacy resources, including children's rhymes/books and alphabet/grammar books, was reported by approximately half of the survey participants (52.43% and 47.56% 'Yes,' respectively). Nevertheless, a substantial percentage indicated no prior encounter with these materials (40.24% 'No' for rhymes; 46.34% 'No' for grammar books). Consistent with other findings, exposure rates for these basic materials are higher in rural locales compared to urban areas (Table 8). This existing landscape of material availability underscores the critical need for sustained linguistic efforts aimed at documenting and preserving

the Mising language, integrating contemporary scientific methodologies to ensure both accuracy and thoroughness in the representation of its grammatical and structural properties.

4.6.3 Mising as a Medium of Instruction

A minimal proportion of respondents (19.51%) reported awareness of educational institutions utilizing Mising as a medium for teaching other subjects. The majority (58.53%) indicated no such knowledge, implying that Mising is seldom employed as a medium of instruction.

4.6.4 Accessibility of Mising Literature

When questioned about the availability of specific literary genres in Mising, poetry books emerged as the most frequently encountered form (75.6% overall), followed by storybooks (53.65%). Novels in the Mising language were reported as being encountered much less often (31.7%). Rates of encountering all examined literary types were generally higher among older age cohorts (particularly the 60+ group) and within rural communities compared to their urban counterparts (Table 9). Approximately 11% of participants reported no exposure to any of these literary categories. Scholarly contributions to Mising literature and linguistics have been made by several prominent figures, including Tabu Ram Taid, Numol Pegu, Mising Agom Kébang (a literary organization), Nahendro Padun, Dr. Bidyeswor Doley, and Dr. Dipok Kumar Doley. However, a considerable body of their research remains accessible only in print, thereby restricting its wider dissemination and utility.

Table 9. Literature in Mising

Age → Literature forms ↓	18-40 yrs			40-60 yrs			60+ yrs			Total
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	
Poetry books	74.13%	46.55%	27.58%	68.75%	50%	18.75%	100%	62.5%	37.5%	75.6%
Novels	31.03%	22.41%	8.62%	31.25%	25%	6.25%	37.5%	25%	12.5%	31.7%
Storybooks	62.06%	43.1%	18.96%	31.25%	31.25%	0%	37.5%	25%	12.5%	53.65%
None	8.62%	0%	8.62%	25%	18.75%	6.25%	0%	0%	0%	10.97%

4.6.4 Assessment of Factor 6

The assessment of Factor 6 indicates that the availability and application of Mising language education and literacy materials are currently fragmented and inadequate for ensuring robust language maintenance, although recent policy developments, as discussed under Factor 7, may foster improvement. While some foundational materials, such as children's books and grammars, along with certain literary genres, notably poetry, are extant and accessible to a segment of the community, formal integration into the educational framework has now officially commenced, especially within rural Mising-populated areas. Nevertheless, the restricted use of Mising as a medium of instruction and the lower reported encounter rates for novels point to deficiencies in the development and dissemination of diverse written resources. This lack of comprehensive educational and literary support continues to represent a significant vulnerability, even as the situation is perceived to be evolving due to the recent inclusion of Mising in the foundational stage of government-aided schools.

4.7 Factor 7 - Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, including Official Status and Use

This factor evaluates the extent of official support a language receives from governmental bodies and institutional structures at regional, national, and local levels. Favorable policies encompass aspects such as official recognition, utilization in administrative functions, support within educational systems, allocation of funding for language programs, and representation in state-sponsored media. Conversely, a lack of such support, or the implementation of policies that favor a dominant language, can significantly undermine the vitality of a minority language.

The *Mising Agom Kébang*, which serves as a principal non-governmental organization for the promotion of the Mising language, actively orchestrates literary and cultural events throughout the year within Mising-populated regions. Furthermore, various organizations operating outside Assam, including the

Mising Students' Association Delhi (MiSAD), the *Bangalore Mising Society of Assam (BMSA)*, and the *Mishing Society of Mumbai*, contribute substantially to the promotion of Mising literary activities beyond the state's borders.

