Hindi Grammars: A View & Review

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Abstract

In the 18th century Hindi grammars were prepared by the European scholars with an aim to teach and learn Hindi language. These grammars were prescriptive and useful from pedagogical point of view. Subsequently Indian scholars like Kamta Prasad Guru and Kishori Das Vajpayee made significant contribution in the preparation of Hindi grammars. In the last three decades Hindi grammars have been prepared following linguistic models which provide deep insight into the grammatical structure of Hindi language. These grammars cater to the needs of Hindi language learners.

It is speculated that the history of Hindi grammar date back to the 17th cent and first Hindi Grammar was written in Dutch by Johannes Josua Ketelaar, an employee of Dutch East Indian Company. The grammar was written in 1698 but remained unpublished. It was primarily data oriented and focused on presenting data rather than formulating rules. The main body of the work consists of lexicons and grammar. It's Latin Version De Lingua Hindustanica (Hundustanis Language) was later on translated and published by David Mill in the year 1743. Mill's grammar presents the first treatment of the writing system in the History of Hindi grammar. He converged Ketellars bilingual grammar i.e. Hindi and Persion into Hindi grammar. Intensive editing of Ketellars grammar was also done by him. During this period other two grammars were written in Latin by two missionaries- Benjamin and Cassiano. In this grammar they quoted passages from the Bible. Benjamin wrote 'Grammatica Hindostanico' (Hindustaur Grammar, 1744) and Cassiano wrote 'Alphabetum Brammatanicum' (Bralman Alphabet, 1771). This was followed by an attempt of Hindi grammar by George Headly entitled 'Grammatical Remarks on the practical and vulgar Dialects of Indostain' (1772) in English Language. Subsequently a Russian Scholar Lebedar brought a grammar 'A Grammar of the Pure and Mixed East Dialect' with dialogues. 'Hindi' grammars written in the 18th cent were not satisfactory. These are quiet divergent in scope and data. These are primarily data oriented. In the beginning of the 18th cent two Pundits in Calcutta Lallu ji Lal and Sadal Misra were inspired and instructed by the european scholars who were Head of the College in which they were teaching. They initiated a movement which is largely responsible for the survival of modern Hindi.

At the end of the 18th cent, Britishers felt need of teaching and learning Hindi Language, As a result different pedagogical grammars were brought out by the British scholars. John B. Gilchrist- taught Hindi language to the employees of the East Indian Company at Fort Willaim college. Keeping in view the needs of the learners, he wrote 'A Grammar of the Hindustani Language', in 1796. This grammar was based on western model. His work was followed by attempts of various other scholars. Roebucks (1810) wrote 'the English and Hindustani Dictionary with grammar'. Rev A.T. Adams 'Hindi Bhasha ka Vyakran' (in Hindi, 1827) and

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Duncan Forbe's 'A Grammar of the Hindustani Language' (1846) were followed by grammars of Charles Stuar (1808) L. Shakespeare (1813) and W. Ethrington (1820). "The Hindi Translation of Ethurington grammar appeared in 1896. East wick wrote 'A Concise grammar of the Hindustani Language (1847) published in London.

All these pre-modern linguistic grammar were prepared with an aim to teach Hindi language to the missionaries. These grammars being prescriptive do not provide detailed description. These grammars just provide raw data or rare data on the learning of Hindi as a second language. Basically, these grammars are self-taught grammars of Hindi prepared with an objective to learn Hindi as a second language. They set out patterns which are immediately useful to the learners. Therefore, these grammars adopt selective approach to Hindi language pedagogy. The old grammars of this era were torch bearer for the modern grammars.

Besides European scholars, Indian scholars also made significant contribution in the preparation of Hindi grammars. The most significant grammars and noted grammarians of the 19th centuries were: Pandit Shri Lal (Bhasha Tatvabodhini, 1865), Navin Chandra Ray (1868), Raja Shiv Prasad 'Sitare Hind's Hindi Vyakran', (1875), Ayodhya Prasad Khatri, (1877), Govind Dev Shastri (1879), Devi Prasad (1881), Mohan Lal (1881), Dua Woth (1886), Ram Narain (1897) Sri Narayan Shastri (1897), Mohan Lal Verma (1901), Kesheo Ram (1903), Babu Shyam Sunder Das (1906), Ganga Prasad (1907), Manikya Chand Jain (1908), Kanhaiya Lal Upadhyay (1910), Ramavtar Sharma (1910). Ambika Prasad Vajpai brought out 'Hindi Kaumadi' (1919) from Calcutta. His grammar is significant because he covered every grammatical aspect of Hindi.

