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Tatiana Oranskaia, Anvita Abbi *The Heart of Change: Issues on Variation in Hindī*

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1 Introduction

The volume edited by Tatiana Oranskaia and Anvita Abbi, *The Heart of Change: issues on Variation in Hindī*, and published by Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing, proposes different approaches and perspectives on variation. First of all, variation is intended as a basic peculiarity of language itself and of each and every language's vitality and, focusing on Hindī, it takes into account different modality of variation, namely variation through context (geographical/diachronic), internal (grammatical) variation, and in pragmatics and language teaching. Following these topics, the volume is divided into three parts which, respectively, deal with 1) geographic variation, along with glimpses on diachronic perspectives, 2) variation in grammar and discourse in standard Hindī and 3) pragmatic issues within the Hindī teaching framework. The interesting point of this volume lies in its bilingual structure, comprehending 11 chapters both in English and Hindī, respectively 7 and 4, while the abstracts of each chapter is both in English and Hindī. Additionally, as will be discussed later, the different points of view on variation shed light

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both on possible comprehension of linguistic variability, creating a complex idea of how language – and specifically Hindī – is dynamic, and on fields of research which can and should be explored further.

Overall, the volume is well constructed, presenting several points of view from different disciplines while keeping Hindī as the main topic throughout all contributions. Due to the high variability of each and every presented research (from historical linguistics to morphology, syntax and Hindī in education), occasionally it is hard to follow the *fil rouge* connecting the overarching topic of Hindī variation; nonetheless, this same critique perfectly aligns with the concept of 'variability' – which can actually be traced back in the majority of the essays. In addition, the majority of the papers draw to a highly-linguistic background, taking for granted a high competence in Hindī and in the comprehension of the morphosyntax of other New Indo-Aryan languages, while other essays give a shallow contribution to the theme, as Pandey's हिंदी में लिंग निर्धारण *How to determine Grammatical Gender in Hindi*, which could be very useful for scholars who do not deal with Hindī – if it was not written in Hindī.

2 Part I: Geographic Variation in Grammar and Lexis

Anvita Abbi's paper, which opens the first part of the volume, deals with emerging varieties of Hindī across India and on the grammatical peculiarities of these same varieties. She focuses on contact Hindī, both in the 'Hindī belt' (areas where Hindī is one of the official languages or the official language, such as Bihar, Jharkhand but also the Union territory of Andaman and Nicobar), and in non-Hindī zones, such as Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.

She claims that Hindī is a lingua franca among the uneducated and, along with English, for both educated and uneducated people. It is composed by 57 varieties (according to the Census 2011), and many of these are considered dialects. However, these dialectical forms, or sub-standard varieties, are becoming the major lingua franca, used by the 60% of the population, which is widely accepted in communities all over India and in Union territories, such as the ones examined by the author. The interesting point in Abbi's contribution is that she presents the grammatical points which are negotiated in contact Hindī, which makes Hindī more accessible and acceptable for a wide range of people and speakers.

The author presents some data regarding the rise, in 2011 census, of people who consider Hindī as their mother tongue, both in states where Hindī is not the primary official language and in states where Standard Hindī is the official language. In general, she states that, along with different registers, there are around six varieties of Hindī, namely:

- Hindī spoken in cosmopolitan cities, a phenomenon observed recently;
- Hindī spoken in the Hindī belt;
- Hindī spoken in non-Hindī zones;
- Hindī spoken in the Northeast (part of the non-Hindī zones);
- Hindī spoken in the Andamans (part of the Hindī belt but subject to various contact phenomena of diverse populations of India);
- Standard Hindī with several registers according to the profession of the speakers.

The linguistic and sociolinguistic situations of the areas taken into account within Abbi's research study are surely different, since in the territory of the Hindī belt Hindī is one or the official language of the area, giving rise to Contact Hindī, exposed to many non-Indo-Aryan languages (as Kharia and Ho, Austroasiatic languages, and Kurux and Malto, Dravidian, in the state of Jharkhand). On the other hand, in non-Hindī zones Hindī is used as a 'language of contact', due to the great variation in the spoken languages of the areas and to the need to communicate within the state and outside the state. In these territories, neither there is a serious attempt to speak Standard Hindī nor the speakers have access to a strong exposure to Standard Hindī – even though it is considered a language of prestige and a means to communicate to a larger population base. However, even if in states like Arunachal Pradesh there are and have been serious attempts from government organisations to imparting knowledge of Hindī, this has been possible through the "sociolinguistic history of the speakers […] that is the primary determinant of the linguistic outcome of language contact" (Thomason, Kaufman 1988, 35). In this case, the social interactions with outsiders prompted speakers to develop Contact Hindī. Additionally, the changes present in these varieties are the result of the interplay of the model language and the recipient language.

