

Teaching of Hindi: Learner Challenges of Heritage Language Speakers

Rajesh Kumar

'Learner Challenges of Heritage Language Speakers'

Gabriela Nik. Ilieva

'Fossilization in Hindi: Avoiding and/or Undoing It'

Sankaran Radhakrishnan

'Heritage and non-Heritage learning: Teaching Learning Challenges-LCTLs '

Vasu Renganathan

'Pedagogical Relevancy of online Hindi Materials'

Herman van Olphen

'Teaching Hindi in the U.S.: the shift in paradigm from non-heritage to heritage learners'

Objectives of the Panel:

Several times it has been a commonly agreed up fact that the theoretical, methodological, and curricular frameworks used to deliver Hindi are based on fossilized models unable to incorporate insights from contemporary research paradigms of foreign language acquisition. Teachers and researchers in the field of Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) also agree that the learning-audience has changed over a number of years, i.e., the target-learning communities have changed from largely foreign to largely heritage language communities, and the teaching materials used to teach such languages respond neither to the learner-needs nor to the contemporary contexts of learning situation. The main goal of language teaching is to embed language learning in the context of cultural learning, with the goal of teaching the language and its use in the native cultural context. Our discussion in the panel will highlight the challenges in meeting this goal in providing language instruction.

We will begin with the talk on 'Teaching Hindi in the Unites States: A shift in paradigm from teaching Non-native speakers to mainly Heritage language speakers' where Herman van Olphen will present a historical development of Hindi teaching. His talk traces significant developments and the major challenges the enterprise of Hindi teaching has met in last thirty years.

The talk on 'Learner Challenges of Heritage language speakers' by Rajesh Kumar will present the specific challenges in teaching beginners class and the difficulties in dealing with the heritage language speakers. It will outline the curricular frameworks of Hindi which is based on fossilized models. This talk will primarily focus on the challenges of heritage language

speakers for the beginner's level. This talk will also discuss the challenges of classroom, which is a mix of both foreign language speakers and heritage language speakers.

The talk on 'Fossilization in Hindi: Avoiding and/or Undoing It' by Gabriela Nik. Ilieva will deal with the process of fossilization in Hindi as a foreign/second language. In her paper she will primarily focus on the challenges of heritage speakers at the intermediate and advanced levels. Learners acquire relative fluency in using very limited resources for restricted social purposes. Generally, this is caused by incomplete learning and insufficient input, in the case of real beginners, and/or forgetting and diminished language abilities, based on lack of practice, in the case of learners with background in Hindi. The paper discusses several strategies of teaching and learning at the Intermediate and Advanced level, which aim to destabilize morphological and syntactic error patterns in the learners' interlanguage. First, a distinction is being made at the performance level between 'planned' discourse, where the students use automatic and unanalysed knowledge, and 'unplanned' discourse, where they use analysed knowledge - monitoring is an example of this. In addition, the use of literature and other authentic materials are examined, on the one hand, as a basis for extensive input and context for high volume production. On the other hand, they are explored as a basis for increasing general awareness of Hindi that leads to decreasing the cultural and psychological distance from the society of the target language, Hindi, which is thought to correspond to the distance from target-language norms where fossilization occurs.

The next paper 'Heritage and non-Heritage learning: Teaching Learning Challenges-LCTLs' by Sankaran Radhakrishnan talks about the challenges in teaching culturally deviant languages to heritage and non-heritage learners.

Finally, the paper 'Pedagogical Relevancy of online Hindi Materials' by Vasu Renganathan presents an overview of challenges in delivering pedagogical materials through the use of technology. In his paper he probes into the potentials for the best use of web technology for Hindi learning, as well as he critically analyzes the existing online Hindi materials for their relevancy in the pedagogical context. Web technology has allowed us to present language learning materials to the students in a manner that wasn't imaginable before. There have been enormous amount of learning materials available on the web for many languages, and Hindi is not an exception in any sense. Particularly, with the advancement of Unicode technology in the past few years, use of languages with non-roman script on the web has become very straightforward. Also, the developments in video and audio technologies made one to present the movie clips of any size without too many complications. Medium of videos is one of the inevitable resources for language learning and the technologies such as QuickTime, Windows Media etc. have made it possible for the language teachers to construct their web based lessons in many novel ways with video and audio components. The other important use of web technology for language learning is development of online exercises. Technologies such as Javascript, java, Flash etc., allow one to make online tests in a very user-friendly manner and at the same time in a pedagogically appropriate manner. In his presentation he would focus specifically on the following three aspects of web based development of online Hindi materials namely (a) use of Unicode technology for presenting Hindi materials on the web, (b) use of multimedia content and (c) implementations of online exercises for Hindi. He proposes to discuss both the pedagogical relevancy of existing Hindi materials on the web, as well as to explore all the potentials of the web technology in the present context for making Hindi language learning materials for the web.