

Heritage Learners: Where to pitch the ball?

Whether it's cricket or baseball, the bowling or pitching strategy depends on the strength/weakness of batsmen. Teaching heritage learners is no different strategically in terms of planning lessons for them, particularly, a Hindi class with heritage students. Such a class is linguistically, socially and culturally as diverse as South Asia is. These students of Hindi come from a variety of language backgrounds. They may have limited speaking and listening skills in Hindi or in other Indian languages like Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu or Urdu. Their oral and aural skills may vary from novice to advanced levels. However, most of them have one common interest, that is, Bollywood Hindi movies. Is the South Asian background of such heritage students enough to provide an ideal classroom set-up for learning Hindi (as L-2) or does their diverse background make the teaching of Hindi more challenging? Is there a difference between active and latent competence? Do they have to de-learn certain things in order to learn Hindi? The proposed paper intends to address the complexities of Hindi classroom with heritage students and discuss the issues related to instructional methodologies.