Abbi then analyses Hindī as a Language in Contact, namely within the Hindī-belt Hindī, describing the features of Contact Hindī of Bihar, of Jharkhand and of the Andamans (both of the Great Andamanese and of Hindī used by Andamanese settlers). Surely the sociological features of these territories are different, along with historical immigration and diversity of languages present in the areas, as Abbi describes. Nonetheless, even though there are many points of divergence, there are many common features and partial similarities in all these Contact Hindī varieties, namely:

1. Absence of grammatical gender;
2. Use of the word log 'people' as a plural marker for nouns;
3. Absence of oblique case marking on nouns before postpositions;

4. The use of the modal verb *sak-* 'be able to', 'can', as an independent verb.

The author then analyses Hindī as the Contact Language of the Northeast, namely of Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya, where this variety arose due to the need of a lingua franca and to the inflow of visitors from the rest of India (mainly speakers of Bangla and varieties of Hindī). In Arunachal Pradesh, there are many scheduled tribes that speak different, mutually non-intelligible languages of different families. In the last decades, infrastructural changes in the region led to higher mobility and the need to communicate among tribes. Hindī, in this case, is seen as an equaliser and it has helped mitigating differences in society. The same can be said for what concerns Meghalaya: the cosmopolitan city of Shillong is inhabited by both indigenous and non-indigenous populations. In general, Meghalaya Hindī is characterised by loans from Bengali, Assamese, Nepali, Bhojpuri, English, etc. and has a formal and an informal register, the former used in government offices and the latter used in public spaces and by workers from various parts of India (traders, cab drivers, hawkers), who have only one link language in common – Hindī. Arunachalese and Meghalaya Hindī, as for the above-mentioned Contact Hindī varieties, have some features in common, such as the use of *lok* 'people (Bengali)' to create plurals, lack of agreement of subject-verb in both gender and number, the use of *-vālā* as a specifier, the use of *sak-* 'can', 'be able to' as the main verb, absence of oblique marking, etc. Abbi lists also many points of divergence between Arunachalese and Meghalaya Hindī, the latter often lacking grammatical function words and still evolving.

Abbi concludes that the contact between Standard Hindī and other languages leads to Hindī restructurisation, with many morpho-sintactic features of Hindī which are simplified or generlised. The role of Hindī to assure contact among peoples and tribes is surely to keep in mind, along with its prestige and the attitude towards it.

Abbi's paper is well structured, full of useful examples of spoken varieties of Hindī while presenting also the sociological-historical perspectives of the areas taken into account, giving an adequate account of ethnographic methodological integration within linguistics. From the point of view of content, it presents both those features of Hindī which are prone to diffusion or loss – therefore presenting Hindī geographical and historical change – while highlighting the importance of Hindī variation in its role as a language for communication and contact and giving the basis for future analysis of Contact Hindī in other areas as well.

Annie Montaut's paper concentrates on the non-lexical categories of *avyay* 'invariables' and their grammaticalisation in the Pahari languages, namely in Gaṛhvālī, with a comparison to Standard Hindī.

The case of Gaṛhvālī's *avyay* grammaticalisation processes with respect to Hindī and other Indo-Aryan languages is widely analysed and exemplified, to show the various path that etymological bases can take into grammaticalisation, turning into any case function, sometimes with different (if not opposite) meaning. The example of the Sanskrit word for 'ear' *karṇa*, is excellent to demonstrate this, since on one hand it was grammaticalised into the ergative/instrumental postposition *na* and on the other into the dative, specific to Gaṛhvālī, *khuṇi*. Many of the markers taken into account in Montaut's paper are of a more abstract origin, coming from *bhū* 'to be, to exist' in Sanskrit and its diverse forms, but there are also quite specific and unique grammaticalisation processes, and this is the case of *bal*, peculiar of Gaṛhvālī.

The contribution gives many examples of diachronic adpositional changes, suggestions of grammaticalisation processes taken from diachronic, etymological studies and grammars, such as Grierson's, Cātak's, etc. – Montaut stresses the importance of more general grammars in this regard, highlighting that those with a diachronic perspective mention Gaṛhvālī forms. Montaut then presents the main and the most frequent case markers in Gaṛhvālī, where it is clear that there are many co-existing forms even though only some of them are the mostly used. The different usage of case markers is then presented: ergative/instrumental, dative/accusative, instrumental/ablative, genitive and locative. For what concerns the more recent evolution of New Indo-Aryan languages, in the process of changing from Sanskrit inflections to adpositions and auxiliaries, Gaṛhvālī still uses inflectional case markers in some dialects and from the analysis of such changes, along with the etymology of the different markers present in New Indo-Aryan languages, it is clear that Standard Hindī and Gaṛhvālī have different specialisation and grammaticalisation paths. The marker *bal* is quite unique in Gaṛhvālī and Montaut suggests identifying it as and evidential marker: it is used to report an indirect information with some doubt regarding its authenticity, but also to emphasise a given expression, even though its etymology still remains uncertain (from Sanskrit *manye* or from the verb *bol-*). Montaut's analysis is, overall, detailed and well constructed; nonetheless, it focuses on a single Pahari language: it will be interesting to have a wider perspective on grammaticalisation processes considering languages from other areas of the Hindī belt.

Vashini Sharma's paper, entitled *The impact of Other Indian Languages on Dakhinī*, is unfortunately just a draft, since Sharma passed away before the publication of the volume. It is the first paper in Hindī within this volume, and it deals with the complex linguistic background of Hyderabad, analysing it as a linguistic area. In particular, she deals with the phenomenon of convergence in Dakhinī, due to the constant contact with Telugu and other Dravidian

languages. In Hyderabad, where Dakhinī Hindī emerged, Urdū was used as the means of education and communication during the reign of Nizam, and it continued being the medium of conversation both in Andhra Pradesh, and then in the new, language-based whole state of Telangana, whose official languages are, in fact, both Urdū and Telugu. Due to these factors, Dakhinī has been influenced both from Urdū and from local Dravidian languages, as Telugu.

