



# The Hindi Newspaper Revolution: Teaching Reading of Print and Online News Media

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## Abstract

There has been a revolution in Hindi newspaper publication and readership in the last fifty years. This has created new opportunities and challenges in the teaching of Hindi. This article is based on studies undertaken as part of the development and teaching of Hindi courses at La Trobe University from 1997 to 2007. Evident advantages of the newspaper revolution include: current content in classes; comparisons of English language and Hindi language stories; and the study of local level stories. The problems relate to what constitutes ‘standard Hindi’ itself. The most notable challenge created by the newspaper revolution in India for Hindi teachers is the issue of what constitutes the ‘standard Hindi’ we are teaching, as new editions of new Hindi papers continuously redefine what is regarded as Hindi. This highly contested area has seen a shift from a highly Sanskritized formal Hindi in the 1950s to constant code-switching between Hindi, Urdu and English elements in contemporary news media. This article concludes by arguing that there is only one way to deal with this contradiction; when teaching students how to read news media, Hindi teachers must also get students themselves to engage in the debate over what constitutes ‘Hindi.’

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## 1 The Hindi newspaper revolution

Hindi newspaper sales and readership have grown immensely since 1991. Readership had increased from 29 per thousand in 1991 to 69 per thousand in 2001 and has continued to grow up to the present day (Jeffrey, 2007). In fact, four out of five of the top selling Indian newspapers are now Hindi papers (Ninian, 2007, p. 16). The best way to examine circulation and readership figures for Indian papers is from the National Readership survey published by the National Readership Studies Council in August each year. The National Readership Survey in 2006 estimated there were 204 million readers of daily newspapers in India, and that 40 percent (81.6 million) were readers of Hindi papers and 10 percent (20.4 million) were readers of English papers. (Ram, 2007) The top selling Hindi newspapers were the *Dainik Jāgra* दैनिक जागरण (“Daily Awakening” with 21.2 million readers) and *Dainik Bhāskar* दैनिक भास्कर (“Daily Sun” with 21 million readers). In comparison the biggest readership for an English paper was *The Times of India* with 7.4 million (“NRS 2006 - Key Findings,” 2006).

These changes also reflect another dramatic shift in attitudes towards the Hindi press. Prior to this, most educated English speaking Indians tended to dismiss the Hindi press as parochial, badly written, and mostly merely translations of stories from the English language press. Whether such views were valid is not really the issue. The point is simply that, due to such attitudes, there was

little study of the Hindi press, and even less of how to teach students to read it. This situation is exacerbated by the difficulty of getting advanced level teaching materials published for Hindi due to its perceived marginal importance in many people's eyes.

## 2 Hindi newspaper readers

The teaching of how to read newspapers is a well established tradition in foreign language teaching and newspaper readers exist for many languages. For European languages, readers were being published in the early 20th century for languages such as French (e.g. Weill, 1912). Newspaper readers have generally taken the form of collections of articles accompanied by glossaries and notes. Many such readers for Asian languages date back to the nineteen sixties, for instance Harter's Indonesian reader (Harter, 1968). There are also publishers in the USA, such as Dunwoody, who specialise in producing materials for less commonly taught languages (LCTL). The Dunwoody catalogue includes newspaper readers for many Asian languages ("Dunwoody Press"). Newspaper readers continued to be published for many languages, sometimes nowadays including material from both print and internet sources, such as in a recent Indonesian newspaper reader (Gale & Laia, 2008).

Materials related to reading Hindi news media including the print press were also being developed during the 1960s. The earliest published Hindi newspaper reader appears to have been the one produced in 1963 by the well known linguist Colin Masica and published by the University of Chicago (Masica, 1963). Mimeographed Hindi newspaper and radio reading resources were also available to undergraduates at SOAS in London in around 1985 which took the form of vocabularies to accompany articles about the Vietnam War and bombing along the demilitarized zone and clearly dated back to the late nineteen sixties. In 1989, Stone & Kapadia published a further Hindi newspaper reader in the US (Stone & Kapadia, 1990) which consists of around fifty articles with glossaries. The most recent publication of a reader related to the Hindi press was also in the early 1990s when Awadesh Mishra published in India a Hindi magazine reader (Mishra, n.d.).

## 3 Hindi courses at La Trobe 1997–2007

La Trobe University in Australia was involved in the development of Hindi course materials and from 1997 onwards, materials began to be assembled which could be used to teach students how to read contemporary Hindi news media. These were based on both print copies of newspapers which were available in La Trobe University Library, and online newspaper content which was available in 1997 for the *Dainik Jāgra* □ दैनिक जागरण newspaper. Hindi newspaper online content was not widely available in 1997 and in terms of serving up fairly extensive coverage of its contents *Dainik Jāgra* □ दैनिक जागरण took the lead in this, although *Navbhārat* □ *āims* नवभारत टाइम्स ("New India Times") also had minimal coverage of its content online at this time as well. Due to this, most of the online content that was drawn upon was from the *Dainik Jāgra* □ दैनिक जागरण.

Materials from newspapers were then introduced into intermediate level (second year) courses and by 2001, La Trobe University was running an intermediate level course specifically on reading Hindi newspapers. The materials in the reader which was produced were based on three main studies.

- First, selections from print and online Hindi newspapers made from 1997 onwards in Melbourne, Australia, intended to contribute to Hindi language teaching materials.
- Second, a study made by Friedlander, Jeffrey and Seth (2001) of two popular Hindi daily papers, the *Dainik Jāgra* □ दैनिक जागरण between August 1997 and June 1998, and the *Pañjāb Kesarī* पंजाब केसरी ("Lion of the Punjab") from March to June 1998.