A standard grammar of Hindi 'Hindi Vyakran' by Guru Kamta Prasad appeared in the year 1920. This grammar shows impact of the western and Sanskrit Tradition. Guru's work inspired his contemporaries to write Hindi grammars. Dhirendra Verma and Babu Ram Saxena brought out and 'Navin Hindi' Vyakran' in 1933 from Allahabad. Kishori Dass Vajpei wrote 'Braj Bhasha ka Vyakaran' (1943), 'Rasthrabhasha ka Prathma Vyakran in 1949 followed by another grammar 'shabdanushashan' in 1958. Of all the grammars written so far, kellog's grammar 'A grammar of the Hindi language (1975) is one of the best grammar ever written in Hindi. It covers a great deal of information about Hindi dialects spoken in different states of India. The grammars written by Kellog, Guru and Vajpayee gained immense popularity. The historical treatise reveals the fact that these grammars adopt the grammatical model of Sanskrit and follow the tradition of Greek and Latin. These old grammars delineate the old traditional patterns and do not suit the needs of modern period. Many Hindi grammars enrich the tradition of historical studies which began with the work of J. Beam's Comparative Grammars of the Modern Aryan Languages of India published in three volumes (1872-1876).

The grammars published after 1950 may be listed as follows; The Government of India published Aryendra Sharma's, 'A Basic Grammar of Modern Hindi (1958), 'Hindi Vyakran' prepared by Duni Chand, Hindi Pracharani, Sabha published K.D. Vajpey's grammar 'Hindi Vyakaran' in 1957. H.C. Scholberg (1955) wrote' Concise Grammer of Hindi Language S. Misra, L. Apte and M.C. Sehgal (1958). Wrote 'Modern Hindi Grammar'. Lok Nath Dwivedi's 'Hindi Vyakaran Kaumadi' was published in 1966.

Kachru points out that the descriptive studies appeared after 1950 vary a great deal in their approach, some set up taxonomies with no regard to the meaning of the items under consideration, others concentrate on the meaning with little attempt at syntactic description like Hacker.

The traditional models derived for writing modern grammars have undergone sea change now. The scholars are using systematic and scientific tools for writing grammars. Endeavouring the contents of the grammars, the grammars may be classified as:

(a)   Traditional Grammars

(b)   Historical and Comparative Grammars

(c)   Structural and Descriptive Grammars

(d)   Pedagogical Grammars/Prescriptive Grammars.

(e)   Modern Linguistic Grammars

In the early sixties the chomskyan generative model brought revolution in the preparation of modern structural grammars. Some of the scholars prepared grammars based on the chomskyn model.

A Reference Grammar of Hindi (1967) by K.C. Behl, and 'An introduction to Hindi syntax' (1966) by Yamuna Kachru, both these grammars not only follow transformational model, but also have an impact of traditional methodology.

Raj Gopalan (1973) prepared 'Hindi ka Bhasha Vaigyanik Vyakaran'. Balacharan (1971) and Sah (1971) applied integrated theory of 'Case grammar and Generative Semantics' to account for grammatical phenomena in English and Hindi. 'A Reference Grammar of Hindi' by Stella Sandhal (2000) intends to be a reference grammar. This grammar serves as a supplement to other pedagogical material.

In view of current developments of Hindi grammars, the grammars can be viewed as documents of more than mere historical importance. They have a unique place in the grammatical tradition of Hindi for they-provide major information for research historical socio and pscholing in the. For historical linguistics they provide access to rare samples of spoken Hindi for the late seventeeth and eighteenth centuries they provide valuable sociolinguistic data for the study of such topics as the nature of linguistic variations in Hindi and language attitudes of the grammarians about three centuries ago.

Moutaut (2005) wrote linguistic grammar of Hindi from a typological point of view. The grammar is useful for linguists working in the area of linguistic typology with special reference to Indo Aryan languages.

Kachru (2006) gives description of Modern Hindi from socio-linguistic point of view. She provides rules of phrases, sentence constructions and conventions and practices of language use in spoken and written texts keeping in view linguistic theories. This grammar is quite useful for language learners of Hindi.

Agnihotri (2007) wrote "Hindi: An essential Grammar". The grammar provides brief description

of various simple, compound and complex structures of Hindi.

Kaul's (2009) 'Modern Hindi Grammar' is a pedagogical grammar useful for Hindi Language learners and teachers for teaching Hindi as a second language to non-Hindi speakers.

There is no denying the facts that Hindi grammar has gained significance in modern times. The scholars have contributed to the growth and tradition of Hindi. The native speakers of Hindi without having formal knowledge of Hindi grammar, are capable of speaking grammatically to a great degree of accuracy. The native speakers of a language assimilate these rules subconsciously, but non native speakers have to learn rules consciously.

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