Recent developments indicate some positive shifts in governmental and institutional support, although the Mising lack formal recognition by the Government of India.

4.7.1 Official Status

Mising is recognized as a tribal language in Assam, but is a Non-scheduled Language under the Indian Constitution, limiting its access to certain central government resources and protections afforded to scheduled languages. However, the Mising community is the second-largest tribe in Assam, giving it significant demographic weight.

4.7.2 State Government's Attitude

The Assam government is reported to value the Mising community culturally, suggesting a generally positive disposition, though this may not always translate into concrete language policy.

4.7.3 Educational Policies (NEP 2020)

A significant positive development is the implementation of Mising language education in approximately 200 schools within Mising-populated areas starting in 2025, facilitated by India's National Education Policy (NEP) (Ministry of Education 2020), which promotes mother-tongue instruction in early education. This marks a substantial step towards integrating Mising into the formal education system, contrasting with the historical lack of support indicated in Factor 6 data.

4.7.4 Higher Education

Though Mising does not have its own departments in state universities of Assam, it is offered as a diploma course at Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University (two primary public universities in the state), providing avenues for higher-level study and potential teacher training or research.

4.7.5 Limitations

Despite these positive steps, the language's use in administration and other official domains remains very limited (as shown in Factor 4 data). Its non-scheduled status in the Constitution of India also remains a barrier.

4.7.4 Assessment of Factor 7

The assessment of all subfactors indicates a situation that is evolving positively, though it remains multifaceted. Recent initiatives, such as the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the establishment of university diploma courses, mark crucial advancements in the education domain (Ministry of Education 2020). These developments address a previously identified key weakness. Such changes signal an increase in recognition and support at both state and institutional levels, likely influenced by the Mising community's demographic significance and the cultural value ascribed to it by the state government. Nevertheless, the language's lack of scheduled status and its minimal application in official administrative capacities suggest that support is not yet comprehensive nor deeply integrated across all governmental functions. The sustained impact of these educational initiatives will ultimately be contingent upon factors such as consistent funding, the availability of qualified teachers, and the level of community engagement and uptake.

4.8 Factor 8 - Community Members' Attitude toward Their Own Language

The attitudes of speakers towards their own language are fundamental to its vitality. Positive attitudes, such as viewing the language as a key component of identity, expressing a desire for its maintenance and transmission, and using it with pride, are supportive of vitality. Conversely, negative attitudes, experiences of language shame, or perceptions of the language as having low prestige or utility can accelerate language

shift. The data concerning the Mising language reveal a strong sense of linguistic pride and a desire for its preservation among its speakers, coexisting with a pragmatic understanding of the roles of other languages and evolving perspectives on social practices related to language.

4.8.1 Commitment to Language Preservation

A very high majority of respondents across all age groups believe efforts should be made to preserve the Mising language. Specifically, 100% of those aged 18-40, 93.75% of those aged 40-60, and 100% of those aged 60+ affirmed this commitment (Table 10). Furthermore, most respondents indicated they would be unhappy if their children spoke only Assamese and not Mising. This sentiment was expressed by 87.93% of the 18-40 group, 81.25% of the 40-60 group, and 100% of the 60+ group, who answered "No" to being happy in such a scenario. Only a small fraction of the 40-60 group (6.25%) answered "Yes," with the remainder indicating it "Doesn't Matter" or "No".