- Third, a study of the Hindi press in Bodhgaya during the fall of the years 1998, 1999 and 2000, mostly of *Hindustān* हिन्दुस्तान, *Dainik Jāgra* दैनिक जागरण and *Āj* आज.

There are about fifty or so articles in the reader which was eventually produced and used along with accompanying notes on the context of the article, its vocabulary and grammar issues etc. (Friedlander, 2007a)

During 2006, a further set of teaching materials for the Hindi press was also created between 25th July 2006 and October 14th when a Hindi lecturer and a research student from Delhi, Anandini Dar, made two one hour webcasts a week discussing current Hindi news stories in the online press and how their coverage differed in English and Hindi versions of the stories. The 23 sessions covered about fifty or so Hindi stories and their English equivalents. In addition, in a number of cases, different treatments in various Hindi papers of the same story were examined and how they differed from corresponding English versions. The newspapers, which articles were selected from, included: *The Times of India* and its Hindi stable mate the *Navbhārat* नवभारत टाइम्स, *Hindustan Times* and its Hindi version *Hindustān* हिन्दुस्तान, *DNA India* and its related Hindi Newspaper *Dainik Bhāskar* दैनिक भास्कर, and the *Dainik Jāgra* दैनिक जागरण which has no English equivalent (Friedlander & Dar, 2007). Some conclusions drawn from the contents of the reader were highlighted in a paper at the South Asian Studies Conference in Madison in 2007 (Friedlander, 2007b).

#### 4 Teaching newspaper reading

Hindi newspaper reading courses were taught to small groups of students, typically four or five at a time, about fourteen times over the period between 2001 and 2007 at La Trobe University. The content was based on a mix of materials from the reader prepared at La Trobe and current online content. The principal aim of the classes started out as basically focusing on getting students' Hindi to a level at which they could read Hindi newspapers. The main teaching methodology was based on translation into and out of Hindi. This was actually quite difficult, many students found, as the Hindi press presents several difficulties for learners which are the main subject matter of this paper.

The Hindi used in newspapers uses very long sentences containing multiple clauses which need considerable effort to 'decode' for English speakers back into a meaningful sequence of clauses.

The vocabulary used in Hindi newspapers is drawn from many registers and students need to be able to understand the ways in which new Hindi vocabulary is formed by compounding elements from Sanskrit and other language sources into new words. The interpretation of the meaning of the texts also depends on understanding, in many instances, local circumstances which means that it is hard to understand many stories.

Later, the teaching also started to develop strategies for how to make the students proficient in both reading and discussing Hindi newspaper contents. This was done by getting students to supplement their translation activities by writing their own 'mock' articles based on genres of newspaper articles. It was notable that student's attempts to write articles that described international, or Australian, news tended to be more successful than their attempts to write news stories about events in India. This was often due to the way in which the use of vocabulary and grammar reflected local ideas and the difficulty of learning the nuances in this area provided challenges to students.

A third phase in the teaching was when the teaching started to explore with students what could be understood about the press in India by reading both Hindi and English versions of stories. In many cases, two trends were noted. First, Hindi versions of international stories often represented what was in the story in a way which made it hard to understand in Hindi. Second, English versions of Indian stories often gave only a partial representation of what was in the Hindi media.

Due to the small number of students involved, it is not possible to present any data in the form of statistics about learning outcomes. Instead, this paper focuses on examining instances of where

translation issues gave rise to discussion of larger issues during teaching. This was part of a process where the students were encouraged to explore the types of issues which caused problems when trying to understand the Hindi press.

## 5 What constitutes ‘standard Hindi’?

It is vital to acknowledge that the Hindi press has always played a leading role in the debate about what constitutes Hindi. The role of Hindi newspapers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in helping to determine what constituted modern Hindi itself was very significant.

A notable figure from the early period was B. V. Paradkar who began work in 1906 on the Hindi publication *Hindī Bāṅgvasī* हिन्दी बंगवासी (“The Hindi [speaking] inhabitant of Bengal”). In 1920, he was involved in the setting up of the Hindi daily paper *Āj* आज (“Today”) and in 1924 became its editor, a position he then held for 30 years. He used the paper to campaign for the development of Hindi as a national language *rāṅgriya bhāṅg* राष्ट्रिय भाषा. He influenced not only the grammar of Hindi, but also the choice of words used, inventing terms such as *śrī* श्री for “Mister,” *rāṅtrapati* राष्ट्रपति for “President,” and *mudrāsfiṭi* मुद्रास्फीति for “inflation” (Ninian, 2007, pp. 51–52).

After 1974, the Jay Prakash Narayan movement for social equity caused local words to enter Hindi newspapers and from 1977 to 1982, colloquial Hindi began to appear in newspapers. This was partly to distance the views from those of Brahminical, high caste, supporters of Hindi, often called “Hindi walas” who promoted a high status Sanskritic Hindi lexicon.

In 1982–3, a new newspaper *Jansattā* जनसत्ता (“People Power”) began to be published for the Indian Express group with a Marathi editor, Prabhāsh Joshi. He is credited with having introduced a new round of coinages, often based on Marathi words into Hindi. It was during this period that a number of now widely accepted sports terms became current, such as *golandāz* गोलंदाज़ for bowling, and *gēdbāz* गेंदबाज़ for bowler (Ninian, 2007, p. 61).