Hyderabad is composed by a majority of speakers of Telugu, which had many contacts with the neighbour Marāṭhī and has developed common features. These – mainly lexical features – are visible also in Dakhinī, since many people code-switch to Dakhinī, even though there is a push to Standard Hindī. In Hyderabad there are also Dakhinī mother tongue speakers,

From the syntactic point of view, Sharma lists the following features which make Dakhinī resemble Telugu more than Urdū/Hindī:

- the use of the ergative particle *ne* does not follow the rules of Standard Hindī and is, in fact, used where it is not expected to be found, as in the examples that Sharma proposes;
- concerning the use of subject + *ko*, specific of Hindī/Urdū, Dakhinī is 'degenitivising' for a dativisation;
- agreement in gender and number;
- the use of short versions of emphatic particles, such as *hī*, *bhī*, *to*, which are *-ī*, *-īṁ* in Dakhinī;
- the use of तुम्हारा *tumhārā* as a possessive determinative adjective instead of अपना *apanā;*
- the agglutination of the auxiliary verb in many forms, such as: the progressive construction (Hindī: रहा + है *rahā* + *hai* > Dakhinī: रा / रय / रै / रईं *rā* / *ray* / *raiṁ*); in the present indicative (Hindī: बोलता हूँ, बोलता है बोलते हैं *bolatā huṁ*, *bolatā hai*, *bolate haiṁ* > Dakhinī: बोलतूँ, बोलतैं, बोलताउँ *boltuṁ*, *boltaiṁ*, *boltauṁ*); in the future indicative; in many cases the use of है *hai* is unexpressed, as in Dakhinī: मेरे को जाना (है) *mere ko jānā (hai)* > Hindī: मुझे जाना है *mujhe jānā hai*; in hypothetical forms; interestingly enough, the grammatical gender is inexplicit in these forms;
- the Hindī/Urdū चाहना / चाहिए *cāhanā*/*cāhie* is replaced by होना *honā*, similarly to Marāṭhī and Telugu forms;
- the use of the Marāṭhī forms हौ *hai* (Hindī: हाँ *hāṁ*) and नको *nako* (Hindī: नहीं *nahīṁ*), the latter replacing मत *mat* in negative imperative;
- the way adjective clauses are formed with जो...वह / *jo… vah* in standard Hindī, such a structure is lacking in Dakhinī. Here the independent clause comes in the form of an implicit structure at the phrase level, and here सो *so* is the connecting word;
- the use of बोलके / करके *bolke* / *karke* instead of the quotative Hindī form कि *ki*, the Dakhinī forms calqued from the Telugu form *-ani*;

- concerning interrogative pronouns and particles, as in spoken Hindī, in Dakhinī too in many cases क्या *kyā* is omitted in closed questions, or is postposed at the end of the interrogative sentence; this is a trait of Dravidian languages, as the form *a?* is found in Telugu; क्यों *kyoṁ* is replaced by forms similar to Telugu ऍंदुकु *eṁduku*;
- name of relatives often take the final -u form (as मामा *māmā* > मामू *māmu*) and the जान *jān* suffix is often added to the appellative (मामूजान *māmujān*).

Unfortunately, the conclusions of this paper are absent, even though the premises of the research are certainly useful to unfold a further analysis of the data: the listed features may, indeed, be elaborated to a greater extent by scholars in this same field.

The last contribution in the part concerning geographical variation is the diachronic analysis of Wessler. In *Cosmopolitan Hindustani Under Aurangzeb: Terminological Matters in François Marie de Tours'* Thesaurus Linguae Indianae, he deals with the analysis of a early-eighteenth-century manuscript of a French Capuchin missionary comparing around 11.000 headwords with the Latin equivalent, the Hindī word in Devanāgarī (surprisingly close to Modern Standard Hindī), the French rendering, a phonological transcription with diacritics and, in Perso-Arabic loanwords, also the Arabic glosses both in Naskh and Nastaliq.

De Tours was based in Surat, modern Gujarāt, where the Capuchins had previously established their central office. This is also where the first known grammar of Hindustānī was composed in 1698, by Johan Josua Ketelaar, a protestant missionary, five years earlier than de Tours' (1703). The document, comprehensive of a dictionary and a grammar, was supposed to be printed, but neither the manuscript remained whole nor it got the chance to be printed. It does not have a constant orthography, since it uses some features of Moḍī and Gujarātī scripts: interestingly enough, a century later in Kolkata, Gilchrist classified 'Hindustānī' as a different version of Hindī to be written in Nastaliq.

A paragraph of Wessler's paper deals with the concept of 'colonial linguistics' in relation with de Tours' manuscript, as Anquetil-Duperron, famous orientalist, introduced it and probably had seen a version of the it while staying in Surat. The study of languages was important for the colonial project, in order to control and command the colonised territory (Cohn 1996); on the other hand, Guha (2011) points out that much more complexity arose in the interaction of different discourses, languages and works of literature within Early Modern India, using the term 'cosmopolitanism' referring to the open to pluralist discourse and setup, the linguistic and lexicographic

research on New Indo-Aryan languages made by Christian missionaries being part of this endeavour.

Coming to the features of the manuscript itself, Wessler lists many instances of the headwords of the manuscript, mainly theologically relevant words (which cover a wide part of the dictionary), describing both the etymology and the orthographic choices. In many instances, the Hindustānī/Sanskrit word presents orthographic divergence from Hindī/Sanskrit features, due to common features of Gujarātī and Marāṭhī, as in the same 'Hīndustānī' in the title of the manuscript, with the first 'i' in its long form. In many headwords both the Sanskritic and the Perso-Arabic correspondence are listed in a highly Christian vocabulary translation, with a slight preference for Perso-Arabic terminology; in other cases the 'neutral' common lexeme is used, that makes it possible to conclude that de Tours' informants were from the environment of converted people. In conclusion, this contribution sheds light on the importance of such manuscripts in earlier grammatical (and grammarians') tradition, giving a clear example of how this specimen is entangled with contacts among cultures and languages. The author contemplates in a balanced way the colonial-historical setting, the philological analysis of the manuscript and its importance in the history of thought from a South Asian, Hindī perspective; at the same time, the author does not neglect the crucial role of this type of exchange in the spreading of knowledge on the birth of Hindī as it is known nowadays.