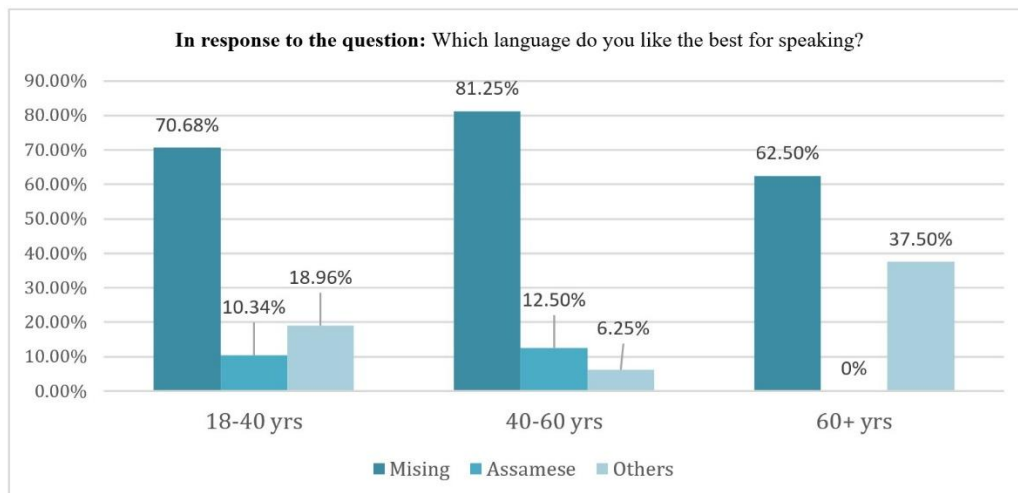
Table 10. Attitude towards Language

Age → Questions ↓	18-40 yrs			40-60 yrs			60+ yrs		
	Yes	No	Doesn't matter	Yes	No	Doesn't matter	Yes	No	Doesn't matter
Would you be happy if your children spoke only the state language – Assamese, in this case – and not Mising?	0%	87.93%	12.06%	6.25%	81.25%	12.5%	0%	100%	0%
Do you think efforts should be made to preserve the Mising language?	100%	0%	0%	93.75%	0%	6.25%	100%	0%	0%

4.8.2 Preferred Language for Speaking

Mising is the preferred language for speaking for the majority within each age group. Among 18-40-year-olds, 70.68% prefer Mising, while 10.34% prefer Assamese, and 18.96% prefer other languages. For the 40-60 age group, 81.25% prefer Mising, 12.50% prefer Assamese, and 6.25% prefer others. Among those aged 60 and above, 62.50% prefer Mising, none prefer Assamese, and 37.50% prefer other languages (Figure 8). However, external factors such as education, television, industrialization, and globalization have influenced parents to expose their children to neighboring languages, including Assamese, Hindi, and English, to provide them with broader communicative opportunities. Consequently, due to limited exposure, these children primarily encounter Mising within the home domain, with minimal opportunities for its use in their daily interactions outside the home.

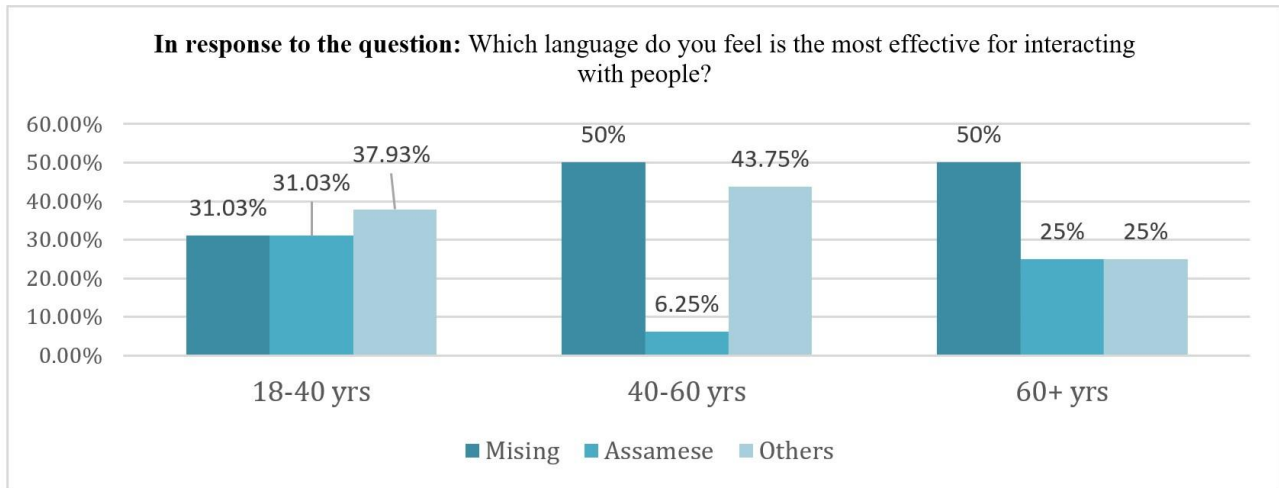
Figure 8. The preferred language for speaking according to age groups