Traditionally, it should be noted that, despite Mumbai being a Hindi-speaking area, its Hindi is regarded as ‘wrong’ by most Hindi speakers from Northern India, as it is viewed as a being from outside the Hindi-speaking area, and to be overly influenced by Marathi and Gujarati. Due to this, normal definitions of what constitutes standard Hindi exclude Hindi, as it is spoken in Mumbai.

After economic liberalization in 1991, the practice of the using English loanwords began to become much more common in Hindi newspapers. Ninian quotes the example of how Babulal Sharma, the editor of *Dainik Bhāskar*, said that “Our Hindi is no longer the Hindi of pandits. It has become modern.” (Ninian, 2007, p. 61). This points to the polarity between what is seen by many as having been the failed attempt by pandits, members of the Brahminical elite, to set the agenda for what constitutes Hindi, and the power of the mass media to determine what constitutes Hindi.

### 5.1 Sanskritized formal Hindi and English loanwords

One of the problems the Hindi press, and its reader, faces today is vividly depicted in Per Stahlberg’s study of the workings of the editorial office of the *Dainik Jāgra* दैनिक जागरण in Lucknow. He quotes the editor in 1997 asking one day in the office, “globalisation – what is that in Hindi?” (Stahlberg, 2002, p. 202). Per Stahlberg does not say what the answer was.

About the same time, that is to say in 1997, I noted that there were three different words being used to mean globalization in the Hindi press. One was *sārvabhaumikara* सार्वभौमिकरण (313) “universal-isation,” another was *bhūmanalīkara* भूमंडलीकरण (37,000) “earth-sphere-isation” and the third was *vaiśvīkara* वैश्वीकरण (54,000) “world-isation.”

The numbers after those words indicate the number of ‘hits’ for those words in Google as of October 23, 2008. I will use these figures as a kind of rule of thumb indicator of the relative prevalence of many of the terms I shall be looking at in this paper. The searches give a kind of snapshot of contemporary Hindi usage which, whilst it may not be absolute, as the net may not entirely reflect what is available in the physical print media, is at least a rough indicator of the relative frequency of the use of many Hindi terms.

These three coinages then competed for a while in the press, until eventually the first got limited to its literal sense of “universalization” and is very little used, whilst the second continues, but has become less popular and the third, and shortest, has become the standard term for globalization. Moreover, despite the tendency to use English loanwords, “globalisation” has not become a popular usage in Hindi.

The factors that influence whether new vocabulary is formed by simply adopting English words, or coinages based on English words are complex, it can be argued. Undoubtedly one factor which may have worked against a simple transliteration into Hindi of “globalisation” may simply be it is hard to pronounce in Hindi. However, the term which has eventually gained popularity also has deep roots in Indian thought. Although nowadays in Hindi the term *viśva* is used to mean “world,” in Sanskrit it relates to the idea of diversity and vastness, and the related form *vaiśva*, as in *vaiśvikara*, evokes images of not only the process of “becoming the world” but also of “becoming diversity.” In other words, another possible reason for the success of *vaiśvikara* वैश्वीकरण is that it is itself an idea which is easy to map onto corresponding Indian ideas about the nature of the world.

## 5.2 English loanwords versus Sanskritic coinages in environmental issues

If a particular topic in news media is studied, it becomes apparent that new vocabulary is not created on the basis of a whole set of technical terms being adopted from English, nor yet only from Sanskrit derived terms. For instance, in discussions about environmental issues, *grīn hāus gais* ग्रीन हाउस गैस is retained as a loanword, but climate change is a coinage based on Sanskrit *jalvāyu parivartan* जलवायु परिवर्तन “water-air change.” The term *jalvāyu* itself for climate in contexts like discussing the weather has been around for a long time, probably since at least the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It seems to have attained new prominence once it was incorporated into the phrase that translates “climate change.” However, it is evident that, in some cases like pollution *pradūṣa* प्रदूषण “intense-fault-isation,” and environment *pariyāvara* पर्यावरण “surrounding covering,” the terms are relatively new inventions. In the latter case, it began to be used in the popular Hindi press in the late 1980s (Stone & Kappadia, 1990) but does not appear in standard Hindi dictionaries published up to the 1970s (Chaturvedi & Tiwari, 1996).

So why do terms like *global vārmīg* ग्लोबल वार्मिंग and *grīn hāus gais* ग्रीन हाउस गैस not get turned into Hindi terms based on Sanskrit sources? In these two cases, I would suggest that it is because the words present conceptual problems for translation into Indic concepts. In the first case, the word “warming” presents a problem as Hindi does not use a word that means warm, as distinct from hot, unless it relates to warmth in a particular thing such as a liquid (*gungunā* गुनगुना). So there is no Indic word to substitute for “warming.” It might be quite possible in theory to find Indic words which could provide a Sanskritic equivalent to “global warming” such as perhaps *bhūtapan* भूतपन. However, it is evident that no such term has actually been coined and succeeded in catching popular currency. My argument is not that it is impossible to create Sanskrit coinages for modern terms. Indeed, Raghu Vira’s “Consolidated Great English-Indian Dictionary of Technical Terms” (1952) shows the possibilities for these types of coinages. However, my argument is that what we need to do is consider why some of these coinages succeed and some fail in terms of becoming common lexical terms. My suggestion is that when there is a conceptual gap,

such as the difference between “warming” and “heating” (*tapana*), the Sanskritic coinages fail to develop widespread currency.

Another clear example of this is “Greenhouse gas.” In Hindi, there is neither an Indic term for a “green house,” a modern invention, nor for “gas.” In everyday Hindi, there is no term for gas (other than “gais” as in “kooking gais”) because, in pre-modern Hindi, the terms for gas, air, and wind are not divided; all are aspects of *vāyu* (Sanskrit वायु), or its Persian cognate *havā* (हवा).