3 Part II: Variation in the Grammar and Discourse of Standard Hindī

The second part of the volume is entitled *Variation in the Grammar and Discourse of Standard Hindī*, and is started by Khokhlova's paper on *Conative:Completive Contrast in Hindī-Urdū Aorist Forms*. Her study focuses on compound verbs in their aorist form (as *kiyā* from *karnā*, *liyā* from *lenā*, etc., which Khokhlova calls V-ā forms) and on the conditions under which this specific feature of Hindī language's verbs do not denote the completion of the action. These verb forms are composed by a primary stem of 'major' verb conveying semantic meaning, and a 'light' verb from a restricted inventory of verbs, such as *lenā* 'take', *denā* 'give', *ānā* 'come', *jānā* 'go', etc. The methodology of her study is based on elicitation of responses or reactions to a battery of utterances presented to Standard Hindī speakers from different Indian universities.

The issue around whether aorist forms express completive meaning has been debated by Hindī grammarians, as Montaut (2004), Kachru (1980), Hook (1974), and many scholars, such as Nespital (1997), Pořízka (1967-69) and Liperovskij (1984), state that V-ā may have

but also may not have completive meaning. Other scholars state that compound verbs, however, may signal the inception or completion of an action, but Khokhlova adds that compound verbs formed from telic stems (that presents an action or event as having a specific endpoint) may bear conative (the attempting of an action as opposed to the action itself) or completive sense, while non-telic stems bear inceptive meaning. In particular, in her analysis she focuses on telic verbs in compound with incremental themes, namely where the argument has properties which determine the progress of the event. These incremental themes may be of different kinds, but, in general, when compounded with light verbs, these incremental arguments may denote an incomplete action:

- when then event's end "is achieved by progressing incrementally through the object" (Dowty 1991), as in verbs like 'eat' or 'build', where the meaning of compound verbs is between conation (attempt) and completion;
- the temporal terminus of the event is achieved progressively, but the object does not change or move, as in Khokhlova's example *laṛke ne kitab paṛh lī lekin do panne bāqī rah gaye* 'the boy read the book, but two pages are left';
- the event's temporal end is "achieved by progressing along measurable degrees of change in some property central to the verb's meaning. Internal argument undergoes some change in a property over time" (Tenny 1994, 17-18), as in Khokhlova's examples with *sāf karnā* 'to clean': *maĩne ghar sāf kiyā (*versus *kar di-yā) par vah sāf nahī huā*, 'I cleaned the house but it did not become (sufficiently) clean.' However, if the state of the object changes instantly or the verb meaning has a conative semantic, aorist forms of compound verbs cannot denote an incomplete action: she uses the following example: *bacce ne akhroṭ toṛā par vah nahĩ ṭūṭā*, 'The child was cracking (= tried to crack) the walnut but it did not crack.' **toṛ diyā* could not be used since the action could not be completed.

In general, from the answers of Standard Hindī speakers to the proposed battery, she considers that compound verbs with non-telic stems convey inceptive meaning, while for the ones with telic stems the meaning may be conative or completive, and that compound verbs are usually used in contexts where the action is not supposed to be completed at all, or when the agent considers his goal achieved, despite the action remaining incomplete. Overall, the methodology of the research is clear as are the presented examples which draw the author to the conclusion. However, the selected respondents represent only high-littered Standard Hindī speakers, while at the same time coming from two different areas (Delhi and Wardha):

widening the level of literacy of the respondents may shed further light on a possible variation in aorist compound verbs in Hindī.

Continuing with variation in grammar, Verbeke and Ponnet deal with *ko*-marking of the direct object in relation to three issues: animacy, definiteness/specificity, and verb semantics. In particular, the aim of the research study is to understand:

- if the primacy in *ko*-marking belongs to animacy, definiteness/specificity or to other syntactic features;
- if there is difference between definiteness/specificity, these concepts not being commonly accepted and used by linguists;
- in which degree *ko*-marking depends on the semantic properties of the verb.

The methodology used integrates secondary sources' analysis, dealing with textbooks and grammars of Hindī on the subject of direct object marking, and with primary sources' analysis, namely of 450 selected sentences from the EMILLE Spoken Hindī corpora.[1] The authors thus use data from both a prescriptivist point of view and from spoken Hindī, with dialectal variation and non-standard grammar.

Dividing the analytical part of the paper into 4 parts, the authors firstly present differential object marking with the examples from Mohanan (1994): *Ilā ne bacce ko uṭhāyā* ('Ila lifted a/the child', with the *ko*-marked animate object), *Ilā ne hār ko uṭhāyā* ('Ila lifted the necklace, with an inanimate object marked with *ko*) and *Ilā ne hār uṭhāyā* ('Ila lifted a/the necklace', with the inanimate object unmarked). In this cases, the direct object is marked only in the case of animacy and specificity/definiteness, but when adding the role of animacy to the theme it can be argued that animate non-human arguments are often unmarked, as in Montaut's example (2004): *billī cuhi khāegī* ('The cat will eat the mouse'), even though these are more likely marked than inanimate arguments. Nonetheless, the primacy of animacy can be discussed, since animate nonspecific arguments may lack *ko*-marking.

