
The text, "A History of the Hindi Grammatical Tradition" presents a much-needed survey of the 300 years of history (1698 to the present) of the Hindi grammatical tradition. It carefully traces the origin and development of the tradition through a meticulous analysis of the form, content, function and tacit or avowed motivations behind grammars at different points during the history of the Hindi language.

The study and analysis of more than 400 grammars makes the survey very broad-based and extremely insightful. Bhatia focuses primarily on grammatical works of the 17th through the 19th century for the simple reason that no previous work has tried to systematically reconstruct the Hindi grammatical tradition of that period. Though the survey of this tradition has been a minor part of many of the Hindi grammars, dissertations and research articles on Hindi, the book under review surpasses them all and establishes a new genre of scholarship. The text includes analysis and critical evaluation of native as well as non-native grammars written by grammarians from different parts of the world (England, Germany, Russia, etc.).

The discovery of the first grammar of Hindi (i.e., Ketelaar's original grammar (1698) reported in the text, is one of its most commendable features. Bhatia has made an immense contribution to the history of Hindi grammatical tradition by proving beyond doubt the existence and legitimacy of Ketelaar's grammar, which he personally examined in the Netherlands. Thus Bhatia satisfactorily resolves the controversial debate about the first grammar of Hindi. Similarly, the study presents, for the first time, a detailed, authentic treatment of some rare, unpublished and even "lost" grammars—Ketelaar's (1698), Schultz's (1744), Re. Adams' (1827), Rājā Shivprasad sitār-e-Hind's (1875) etc. Some of the forgotten grammars written in European languages other than English (e.g. Garcin de Tassy's grammar in French, *Rudiments de la Langue Hindoustani* (1829)) are also discussed in this study. The inclusion of these rare texts has not only brought to light hitherto unknown facts about the structure and contents of early grammars, but also their socio-linguistic make-up.

The book has a very cohesive organization which allows an easy comprehension of the historical facts, their interconnection and explanation. The book is divided into seven chapters followed by two appendices and three very useful indices. Each chapter covers a segment of time, and the titles of the chapters highlight the most influential landmark of each era; a grammar (e.g. Kellog's grammar of 1876), an issue (e.g., the Hindi-Urdu style controversy triggered by the British government's decision in 1837 to shift from Persian to Urdu as an official language for tax and revenue offices), or an event (e.g. world-wide rise of vernaculars in the late 18th and early 19th century) of that period. The chapters are further divided into sections which include description and evaluation of particular grammatical texts (i.e., problems and significance, and accomplishments of the texts in the context of the development of the tradition, as well as general features of the tradition during that particular period). The major advantage of this organization is that it allows a clear identification of the characteristics of each of the periods, their influence on the following period and their impact on and contribution to the tradition as a whole.

The book incorporates analysis and evaluation of three types of grammars on *Khari boli*, the standard variety of Hindi: (a) traditional grammars, (b) comparative and historical grammars and (c) modern linguistic grammars. Thus the tradition has emerged through diverse frameworks and approaches which have led to the emergence.

of different perspectives on and insights into the analysis of the Hindi language. Also, the text presents a comprehensive evaluation of grammars at various linguistic levels such as phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics.

The scope of the study extends far beyond a simple chronological documentation of the facts through the history of the Hindi grammatical tradition. It also explains the nature and direction of the growth of the tradition in the context of the sociolinguistic factors (e.g. socio-political contexts, attitudes of the grammarians, etc.) which have been influential in shaping the form and determining the direction of the growth of the tradition. Hence the text is extremely useful for understanding the causes behind particular developments in the tradition at various points in time. The methodological framework adopted, blending the historical and thematic approaches, is well suited for a survey of this depth and magnitude. The major advantage of this method is that it presents description, analysis and interpretation of grammatical trends through different periods of time without undermining contributions of individual grammars and grammarians without glossing over their shortcomings.

Bhatia rightly describes the beginning of the Hindi grammatical tradition as an “alien tradition”—a tradition which ran parallel to the establishment of European /British colonial trade centers in India as well as to the influx of Christian missionaries in the 17th century. The earliest period (1698-1770) of this tradition was the period of general political vacuum in the country created by the lack of will and strength of the last Mughal rulers. This situation was largely responsible for the traditional indigenous scholarship reaching a moribund state. Not surprisingly then, the grammars written in this period were all second language grammars (written mostly by administrators and Christian missionaries) based on a religious—colonial model of language and which were designed to give their European readers a taste of the exotic languages (similar to the exotic spices) of India. The outcome of the attempt of the grammarians of this period to write a grammar of “Hindustani” was crude and unsophisticated in terms of thematic content and linguistic analysis of the Hindi language. These grammars understandably focussed on learning isolated words, sentences and expressions so that the users would be able to survive in India without too much difficulty. Also, the motivation of early Christian missionary grammarians like Benjamin Schultz for writing his Grammatica Hindostanica (1744) was that “learning of the language and scripts of ‘uneducated or illiterate’ people was essential for instructing them in their native way to impart knowledge” (50). Benjamin Schultz’s attitude was definitely the predominant attitude of the grammarians of that period. In as much as these works “exhibit notable deficiencies in the area of phonetics, phonology, (except Beliagatti’s ) and syntax (except Schultz’s), morphology receives only a minimal amount of attention …” (60), and suffer from “errors in the recording and analysis of data, especially the wrong analysis stemming from the wrong segmentation of linguistic units” (63-64), there might be some truth in the overall judgment reflected in the statement of the native traditional grammarians that “It is a shame to call them grammars and an insult to call their creators grammarians” (64). But I do agree with Bhatia that in spite of all their shortcomings, these early authors must be credited for having “initiated a tradition” when there was none indigenously available.

A grammar of Hindoostani language by John B. Gilchrist (1796) marks the early middle period of the tradition. Gilchrist was the first successful grammarian who succeeded in describing the basic form and function of the three vexatious and often-mentioned grammatical constructions—the causative, the compound verb, and the