In relation to discussing such issues with students, it was also notable that it gave a forum for us to talk about these kinds of conceptual differences between traditional ways that Hindi speakers see, or saw, the world, and modern Western ways of seeing the world.

So, despite the tendency for the use of English words to become more extensive, there are interesting limitations on this process. Initially it might have seemed possible that either all words might have been replaced with Sanskrit coinages and calques, or all English vocabulary would be retained as loanwords. However, what is actually happening is a more complex process whereby ideas that have no Indic counterpart are retained as loanwords, but that ideas which can be ‘mapped’ onto Indic concepts are often replaced by Sanskrit calques. Clearly the press, the reader, and the student need to develop a nuanced understanding of this issue, and for the student in particular, it is important to understand the ways in which Hindi develops new vocabulary to deal with new ideas.

### 5.3 Localisation of English loanwords

There are also localisations of English occurring constantly which it is important for the student to understand correctly. *śūtiṅg* शूटिंग is the everyday way to refer to “filming” as a contraction of “film shooting.” Although apparently simply an English word, it should be noted that the Hindi usage is however quite separate for Hindi speakers from the sense of “shooting” in relation to gunfire and is just limited to meaning “film shooting.” There were in December 2009 about 355,000 references to *śūtiṅg* in Google. So, clearly, this was a case where an English loanword had been successful in entering Hindi.

There is also a formal Hindi English-Sanskrit-Hindi compound फ़िल्मीकरण *filmīkaraṅ*, which means “filmisation,” formed in an analogous manner to नाटकीकरण “dramatisation.” I have met advocates of Sanskritic Hindi who advocated, incorrectly, the usage of this word to mean “shooting.” However, in November 2010, there were around 130 references to *philmīkaraṅ* in Google (and 30 to *filmīkaraṅ*) and it is evident that it is only being used in its primary sense of “filmisation.” One feature of this word is that is based on an English word, “film,” with a Sanskrit postfix *karaṅ* “-isation.” There is, however, a second Hindi word for film, a Sanskrit-based coinage चलचित्र *calcitra* “moving picture.” One feature of this coinage is obvious; it was made when people called films “moving pictures.” However, it survives in Hindi in formal contexts. In November 2009 there were around eight hundred thousand references to चलचित्र *calcitra* on Google, but in comparison there were over three million references to the word *philm/film* on Google. You might expect therefore there to be a formal coinage चलचित्रीकरण *calcitrīkaraṅ* also evident in Hindi, and on Google. However, in comparison to the hundred and fifty or so references to फ़िल्मीकरण *filmīkaraṅ*, there were only five references to चलचित्रीकरण *calcitrīkaraṅ* in November 2009 on Google.

The process of shift in the meaning of English loanwords is very common in Hindi. For instance the word *ēśan* ऐशन (100,000 Google hits in October 2008) is now being used as a word that displaces “worry” *fikr* फ़िक्र (29,000 Google hits in October 2008) to mean “worry.” However, *ēśan* ऐशन is clearly being used in the sense of worry, not tension. So its meaning has

shifted. The popularity of this term points to another vital influence, film, as it came to public notice as the catch phrase of a character in the film *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* in 2006.

However, there is probably yet another factor at play here. The English word *□ēśān* ऐशंशन is displacing the Persian-Arabic word *fikr* फ़िक्र, which, although it means “thought” or “reflection” in Arabic, came to carry the sense of “worry” in Hindi. However, *fikr* फ़िक्र itself was also a displacement of the Sanskrit word *cintā* चिन्ता, which again basically means “thought” but carries a sense of “worry” in many contexts.

Discussing such issues with students allows for an examination of several issues. In particular, a discussion of the process by which Persian-Arabic loanwords in Hindi are being replaced by English loanwords and the ways in which cognate terms now co-exist with inflections of meaning. In this case, *□ēśān* appears to relate to worries in relation to westernised life styles, whilst *fikr* is mostly used in everyday discourse, similar to “worry,” and *cintā* in formal registers of Hindi, in a manner similar to “concern.”

## 6 English words: conceptual categories and products

Different Hindi language versions of stories about the death of Steve Irwin, the Australian personality, made various attempts to describe the stingray that killed him. *Hindustān* described it as *a sumudrī jīv* समुद्री जीव “sea creature” (“द क्रोकोडाइल हंटर”, 2006), *Navbhārat* *□āims* and *Dainik Bhāskar* both called it *a samudrī machlī sti□g re* समुद्री मछली स्टिंग रे “sea fish sting ray” (“क्रॉकडाइल हंटर”, 2006, “सदा के लिए सो गया,” 2006). Hindi is not strong in vocabulary to describe marine wild life, an area in which Hindi has little vocabulary, as it is not part of the lived experience of most Hindi-speaking North Indians, who do not live by the sea. This points to the issue of how Hindi develops vocabulary to relate to new conceptual categories and objects. I think it’s important to discuss with students how often new words appearing in Hindi relate to new objects appearing in Indian culture.

Even older borrowings from foreign languages into Hindi, like “table” *mez* मेज़ (Portugese via Persian) and “room” *kamrā* कमरा, (Portuguese), actually reflect that these were at one time new objects, and ideas, in India. For instance the conceptual category “chair” meaning a seat with a back (in Hindi *kursī* कुरसी from Arabic), it could be argued, is not an ancient Indian category, and older words relate to the idea of sitting *āsana* आसन “posture” or the shape of the seat *caukī* चौकी “small square.” In those cases, however, normally nowadays modern Hindi and English do have similar conceptual categories.