4.8.3 Most Effective Language for Interaction

While a recognized need exists within the Mising community to transmit the language to younger generations, the prevailing sociolinguistic landscape presents challenges, particularly for children in semi-urban and urban areas. When considering the most effective language for interaction, responses vary, reflecting the multilingual context. In the 18-40 age group, Assamese is perceived as most effective by 37.93% of respondents, Mising by 31.03%, and other languages by 31.03%. For the 40-60 group, Assamese is viewed as the most effective language (50%), followed by other languages (43.75%), and Mising (6.25%). The 60+ group, however, considers Mising most effective (50%), with Assamese and other languages at 25% (Figure 9). This indicates a practical acknowledgment of the Assamese's role in wider communication, especially for the middle-aged group, even as personal preference leans towards Mising.

Figure 9. The most effective language for speakers according to age groups



4.8.4 Attitudes towards Marriage and Language

Table 11. Perceptions on Marriage

Age → Questions ↓	18-40 yrs			40-60 yrs			60+ yrs		
	Yes	No	Doesn't matter	Yes	No	Doesn't matter	Yes	No	Doesn't matter
If you were unmarried, would you have married someone who does not speak Mising?	25.86%	31.03%	36.2%	0%	40%	60%	0%	60%	40%
Would you allow your son or daughter to marry someone who does not speak Mising?	34.48%	25.86%	39.65%	6.25%	56.25%	37.5%	25%	62.5%	12.5%
Would you allow your son or daughter to marry someone from outside the Mising tribe?	39.65%	22.41%	37.93%	0%	56.25%	43.75%	25%	62.5%	12.5%

Marrying a Non-Mising Speaker (Self): When unmarried respondents were asked if they would have married a non-Mising speaker, the 18-40 age group expressed mixed views: 25.86% Yes, 31.03% No, and 36.2% Maybe. Older groups showed less inclination towards this, with the 40-60 age group reporting 0% Yes, 40% No, and 60% Maybe, and the 60+ age group reporting 0% Yes, 60% No, and 40% Maybe (Table 11).

Children Marrying a Non-Mising Speaker: Regarding preference for their children (or future children) to marry a non-Mising speaker, the 18-40 group again demonstrated more openness or uncertainty

(34.48% Yes, 25.86% No, 39.65% Maybe) compared to the 40-60 group (6.25% Yes, 56.25% No, 37.5% Maybe) and the 60+ group (25% Yes, 62.5% No, 12.5% Maybe).

Children Marrying Outside the Mising Tribe: A similar response pattern emerged concerning children marrying someone from outside the Mising tribe. For the 18-40 group, responses were: 39.65% Yes, 22.41% No, 37.93% Maybe. For the 40-60 group: 0% Yes, 56.25% No, 43.75% Maybe. For the 60+ group: 25% Yes, 62.5% No, 12.5% Maybe.

4.8.5 Long-term Outlook and the Fear of Extinction

Profound concerns about the language's long-term survival are evident. When asked if they believed children in 100 years would still speak Mising, opinions were largely pessimistic or uncertain. Among 18-to 40-year-olds, only 25.86% responded 'Yes', while 29.31% said 'No', and 44.82% were 'Maybe'. For the 40-60 group, these figures were 18.75% Yes, 43.75% No, and 37.5% Maybe. The 60+ group was divided, with 37.5% responding "Yes", 37.5% responding "No", and 12.5% responding "Maybe" (Table 12). There is near-unanimous agreement that it would be undesirable if future generations did not speak Mising (18-40: 100% No; 40-60: 93.75% No; 60+: 100% No). A strong majority across all age groups believes that if current trends persist, the Mising language may eventually be lost or become extinct: 89.65% of 18-40-year-olds, 81.25% of 40-60-year-olds, and 62.5% of those 60+ expressed this apprehension.