In this sense, the authors argue that 'specificity' is a subcategory of the concept 'definiteness', or 'familiarity'. Verbeke and Ponnet state that specificity marks the "certainty of the speaker about the identity of the referent" (p. 139), namely 'uniqueness', and in the case of Hindī it is much more precise for the analysis of direct object marking. In Hindī we find the use of the indefinite determiner *ek* 'one': usually the noun phrase which contains this determiner cannot be marked with *ko*. Nonetheless, taking the example from Mohanan (1994), *ravī*

1 Lancaster University, available on `https://cqpweb.lancs.ac.uk/`, created by Hardie (2012).

ek gāy ko kharīdnā cāhtā hai, 'Ravi wishes to buy a (particular) cow', the authors argue that *ek gāy* is indefinite but specific, thus leading to the *ko*-marking and giving a prior role to specificity in direct object marking.

Many authors, such as Mohanan (1994) observe that deviation to the above-mentioned rules for direct object marking may be due to the semantic of the verb, the last issue that Verbeke and Ponnet analyse in this contribution. More specifically, some classes of verbs require inanimate objects and do not allow *ko*, like *paṛhnā* 'read' and *likhnā* 'write', while other classes, where *khojnā* 'search for', *lānā* 'bring', *bulānā* 'call', *mārnā* 'beat somebody' belong, are neutral regarding animacy or require animacy. It is in this regard that the authors used the EMILLE corpus of Spoken Hindī, selecting seven verbs and investigating whether actual language usage confirms direct object *ko*-marking or not. Even though the corpus is restricted and does not include all the possible meanings and usages of the chosen verbs (with animate/inanimate objects, with pronouns, with determiners, etc)., it is interesting to observe that many of the searches made by the authors comply with the premises regarding the importance of specificity in Hindī: for example that *gānā* 'sing' and *pīnā* 'drink' never have a marked direct object since it is inanimate and in many cases nonspecific; or, regarding *banānā* 'make' and *paṛhnā* 'write', where both *ko*-marking and unmarkedness can appear, since the direct object can be both specific and, for *banānā*, also animate. Pronominal direct objects, both animate and inanimate, are anaphoric and thus specific: this is the reason why they are marked. The use of Spoken Hindī in this analysis marks an interesting point of the research, pulling towards descriptivism and thus embracing Hindī variation.

Kostina's chapter proposes an understanding of variability in discourse markers in Hindī through a linguistic experiment of text reconstruction. Discourse markers is a concept that has been debated since its introduction by Schiffrin (1982), which still does not have a common definition nor presents criteria to distinguish these linguistic items from other items, like conjunctions, particles, etc., even in debates regarding Hindī, the most important works on the theme being Sharma (1999), Shapiro (2003), Montaut (2004) and Kachru (2006). In general, the theoretical framework used by the author regarding discourse markers describe these linguistic items as those which i) establish the coherence of discourse, ii) do not influence the meaning of an isolated phrase, iii) do not deliver any grammatical meaning and iv) do not express the speaker's emotions or attitude towards what is said (Kasevič et al. 2014). They can be connectives as the Hindī forms *lekin*, *par* for 'but', *bhī* 'also', *aur* 'and'; emphatic – both expressing strong, as *kyā* 'what', *na* 'is it not so', and weak emphasis, as *hī* 'particularly', *bhī* 'even', *tak* 'even', *to* 'certainly' – and contrastive topic markers, as *to* 'as

for…'/'indeed'. There are also many complex discourse markers, as *phir bhī* 'nonetheless' and *nahīṁ* to 'otherwise'. In Hindī there are also emphatic pronouns, compounded by a pronoun + *hī*. These linguistic items do not have fixed language rules and there is a strong variability in their use: this is what the linguistic experiment conducted by the author wanted to prove for what concerns Hindī. She presented a 'bare' text, where all the chosen discourse markers where deleted, to 39 Hindī mother tongue speakers but also to 5 non-native speakers. The instructions were to insert the specific discourse markers previously extracted, *hī* (also in its pronominal use), *bhī*, *lekin*, *par*, *to*. Even though the controllability of the test was low, since the participants have filled the gaps by their own distantly and have often misunderstood the instructions, it has been observed that there is great variability in the use of discourse markers – particularly for what concerns complex meanings –, due to personal and stylistic preferences; additionally, many of the items that were deleted by the text are not discourse markers *stricto sensu* but they also convey semantic meaning, since their erasure have compromised the comprehension of the original text. They help mark borders between semantic blocks within the sentence and, finally, their use depends also on the sentence syntax and lexis, but also on the wider context.

Kostina's paper is rich in samples from the linguistic experiment and the methodology is well explained, and, despite some criticalities in the conduction – namely the misunderstandings of the participants and the uncontrollability of the experiment –, it unfolds the path for further analysis on discourse markers, poses the basis to investigate on more controllable experiment strategies and raises awareness on possible research questions regarding the issue.