However, when trying to translate any passage about rural life from English into Hindi, this process of construction of meaning becomes very apparent. A whole range of English terms have no direct Hindi categories to relate them to, for instance, such apparently concrete English categories as: countryside, farm, fence, hedge and landscape are all culturally constructed concepts.

For “countryside,” Hindi normally uses *dehāt* देहात, but that actually refers to the hamlets in the countryside, not the countryside itself. Where in English people talk about “farms,” in Hindi, people talk about “fields.”

The reasons for this are to be found in the fact that Western English speaking notions of the countryside were created during the agricultural revolution, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when people were evicted from the countryside in the clearances and the land was privatised and objectified as “farms” in the “countryside.” However, India did not have an agricultural revolution in the same way and until recently, most farming was still carried out in shared patchworks of fields around villages. In Hindi, there are no separate terms for “farms” and “fields,” nor yet separate terms for “settlements” and “countryside.” Instead, the “countryside” is the area of small hamlets, *dehāt* देहात, in comparison with the village, *gāv* गाँव, which is a centre of inhabitation in rural areas.

Due to variations in farming infrastructure, there may also be other difficulties in translation, and understanding. The use of fences was not extensive in the Indian countryside. So there is no

common Hindi word for an agricultural fence. The closest term for many Hindi speakers is *dīvār* दीवार, but that actually means a wall. However, North Indian fields are enclosed by low raised earthen boundaries for controlling water flow called *meṅ* मेड़. In 1964, Trivedi in the *Nāgrī Pracāriṅī Sabhā* “Compact Hindi Dictionary” defined a *meṅ* मेड़ in this way: “an enclosure made round some land or a field by piling up earth, a small dam, a boundary between two fields in the form of a path” (Tripathi, 1964, p. 945). In 1970, Chaturvedi in the widely accepted “Practical Hindi-English Dictionary” defined *meṅ* मेड़ as “a list; boundary-wall beneath two fields or beds; field ridge” (Chaturvedi, 1970, p. 618)

There is of course no such term in English and I would argue that modern urban Hindi speakers, especially in the Diaspora, are losing their understandings of such traditional terms. In at least one recently produced Western Hindi-English dictionary, a picture of a “hedge” in an American farm landscape is labelled as a *meṅ* मेड़ (Sinha, 2008, p. 182). This may derive in part from a long standing English lexical tradition of including the term fence and hedge in the definition of *meṅ* मेड़ which goes back to at least 1884 when John Platts defined it in this way “Fence, hedge, outer boundary or enclosure (of any kind); line, border, rim, margin, edge” (Platts, 1884, p. 121). In 1993, McGregor in his now widely accepted Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary also gave as a meaning of *meṅ* मेड़, after field boundary, as “a hedge or fence” (McGregor, 1993, p. 831). Stuart McGregor was working in the same tradition as his forbearer John Platts and in part his work draws on Platts’ dictionary.

I would suggest then that, in part, what we may have here is a modern Western dictionary definition made by an Indian in the West, who, when trying to define a Western object, a hedge, has referred back to an English work which represents at its source a 19<sup>th</sup> century English understanding of a term, rather than the understanding of Hindi speakers in India.

In the end then, it reflects how a modern Hindi speaker in the West has re-imagined his own tradition and, in attempting to map it onto Western conceptual categories, produced a strange result, using a term that means for most people, “a raised field boundary” to mean “a row of plants forming a fence.” On the one hand, this shows how definitions of words in dictionaries are heavily dependent on the time, place and viewpoint of the dictionary compilers, and on the other hand it also shows how the meanings of words often shift over time from object to object, or idea to idea and the idea of a fixed relationship between ideas and words is illusory.

Moreover, there is a word for hedge in Hindi, which is *bāṅ* बाड़ (Chaturvedi, 1970, p. 512). This derives from Sanskrit *vāṅ*- which has meanings related to an enclosure or a fence (Turner, 1973, p. 669). In Tripathi’s 1964 dictionary, it is defined as a “spiky bush enclosing crops etc. to protect them” (Tripathi, 1964, p. 794) and in Bahri’s 2002 dictionary, it is described as a *jhāṅbandī* झाड़बंदी a “bush-enclosure” (Bahri, 2002, p. 308). Despite these associations with the idea of a hedge for some Hindi speakers, it is not now a common word in such a context. A Google search reveals rather that the main newspaper usage related to *bāṅ* बाड़ is in relation to barbed wire fences along the Indian border (“जीरो लाइन,” 2008). In this case then, as with many English words in Hindi newspapers, there has been a shift in the meaning of a word. That a *bāṅ* बाड़ is spiky and a boundary line has allowed its meaning to get transferred from hedge to barbed wire fence; and it is now being used mostly in the context of barbed wire fences along an international border.

I would suggest that what we can see here is a process of shift in meaning of Hindi words, similar to that which occurs with English words taken into Hindi. What appears to be causing this particular instance is that young urban Hindi speakers are losing awareness of words which relate to agricultural contexts. Indeed, it is possible that, for many such people, the only way to translate “hedge” into Hindi would be to write a phrase that explained what hedge meant, or just say “wall” *dīvār* दीवार, rather than use an old Hindi word which is now no longer familiar to young urban Hindi speakers.

Working with students translating a passage one day, we also came across the problem of a “dramatic landscape.” Landscape has no Hindi equivalent, you have to explain “view of hills, rivers and mountains etc.,” this turns out to be yet another European notion dating back to the renaissance, in which the urban and the rural become separate categories of thought. However, there is a Hindi word for dramatic *nāṅakīya* नाटकीय, but it means “performed in the manner of a drama,” in the sense of “artificial,” which illustrates another thing which students need to bear in mind. Whilst Hindi retains the original meaning of the word, it is in English that the meaning has actually shifted to a secondary meaning.