Table 12. Perceptions regarding the future and extinction of the Mising language

Age → Questions ↓	18-40 yrs			40-60 yrs			60+ yrs		
	Yes	No	Doesn't matter	Yes	No	Doesn't matter	Yes	No	Doesn't matter
When the children of your community grow up and have their own children (after 100 years), do you think those children will speak Mising?	25.86%	29.31%	44.82%	18.75%	43.75%	37.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%
If those children do not speak Mising, is it good?	0%	100%	0%	0%	93.75%	6.25%	0%	100%	0%
Do you think, if it continued like that, perhaps the Mising language would get lost or become extinct one day?	89.65%	6.89%	3.44%	81.25%	6.25%	12.5%	62.5%	25%	12.5%

4.8.6 Assessment of Factor 8

Community attitudes towards Mising are characterized by a strong emotional and cultural attachment, a clear preference for its use in personal speech, and an overwhelming desire for its preservation. This linguistic loyalty is a crucial asset. However, this is juxtaposed with a pragmatic acknowledgment of Assamese's role in wider communication. Attitudes towards intermarriage with non-speakers or non-tribal members are evolving, particularly among younger generations, which could impact the transmission of the language. Critically, there is widespread concern about the language's future, with many believing fewer children will speak it in the near term, and a significant majority fearing its potential extinction in the long run if current trends persist. This awareness of endangerment, coupled with the strong desire to preserve Mising, underscores both the challenges and the motivation for revitalization efforts.

4.9 Factor 9 - Amount and Quality of Documentation

This factor addresses the scope and quality of existing documentation for the language. Such documentation includes descriptive grammars, dictionaries, collections of texts such as traditional stories and oral histories, and audiovisual recordings. Robust documentation is essential for language analysis, standardization, the

development of educational materials, and broader preservation efforts, particularly if the number of active speakers declines. Significant endeavors have been undertaken to document the Mising language, resulting in valuable resources for its study and preservation.

4.9.1 Grammatical Works

Several grammar books on the Mising language have been authored, including contributions by Taid (2016), Talukdar (1992), and Prasad et al (1991). Among these, Taid's (2016) *A Phonology and Grammar of Mising* is regarded as a particularly adequate and foundational work for understanding the language's structure.

4.9.2 Lexicography

A comprehensive dictionary, *Mising Gompir Kumsung* (2010), is available, serving as a crucial resource for speakers, learners, and researchers. Such a dictionary facilitates vocabulary standardization and the preservation of lexical richness.

4.9.3 Archival Documentation

Extensive documentation of the Mising language, encompassing aspects of its culture, traditional practices, and the environment of its speakers, has been conducted and subsequently archived. A notable collection is accessible through the Computational Resource for South Asian Languages (CoRSAL), hosted by the University of North Texas Digital Library². This archive functions as a vital repository for linguistic and cultural data.

4.9.4 Assessment of Factor 9

The Mising language benefits from a solid foundation of documentation. The existence of multiple grammatical descriptions, with Taid's (2016) work holding prominence, alongside a comprehensive dictionary and significant archival collections such as those at CoRSAL, indicates the availability of substantial linguistic resources. These materials are invaluable for language research, the development of further educational materials (which connects to Factor 6), and potential revitalization initiatives. The quality and accessibility of these resources make a positive contribution to the language's overall vitality assessment, offering tools for its continued use and scholarly investigation.

5 Summary and Conclusions

Based on the UNESCO framework and the available data, the Mising language exhibits a mixed vitality profile. The following summarizes the assessment for each factor:

- I. Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission:** Stable yet threatened (UNESCO Grade 5-). While children still learn Mising, the data indicate declining fluency among younger adults and widespread community concern about future transmission.
- II. Factor 2: Absolute Number of Speakers:** A relatively large population provides a potential base, though this factor alone does not ensure vitality.
- III. Factor 3: Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population:** Considered unsafe (UNESCO Grade 4), suggesting that not all children within the community may be acquiring Mising robustly, or that the proportion of speakers relative to the total population in their areas is a concern.
- IV. Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains:** Domains are dwindling (UNESCO Grade 3), with Mising strong in the home and community but significantly challenged in public, official, and economic spheres.
- V. Factor 5: Response to New Domains and Media:** The community is receptive to using Mising in new domains, particularly entertainment (UNESCO Grade 3), but penetration into mass media and online content creation is limited.