Oranskaia's closing paper of the part of the volume dedicated to grammatical variation proposes a tentative of formalisation of Hindī clause strings – specifically of multicomponent-sequences – including at least one adverbial clause. Their study and interpretation are part of the research subject of complex syntax, central to information and discourse hierarchy in human language and cognition and, in this specific regard, to subordinating modalities. 'Clause strings' are 'intermediary' clauses between compound (coordinated) sentences/complex (subordinated) sentences and larger texts, and which are usually composed by two or more clauses. The analysis of such clauses is, as the author highlights, fairly neglected and typological data from Hindī are scarcely used and researched on. After listing the basic concepts surrounding complex syntax, the author raises the question of the right clause boundary, specifically concerning Hindī. If in languages written in Latin alphabet boundaries are easily recognisable through punctuation and capital letters, this is not the case of Hindī (and of other New Indo-Aryan languages),

since there is not distinction in this language between upper/lowercase and punctuation is scarcely used. Coming to the specifics of adverbial clauses, they have a "low degree of integration into the matrix clause… and a low degree of interlacing" (Kortmann 1997, 241); additionally, the distance between the adverbial and the superordinate clause is variable, and the adverbial clause's governor may itself be a complex multiclausal structure – thus presenting a complex and diverse degree of subordination.

Data analysis was made through a workshop in Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi VishwaVidyalaya, with the assistance of students as well. The processed data was gathered from essays of modern Hindī writers, since the features of this genre are closer to the spoken language (and thus the variability) of the authors of these same essays. It was observed that there were "strong structural variations in expressing a same logico-semantic structure" with an alternation of hypotaxis and parataxis (as Oranskaia states in the volume, p. 194). The formalisation process is then described, from the tagging procedure following the principle of Natural Language Processing (clauses parsing, disambiguation of interclausal meanings, disambiguation of intersentential meanings, establishing types of clauses combination), to the formalisation means using different kinds of brackets and tags. Oranskaia then presents thoroughly an example of analysis and formalisation of four clause strings, all built almost uninterruptedly, explaining both the relation between clauses and the kind of relation – often superficially expressed through subordinating or coordinating conjunctions. Overall, as the author herself states, it is necessary to broaden the corpus, particularly with material from Spoken Hindī, in order to shed a brighter light on Hindī complex communication structure and syntax – and thus in variation, since conveying complex meaning makes the speaker face a choice among multiple forms and conjunctions – and in general to widen the knowledge on information structure. Despite this limitation, Oranskaia's contribution presents a complete presentation of the subject while also explaining thoroughly both the concepts and terms used in the research and the methodology – replicable and where in some phases also students were, virtuously, recruited.

4 Part III: Variation Issues in Hindī Teaching

The third part of the volume is devoted to pragmatic variation, more specifically to variation in Hindī teaching, and it presents three papers in Hindī. The first one, by Agnihotri, deals with multilingualism and language teaching, proposing multilingualism as the nature of language and the identity of being human along with being the most useful means of language teaching. The author considers, in fact,

that a multilingual approach can increase sensitivity and respect towards the many languages present in Hindī (or any other language) classes while at the same time changing the fundaments of language teaching and training; nonetheless, this is rarely put in practice, since the focus in class is solely on the 'pure' side of the language.

Taking into consideration both the universal features every language follows and the specific features of a determined language, Agnihotri exemplifies how variation shall be considered in language teaching, starting from phonology, continuing with morphology, sentence structure and lexicon, thus following the main stages of language acquisition. From the phonological point of view, the constraints of consonant cluster at the beginning of a word must be taken into consideration, as in स्त्री *strī* 'woman' since even mother tongue speakers of Hindī may pronounce स्त्री *strī* as /satari/ or /isli/. Coming to morphology, gender is another important feature that needs to be taken into consideration when teaching, since Hindī and English are different languages in this regard – Hindī being a gendered language and English being genderless.

The realm of language is, in fact, not uniform: the author calls this situation multilinguality, but many other concepts have been developed, such as 'super-diversity', 'translanguaging' and so forth. In addition, classes are multilingual, many languages may co-exist in the mind of a single person in a fluid manner and possessing more linguistic resources can be useful for sensitivity towards languages and thus in language learning. This can be practical to understand how classes need to be reshaped: starting from teacher training (who should show interest in all the languages of the class and have a complete knowledge of how language works), teaching activities and materials.

The theoretical linguistic framework too influenced the perception on language teaching. With the point of view of structural linguistics (Bloomfield 1933), translation of verbs and grammar from the mother tongue to the target language – the audio-lingual method – was believed to be the most useful manner to teach a language, and it is still used today in some contexts. Hymes (1966; 1974), on the contrary, highlighted that the context and society are fundamental aspects in language learning, namely what is the social context where language is used and the reason why it is used, and in further research it was shown that the mother tongue of a student does not influence language learning (if not from the phonological point of view), and that, to learn properly, there is the need for a "challenging input in an understandable way", as Agnihotri states in the volume (p. 219, translation by the Author). Kumaravadivelu (2006) posits a 'post-method', which means that every teacher decides her/his own approach based on the specifics and circumstances of the class. The authors, nonetheless, points out that the languages of the children

are a powerful means for the children cognitive development, thus it is important:

- to introduce new activities and materials;
- to use (in songs, activities, materials etc). every child's language and respect them;
- that the teacher keep learning from the children's materials, even though the teacher does not have to know every child's language;
- to keep in mind that using this approach, children will understand that every language is equal structurally, even though it may not be the same politically or socially; children's confidence will increase when her/his own language gets a voice, and they can compare the languages of the class with specific activities.

The author brings then different examples for useful activities, such as using a couplet from Kabir and discussing the language and the meaning or translating it in the different languages of the class; for older students, also analysing the syntax and the morphology of such couplet in different languages might be an interesting activity, increasing awareness towards metalanguage and multilingualism – for the author the only possible approach towards language and teaching. Agnihotri's approach, despite addressing the importance of being 'sensitive to language' in language teaching, is up to date for what concerns multilingualism and translingualism in education, presenting useful theoretical approaches to the author's aim, methods to integrate multilingual practices in Hindī classes and expected results of such education.