As well as shift in the meaning of words, newspapers also reflect the ways in which differentiation of terms takes place. A headline during the bird flu crisis in 2004 in Hindustan said, “Poultry price falls as people abandon eating chicken” मुर्गे के भाव गिरे लोगों ने चिकन खाना छोड़ा (“मुर्गे के भाव,” 2004). What is notable here is that the word *murgā* मुर्गा which used to simply mean “chicken” in Hindi is here being contrasted with the *cikan* चिकन which is being eaten. What is surely happening here is similar to the distinction between cow and beef in English. In English also, the word for the meat of the animal comes from a foreign language, French *boeuf*. What is happening here is just the same sort of code-switching, Hindi is developing a way to distinguish between chicken in reference to the animal, and chicken as meat that is eaten.

Students encountering such issues are challenged by them to realise how culturally constructed their own language and thinking is, and also about what is happening in India at the moment.

## 7 English words in Hindi vs. Sanskrit clones of English words

There is also a phenomena where words like *pīp* पीप *śū* शू (पीप टो शू) are appearing in Hindi newspapers. For Hindi speakers, who do not know English, it must be impossible to distinguish between adjectives, such as “*meṅelik*,” and proper names, such as “*krisṅiyan leboṅin*,” which all appeared in the phrase “*meṅelik krisṅiyan leboṅin pīp śū*” in one Hindi newspaper article (“ऐश्वर्या,” 2007). Such usages raise questions when teaching students how to read Hindi newspapers. On the one level, how do we distinguish between trade mark names, adjectives and proper nouns in phrases like *elji kā prāṅā haṅseṅ* (एलजी का प्राडा हैंडसेट), which recently appeared in a Sunday supplement of a popular Hindi daily the *Amar Ujalā* (द्विवेदी, 2008)? On another level, should words like “handset” be translated into Hindi?

One viewpoint was clearly that they should. A strong proponent of this was the 1950s language reformer, and one time director of the Broadcasting commission, Raghu Vira, who is notoriously supposed to have invented terms like *loh-patha-gaman-gāminī* (लोह पथ गमन-गामिनी) “iron-path-movement-mover” for “train.” Raghu Vira was in fact only one of a group of people who, from the 1940s onwards, were trying to develop a scientific and technical vocabulary for Hindi. Some of the terms they invented did become standard, others did not. For instance, in the 1952 “Consolidated Great English-Indian Dictionary of Technical Terms,” the word for railway is actually *ayomārg* अयोमार्ग or *sāyām* संयाम, (Raghu Vira, 1952, p. 1511), and in the Hindi-English dictionary supplement, a railway train has become a *lohmārga sāyām* लोहमार्ग संयाम (Raghu Vira, 1951, p. 734) However, none of these terms ever caught on at all in Hindi, as *ren* ट्रेन and *rel* रेल remained the standard terms.

For radio, the 1951 dictionary says that it means the same as “wireless” and should be translated as *vitantuka* वितन्तुक or from Marathi *nabhovāṅī* नभोवाणी “heaven-speech” (Raghu Vira, 1952, p. 1510). The 1950 dictionary also simply has no word for Television but by the 1951 supplement to the dictionary there is *dūrdarś* दूरदर्श for television and *dūrdarśan* दूरदर्शन for televis. (Raghu Vira, 1951, p. 164). In the end the government tried to popularise *dūrdarśan* दूरदर्शन “far-vision” for television, and *ākāśvāṅī* आकाशवाणी “sky-speech” for radio. Naturally, the state Hindi radio and TV companies were then called by these names. However, their meaning never expanded for most Hindi speakers beyond the names of the state companies. So, nowadays,

in everyday discourse you watch Durdarshan on टीवी and listen to Akashvani on the रेडियो. So, in these cases, the attempts at Sanskrit versions of the English words worked, but not in the way intended. However, there is an odd disjuncture in this, where in schools in the Indian Diaspora, in some countries such as Singapore and Australia, you still have to say *dūrdarśan* for टीवी.

As opposed to this artificial attempt to create Sanskrit-based Indian equivalents to English words there is also a very longstanding process in Hindi where English words are adopted and maintain their meaning, but their sound changes and becomes ‘Hindi-ized.’

For instance, by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the English word “tragedy” had become Hindi *trāsdi* त्रासदी, and most Hindi speakers would not think of it as an English word at all. More recently, such changes sometimes take the form of adopting a noun, but using it as an adjective – for instance, the use of *balance* to mean balanced in *bailās* बैलंस डाइट “balanced diet.”

Yet another way in which English words are adopted into Hindi is the opposite, the sound is unaltered, but the meaning changed. Two instances of this which appear in newspapers, are *pol* पोल meaning electricity pylon as well as pole, and *fidar* फीडर meaning electricity transmission cables (“पोल के गिरने का खतरा,” 2000). I also vividly recall that for many years in Banaras people said *māik* माइक when they meant a loudspeaker.

There is also one other sort of change in meaning which is both interesting for the students when they encounter it, and also quite perplexing for some native speakers. Some words have one meaning now in English for Hindi speakers and one in Hindi for them. A clear example of this is *jungle*. This is originally a Sanskrit word that meant uncultivated dry scrubland. In Hindi it then came to mean uncultivated land and, when the British arrived in India, could refer to any wild country, forest, mountain, desert, or rainforest. However, in English, it then became limited in its meaning to rainforest. Many Hindi speakers who also speak English use it to mean rainforest in English, but still use it to mean uncultivated, wild, or wasteland in Hindi.

