From flirting in Spanish and keeping in touch with their mother tongue to being able to understand their favourite K-dramas, there are a myriad reasons why an increasing number of people have started learning new languages during the pandemic. Klingon included.

There has been a definite increase in German learners. In 2021, we had 2,200 registrations in Chennai.

Linguists of Lockdown

There are also many who are utilising this time to get better acquainted with their mother tongue. For example, Santhosh S, who has lived away from his hometown in Coimbatore for over six years, began learning Marathi. He says, "While English, Hindi, French, Spanish and Korean are widely spoken, there are".

From the work of German composers, such as Bach, to Prabhakar Narayanan, deputy director and language head, Goethe Institut, Chennai, he says he has also noticed a number of grandparents learning the language so they can converse with their grandchildren living in Germany. In 2021, we had 2,000 registrations in Chennai. This year we are targeting 2,500," says Prabhakar.

There are dedicated classes every day. "Since 2020, the classes have been virtual. We have intensive, very interactive and personalized classes," he says.

Different apps have different methods of teaching. Courses on Duolingo feel like an interactive game, while others are bite-sized which means they can be taken on the-go in five minutes at a time and fit anyone's schedule. Everything is free," he says.

There are also many who are utilising this time to get better acquainted with their mother tongue. For example, Santhosh S, who has lived away from his hometown in Coimbatore for over six years, began learning Marathi. He says, "While English, Hindi, French, Spanish and Korean are widely spoken, there are more than 1,100 languages in the world. But many people want to learn more about their roots or simply to communicate with others. There is a growing interest in learning these lesser-known languages."