Pandey's contribution regards grammatical gender in Hindī and the difficulties non-Hindī speakers face when discriminating feminine and masculine words in the learning process. As Guru stated, "it is very difficult to know the gender of non-living words in Hindī because this is mostly a matter of usage. It is difficult to know the gender of these words from both the means of meaning and form" (1920, 162). Difficulties especially arise for inanimate/abstract words and for the realm of animals and birds: the paper has thus the aim of systematising the rules behind gender attribution in Hindī.

Gender can be inferred through meaning, for words such as पुरुष *puruṣa* 'man' and महिला *mahilā* 'woman', etc. and for many names gender is clear from the suffix, as in राजा *rājā* 'king' / रानी *rānī* 'queen', हाथी *hāthī* 'elephant' / हथिनी *hathinī* 'female elephant', etc. On the other hand, many names of animals, insects and birds have been arbitrarily placed in the masculine or in the feminine category. Gender can also be inferred through grammatical context, namely through the predicate, as in वह आ रहा है *vah ā rahā hai* 'he is coming' versus वह आ रही है *vah ā rahī hai* 'she is coming' and in many other examples that

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the author quotes. Nonetheless, there are many other forms where the gender cannot be inferred through the predicate but through the extralinguistic context, such as in आप कौन हैं? *Āp kaun haiṁ?* 'Who are you (formal)?'.

Gender can also be inferred through suffixes, both inflectional and derivational. Regarding inflectional suffixes, the author presents different tables showing plural direct suffixes for feminine and masculine words with different endings, which show the difference of behaviour between the two grammatical gender – namely the use of *-eṁ* and *-yāṁ* suffixes for feminine words and *-e* or zero for masculine words. The author then presents the plural oblique form, for plural substantives followed by a postposition, which is *-oṁ* for both genders. Derivational suffixes, on the other hand, can cause morphophonological changes in the original substantive, especially for Sanskrit tatsamas and Sanskrit-based neologisms. The author presents then tables with *-tā*, *-imā*, *-āvaṭ*, *-(ā)haṭ*, *-anā*, *-i*/*-tī*, etc. abstract suffixes: every suffix is used with nouns of a specific category to create particular meanings (as participle, abstraction, etc). and all them create a feminine substantive notwithstanding the gender of the root noun. Pandey also lists suffixes which are used to create the feminine corresponding substantive from the masculine noun, as *-ī*, *-ānī*, *-in*. Masculine derivational suffixes are also presented in tables, such as *-tva*, *-ak*, *an*, *-āv*, *-āvā*, *-pan*. Zero suffix nouns are also presented, as in the case of the drop of *-nā* suffix (*jāṁcnā* 'to check' m. > *jāṁc* 'check' f).. Along with suffixes of Sanskrit origin, there are also Perso-Arabic derivational suffixes used in Hindī, such as the feminine suffixes *-iś*, *-ī*, *-gī*, *-gīrī*, *-at*, *-iyat*, *-ānā*, and the masculine *-āk*, *-gār*, *-gīr*, *-cī* (the latter a Turkish suffix).

Through this very specific and complete paper, Pandey has surely presented a tool which can be used in teaching and for a comprehensive analysis of suffixes and their relationship with gender in Hindī. It also shows the variation of suffixes in Hindī, both from the point of view of their etymology (from Sanskrit or Persian-Arabic) and their meanings/usages. However, despite the usefulness of the contribution and the temptative *fil rouge* to the topic of variation, it seems that this essay only presents strategies to understand gender in Hindī not diving deeper into the reasons for such variation within the language morphological suffixes.

The last contribution of this volume, by Singh, brings a case study regarding attitude towards Hindī learning in Singapore Universities. Singapore gained independence from England in 2025 and from Malaysia in 1965, Malay people being considered the 'original' inhabitants. Nonetheless, the ethnic composition of this state is nowadays quite unique, Chinese being the first ethnic presence, followed by Malay, Indian (9,1%) and other ethnicities (Census 2018). Along with ethnic diversity, the Singaporean society is multilingual

too: English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil are all four official languages, with the former being the official language of education and the others as second languages. Other languages too have a role in the state, since many people have started choosing Hindī in local schools and in universities, the latter being the main focus of this paper. Specifically, Hindī is being taught in two universities, in the National University of Singapore (NUS) since 2008 and in the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) since 2014. In the paper, the author focuses on ethnic and social perspectives of the learners, in order to analyse if there are Heritage Learners in Singapore as in European countries, on the interplay between ethnicity and learning, and on the teaching materials. The methodology of the proposed research study is both qualitative and quantitative, through questionnaires, observations and informal interviews/chats with 40 students followed by their analysis. The inclusion of interviews' excerpts is a positive point in the paper.

The paper is then structured in three main topics, the first one focuses on the ethnic perspective on Hindī students, the second one presents the reasons to study Hindī and, lastly, the third focuses on Hindī teaching materials. The paragraph regarding the ethnic perspective presents the number of students by ethnicity in both universities, and in general:

- Malay students choose the language because they are fond of Bollywood and want to understand what is being said without subtitles. Nonetheless, in the last few years there is a strong trend towards Arabic culture and language, even though in one university Malay students are relatively a large number;
- Chinese students, who are few in the courses, prefer studying Tamil since it can be used in government jobs as well;
- Indian students are the first ethnicity learning Hindī in both universities taken into account. Nonetheless, they are not Heritage Learners since both universities teach Hindī as a foreign language, not accepting students with a prior knowledge of the language. They are, thus, non-Hindī speaking Indians (mainly from South India, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada mother-tongue speakers) who consider Hindī the representative language of India and who have an interest in Hindī films.