These kinds of shifts in meanings of English words in Hindi are important for students when they are reading Hindi newspapers. Students learn that English loanwords in Hindi often have different meanings from their original English meanings.

## 8 Mistranslations from English into Hindi and ‘bad’ Hindi

There are also more instances appearing of misunderstandings of English in Hindi. One article on the Hindi language pages of the Indian news website *Sify.com* in 2007 reported “There is no reason why Hindi films are not made with Hollywood style budgets” (“बॉलीवुड,” 2007). However, the original article said, “no reason why they *should not* be ...,” which is a very different matter (“Bollywood,” 2007).

It is also possible to suggest that some of the expressions formed on English models could fall into the category of bad Hindi. Several newspapers called the 2007 APEC meeting in Sydney a *mīl kā patthar* मील का पत्थर “a milestone” (“एपेक,” 2007). However, what they did was directly translate the English into Hindi, which created a meaningless Hindi phrase “a stone of a mile.”

It is also clear that the mixed language origins of the journalists and readers are allowing much more of what could simply be called ‘bad’ Hindi to be published. In some cases, these instances of bad Hindi may be related to content being generated outside of India. In 2006, students encountered on the Deutsche Welle website an article in which the gender of “speech” was incorrectly shown to be masculine by the way in which a possessive particle *ke* के appeared before *bāt* बात “speech,” whereas in standard Hindi it should be *kī bāt* की बात, and such articles continue to appear on the Deutsche Welle website (एसेलबोर्न, 2008). Most of the students thought it was due to the person writing in Germany. However, there are currently over 10,000 hits for the ‘incorrect’ phrase *ke bāt* and around 700,000 for the correct *kī bāt* on Google in October 2008. This suggests

that variations from standard Hindi on the internet may reflect a range of factors. One such factor may be Eastern dialect Hindi usage. In this case, the gender agreement shown by “*ke*” reflects a view that *bat* बात “speech” can be regarded as a masculine noun.

Whether these usages are more current in the print press, or the internet press, is a moot issue as basically there is no separation between these media for most intents and purposes. Most Indian papers also post their content online and do not generate separate internet content. The *Dainik Bhāskar*, which has connections with the Mumbai based *DNA News* and Star TV, seems sometimes to reflect odd Hindi usages. For instance, students encountered in a *Dainik Bhāskar* article a strange way of talking about the time, “at 3.19 o’clock,” (*3.19 baje बजे*) which is not standard Hindi. This shows a lack of familiarity with traditional ways of telling the time in most of the Hindi-speaking areas of North India. Like the Deutsche Welle publication this again reflects usages from outside of the standard Hindi-speaking area, and is identified as ‘wrong’ by most Hindi speakers from the Hindi heartland (“आतंकी हमले की आशंका,” 2006). This then forms an opportunity to discuss with students how ‘correct’ Hindi is defined, and the role that the Hindi heartland, and Hindi as spoken in peripheral areas takes in this process.

The area where non-standard Hindi is most evident is in blogs, which are by their nature unedited. Thus there are for instance currently 75,000 instances of *karie* करिए on the net, which is a non-standard regular form for a polite imperative of “do,” whilst there are almost four hundred thousand usages of the correct form *kijie* कीजिए. However, in general, even in blogs, the Hindi is no more varied than it is in news media. When students encounter these kinds of examples on the net, it then becomes an opportunity to discuss what factors influence when, and if, a non-standard usage will become accepted as ‘standard’ Hindi. In this case, treating irregular verbs as regular verbs is often associated by Hindi speakers with younger people from Delhi. So, perhaps, when those people themselves become the establishment, it may become acceptable. However, at least one student at La Trobe in 2007, who was from Delhi, said that he thought that it was correct to say the word in this way, but it still had to be spelled in the old way. Such an attitude, if it became accepted, would mark a breakdown in the largely phonetic nature of Hindi script, which, as a Hindi teacher, I would regard as a disaster. In fact, I think that treating irregular verbs as if they are regular is likely to remain ‘wrong’ for a long time to come.

## 9 Code-switching between Hindi, Urdu and English

One area in which there seems to have been a major shift in the last twenty years is in code-switching between Hindi, Urdu and English. It used to be regarded as good practice to use generally either Sanskrit-based or Persian-Arabic based lexicons, and mixing up the two lexicons for no apparent reason was seen as bad style. However, nowadays, it seems that the influence of the idea that overusing the same adjective is a bad idea often leads to articles in newspapers in which there is switching from Sanskrit-based or Persian-Arabic based lexicons for adjectives for no apparent reason, other than to avoid repetition.

However, in any discussion of code-switching in Hindi, it is necessary to also explore ways in which code-switching is a general feature of languages, and of Indian languages in particular. One way of doing this is to explore parallel Hindi and English versions of publications. For instance, the film magazine “Stardust” appears in both languages, and sometimes uses similar sorts of code-switching in both versions. A good example of this recently was in the monthly gossip column called “Neeta’s Natter” (Hindi, *nīā kī caarpaar नीटा की चटरपटर*). In this, when talking about two Bollywood film stars and their rivalry in English, it said that both were competing for the *Numero Uno crown* (“Cat’s Crown,” 2009, p. 27), whilst in the Hindi version, it said that they were competing for the *nambar van ke tāj* नंबर वन के ताज (“म्यांड मुकुट,” 2008, p. 13). The point here is that both versions of the article, Hindi and English, use code-switching. The English version switches into French, and the Hindi version into English. In both cases, the author uses the code-switch to sound sophisticated just as when English people use French phrases, *nes’t*

pas? When students encounter examples like this, it allows them to explore the significance of code-switching in a broader context, in their own languages, as well as in Hindi.