² Refer to: <https://digital.library.unt.edu/explore/collections/MSLR/>

- VI. Factor 6: Materials for Language Education and Literacy:** Written materials exist but are not widely accessible or integrated into formal education, which is largely absent (UNESCO Grade 2). This is a critical weakness.
- VII. Factor 7: Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies:** Policies largely reflect passive assimilation (UNESCO Grade 3), though recent NEP 2020 initiatives offer some positive change in education
- VIII. Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes toward Their Own Language:** All members value their language and wish to see it promoted (UNESCO Grade 5), a significant strength and motivator for revitalization. However, this is coupled with fears of future decline and extinction.
- IX. Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation:** Documentation is considered good (UNESCO Grade 4), with grammar, a dictionary, and archival resources available.

5.1 Overall Assessment

The Mising language is in a state of vulnerability or endangerment. Strengths include a substantial speaker population (Factor 2), exceptionally positive community attitudes, and a strong desire for promotion (Factor 8, Grade 5). Additionally, there is good existing documentation (Factor 9, Grade 4) and a receptive approach to new domains, such as entertainment (Factor 5, Grade 3). Recent positive policy shifts in education (Factor 7) also offer potential.

However, despite the afore-mentioned positives, challenges are profound. Intergenerational transmission, though still occurring, is threatened (Factor 1, Grade 5-), and the proportion of speakers is deemed unsafe (Factor 3, Grade 4). The domains of use are dwindling (Factor 4, Grade 3), particularly in public and official spheres. The provision of language education and literacy materials is severely lacking (Factor 6, Grade 2), and overall governmental policies tend towards passive assimilation (Factor 7, Grade 3). These weaknesses are compounded by the community's own expressed fears about the language's long-term future and potential extinction (Factor 8).

While some factors score moderately and community attitudes are powerful, the critical areas of intergenerational transmission, domain use, and especially educational support point towards a clear endangerment scenario. The high rating for 'community attitude' (Factor 8) is a powerful resource, but it contends with practical challenges and anxieties about the future. Revitalization efforts must address the weak transmission, expand domains of use, and, critically, build robust educational and literacy support, leveraging the existing documentation and recent policy openings.

This study concludes that the Mising language stands at a critical juncture, navigating a complex path toward its future. While the deep-seated pride and unwavering commitment of the Mising community to their linguistic heritage serve as an invaluable and powerful foundation, our findings highlight that intergenerational transmission, though still present, is increasingly threatened, with younger generations showing a worrying decline in fluency and consistent use. Furthermore, Mising's presence in crucial public and professional domains continues to diminish, impacting its visibility and perceived relevance beyond the home. Critically, the severe lack of accessible and robust formal education in Mising presents a formidable barrier to its sustained vitality and broader recognition. This suggests the need for attention by linguists and members of the speech community.

5.2 Recommendations for future research

To secure Mising's future, a multi-faceted and urgent response is essential. This includes empowering families with resources and strategies to revitalize home-based transmission, actively expanding the language's footprint in diverse modern spheres, from local governance to digital platforms, and, perhaps most crucially, establishing comprehensive and culturally appropriate educational programs at all levels.

Future scholarship needs to move beyond descriptive accounts to the empirical evaluation of revitalization mechanisms. Specifically, longitudinal studies are required to assess the efficacy of home-based transmission strategies and the sociolinguistic impact of integrating Mising into administrative and digital domains. Furthermore, the methodological framework utilized here for vitality assessment presents a viable model for comparative research on other Tani languages within the Tibeto-Burman family. Replicating this assessment tool across cognate languages will enable scholars to map regional patterns of knowledge erosion and theoretically ground future preservation models in verifiable data, rather than relying on isolated case studies.

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