The author, relying on Romaine (1989) for the factors which motivate language change, draws to the conclusion that learning Hindī is not connected to job opportunities, both for the dominance of English and for the scarce role Hindī has in India too, if not for communication and for family reasons, like visiting relatives. This last reason seems to be shared by different Indian students, 30% of whom have visited India in the last five years, thus drawing to the practicality and the social benefits of the language (Dorian 2014, 207). Also inter-caste

marriages are reasons to study Hindī. In general, the author highlights the need for a development of a positive attitude towards Hindī.

Regarding the second issue, the author asked the students 'Why are you learning Hindī?' and 'How will this language be useful in the future?'. The majority of the students (60%) indicated that Bollywood, Hindī films and songs are their reason(s) to learn Hindī, while many other students want to learn a new language "for the sake of learning a new language", as Singh states in the volume (p. 255, translation by the Author), to extend their cognitive skills and because they are fascinated by the Devanāgarī script. Another reason to study Hindī is the desire to travel across India and talk to people, also because of the connection among travel, language and culture. For what concerns culture, it is itself one reason to learn Hindī along with the desire to approach it: many students state that they are fascinated by Indian culture, history or politics or that they feel the appeal of the Devanāgarī script. In particular, Indian culture is gaining visibility in Singapore, through festivals like Holi celebrated at many places with enjoyers of different ethnicities. Talking to friends and relatives is an important pull too: due to the education appeal of Singapore for Indians, many non-Hindī speaking Indians have university friends from cosmopolitan cities where there is a trend of speaking Hindī, and understanding what they say make them decide to learn Hindī. Lastly, India's growing economy and employment opportunities is said to be quite important, even though at the moment few students choose this path.

Lastly, for what concerns Hindī teaching materials, the students are more enthusiastic about the culture along with language. Teachers use audio-video recordings, podcasts, webcasts, etc., even though the ready-made teaching materials for Hindī are still scarce.

In conclusion, Singh's contribution draws from very interesting research material: on the one hand his contribution paves the way for further and replicable research studies, while on the other it explains what can and should be done to push students towards Hindī learning, since the reasons and motivations to learn Hindi are quite variegated.

5 Conclusion

In this volume, the contributions have displayed Hindī as a linguistic means of administration in the East India Company's territories, but also a means to understand Indian narratives and to start a dialogue with it, like with de Tours' manuscript. Hindī has changed geographically, historically but also through contact. In Abbi's paper, Hindī was displayed as a lingua franca which creates dialogue between different peoples and tribes, and it is in its variation itself

that all this facets of the language can arise. For what concerns its variation in grammar, it is particularly visible how spoken data show a greater variation and many opportunities, hence giving a direction for further research studies, either in complex syntax, in discourse markers and in compound verbs. The contributions of the last part, additionally, have given many resources for teachers and researchers for what concerns Hindī variation but also in the ever-changing nature of language itself.

Overall, all the contributions have dealt with a different and peculiar perspective on variation, contact and change, from philological, educational, morphosyntactical and sociolinguistic perspectives. The *fil rouge* of 'variation' is expressed in diversified paradigms – dialectology and geographical change, grammatical variation within the language and addressing variation in Hindī education. Nonetheless, some contributions do not give a clear image of their link to the general themes of the volume or could be better inset in it. More precisely, in the first part Abbi, Montaut and Varna's contributions, it is clear how variation and from which point of view of the issue – namely contact (and in its results in grammaticalisation, as in Montaut's) – was dealt with. Wessler's analysis of de Tours' manuscipt as well, despite showing preliminary results of a wider research, indicates in which variable, cosmopolitan and multilingual environment Hindī's birth's premises were rooted.

Regarding the second part, devoted to variation in grammar and discourse, Khokhlova's contribution's link to the issues of the volume could be explored further, despite the interest both from the scientific and methodological points of view and the wide variety of examples. In Verbeke and Ponnet's, Kostina's and Oranskaia's essays, variation and – more in general – the issues of the volume are explored from different perspectives: using real, natural linguistic sources (as Verbeke and Ponnet's and Oranskaia's Spoken Hindī corpus and the elicitation of native speakers' competence in Kostina's) to explore variation from the microlevel of individual speakers, while moving to a broader generalisation of variation on the macrolevels of morphology and/or syntax. All these contributions, additionally, show how variation within Hindī can be assessed on different levels of analysis. An essay regarding lexical variation (which is, and has been, of pivotal importance in Hindī) is, nonetheless, absent.

Lastly, in the part devoted to variation issues in Hindī teaching (completely in Hindī) different perspective on variation in education are addressed, more or less profoundly. Agnihotri's contribution address the topic of 'variation' from the viewpoint of multilingualism both within one language (as in Hindī phonological system) and in Hindī classrooms, where several languages may coexist. Pandey's paper, despite showing how varied can gender morphological suffix can be in Hindī, shallowly links the presented issues to the broader

theme of variation of the volume: he presents the different origins of gender suffixes in Hindī, while not completely addressing this variety from a more historical perspective. Finally, Singh's essay present another, different approach to the theme of variation, namely the reasons why students of Hindī have chosen this language in two Singaporean universities and, more in general, how attitudes towards languages may vary.

In conclusion, the majority of the contributions explicitly addresses the themes of the volumes, while at the same time giving an example of how insightful, diversified and rich can researches on the same language be.

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