If we regard code-switching as referring in part to switching between Persian-Arabic and Sanskrit lexicons in Hindi, then it is most often affected by factors which include religion, formality, and generational factors. I would now like to give just one such related factor for each of those aspects of code-switching.

A good example of the influence of religion on code-switching is the English concept of religious observances and “to pray.” In Hindi, this idea needs to use different vocabulary depending on the religion which is being spoken about. To pray in an Islamic context is spoken of as *namāz paḥnā* नमाज़ पढ़ना, but when speaking about praying in a Christian context (and sometimes Hindu) one speaks about *prārthnā karnā* प्रार्थना करना. Whilst, in a Hindu context, people mostly talk about performing *pūjā karnā* पूजा करना rather than praying and, when talking about praying, distinguish between *nivedan karnā* निवेदन करना which is “to pray” in the sense of making a request, as in “pray tell me the way to the bank” and *vinitī karnā* विनती करना which means to entreat, as in to entreat God, or some great being, to grant a request. In other words, there is no single word which can express the various notions of the English term “to pray.”

Formality is a second factor that effects code-switching. As indicated earlier, formal Hindi prefers a lexicon based on Sanskrit, less formal Hindi freely adopts from other languages. This is evident in many news reports speaking about people and events. For instance, in most everyday speech, almost all terms related to the courts are spoken of using Persian-Arabic terminology, as during the British period Persian remained the court language for a long time. However, in official Hindi, there are now Sanskrit versions of the terms. Thus, in the same paragraph, you might get a journalist talking about a judge as both the *nyāyādhis* न्यायाधीश, his official government title, and as a *jaj* जज, whilst the court might be referred to at one moment by its official term *nyāyālay* न्यायालय and then by the common Persian-Arabic term *adālat* अदालत. This kind of switching between official terminology and everyday terminology often allows the reader to interpret which parts of statements are the ‘official’ parts, and which parts are the journalistic comments on them.

Finally, generational factors are clearly very significant. Hindi, like all languages, constantly changes its vocabulary. One factor in this is to do with fashion, sometimes quite literally. Just as in English “slacks” were once fashionable for women, but now summons up images of old ladies, so too in Hindi many words are time-bound. Older people still write with a *qalam* कलम, a Persian-Arabic word, whereas younger people all write with a *pen* पेन. What is more, if younger people are asked what a *qalam* is, they sometimes may tell you it means a fountain pen that you put ink into, rather than a modern pen. Older Hindi speakers, and writers, spoke of matches as *dīyāsālā* दीयासलाई “lamp-stick.” Younger people call them *mācis* माचिस. Here the product remains the same, but the association has changed. There is also apparently a process which could perhaps be described as inflation of meaning. For instance, in Hindi fiction from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a door to a room is a *dvār* द्वार and a grand door that leads into the courtyard around which the rooms of a house are arranged is a *darvāzā* दरवाज़ा. This can be seen in the “Daughter of a Great Family” (*baḥe ghar kī beṭī* बड़े घर की बेटी), which was first published by Premchand in 1910. In this story the doorway to a mansion is spoken of as a *darvāzā*, but doors to rooms in it are spoken of as *dvār* (Premchand, 2008). Door is an Indo-European word and in its form *dvār* goes back to Sanskrit. However, the form *darvāzā* comes from Persian and its use in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Hindi, as reflected in this story, suggests the idea that it is refers to a grand and high status door, such as a Persian-knowing official might have. However, gradually over time, it seemed that everybody came to view their doors as being as grand as any *darvāzā*, and a *dvār* got downgraded to the status of an old-fashioned door. Such a theory might be open to criticism, but presenting an idea like that to a class when reading Hindi news media opens up all manner of possible

discussions about how people speak about their lives and the ways in which language reflects those changes.

I would argue then that reading newspapers, and magazines, with students often focuses attention on the question of why code-switching is taking place. For the student, it often appears first only as an obstacle – that they need to learn at least two terms for everything, one derived from Persian-Arabic, and one derived from Sanskrit. In some cases in contemporary newspaper articles, the switching does appear to be random. However, in some instances, code-switching is also being used to show nuances in meaning.

## 10 Conclusion: Student engagement in the debate

Ultimately, once students manage to struggle through the long sentence structures and complex clauses and at times confusing grammar used in Hindi newspapers, the challenge with which they are faced is the vocabulary. In this paper, I have shown that, although at first sight the ways in which code-switching between Sanskrit, Persian Arabic, and English loanwords appears random, it is often far from random. I would highlight three critical factors which have come up in discussions with students and have been discussed in this paper:

- The role that reading news media can play in developing in students a nuanced interest in the interplay between Indic concepts and other world views on issues such as the environment and development.
- The need for students to explore the constructed nature of ideas about reality, in the sense of concepts which frame how people conceive of notions such as urban and rural, the built environment and the landscape in India and elsewhere in the world
- The opportunities for deepening students understanding of India as a multicultural and multigenerational society through studying the nuances of shifts in meaning between Sanskritic 'Urdu' and 'English' lexicons

Furthermore, it is essential to get students to engage in the debate about why this kind of code-switching is taking place. This is because it is only through such a process that they are able to explore how translation often reflects profound issues about the ways in which people in the Hindi-speaking world see themselves, and the world, and how we might try to begin to address them in order to explain how we see the world.

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