

The present volume, which comprises seven English contributions and four in Hindi, addresses issues of linguistic variation – a phenomenon central to the study of language use – in regard to the major official language of India. It combines multiple theoretical and pragmatic approaches to a variety of linguistic phenomena conceptualised under the designation ‘Hindi’ and attempts to obtain a more accurate portrayal of the changing reality behind this versatile taxonomic term. In doing so, this volume provides insight into how the forms and functions of Hindi are changing across borders within and outside of India; the concept of language contact is thus present in several of the studies. The analyses are based upon data observed in written texts, including manuscripts, and elicited from instances of oral speech.

The contributions, prepared by established and emerging scholars from several Asian and European countries, investigate functional aspects of the regional, social, and cultural forms of Hindi and how they interact in differing contexts, time periods, and types of communication. A similar vantage point is being adopted in the investigation of possibilities and constraints of formal variation in the grammatical structures of Standard Hindi. In addition to providing analyses from the perspectives of both general linguistics and sociolinguistics, the book discusses issues associated with teaching Hindi from the perspective of language variation.

The volume is distinguished by its innovative character in terms of both the data utilized in it and the width of its scope, and aims to contribute to a better understanding of ‘Hindi’ as a concept as well as of the general principles of linguistic variation.

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