

Beyond Berlitz: Teaching Eloquence and Elegance in Advanced Hindi-Urdu

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For much of the past half century active control as a pedagogical aim in teaching Hindi-Urdu as a foreign language (THUFL) has been limited to enabling students to express themselves at a basic instrumental level: communication with monolingual relatives, tourism, anthropological research, etc. Knowledge of abstract, literary or cinematic language has been regarded as a passive objective with little attention paid to having THUFL students achieve active control of a more elegant register. With the present evolution of Hindi and Urdu as nation-wide media of communication in India and Pakistan the time has come to expect higher levels in the abilities of foreign learners including children of NRI/NRP citizens to express themselves more elegantly. This paper illustrates two of the many ways in which such an objective may be achieved.¹

i. Replacing "V देना with "V-कर रख देना serves to harden or strengthen an assertion:

1a. महंगाई ने लोगों की कमर तोड़ दी ... => 1b. बढ़ती महंगाई ने आम आदमी की कमर तोड़कर रख दी है ।

2a. उग्र वह चिंगारी है जो हर इंसान को जला देती है । ≈ 2b. नफरत की आग इंसान को जलाकर रख देती है ...

Moving from spark to fire moral destruction as portrayed in (2b) is utter and complete.

ii. Replacing the passive + modal जा + सक- in "V-या नहीं जा सकना with "V-ए नहीं in "V-ता/-या:

3a. कोविड अस्पताल नहीं बनाया जा सका है => 3b. कोरोना अस्पताल बनाए नहीं बना है

Use of this construction may serve to enhance or emphasize. Compare conventional (4a) with (4b):

4a. सत्य को छुपाया नहीं जा सकता 'Truth cannot be hidden.' => 4b. सत्य छुपाए नहीं छुपता 'The truth will out!'

In (3b) and (4b) the "V-ए नहीं in "V-ता/-या construction serves to negate or deny the result of effort. It can also be used to deny efforts themselves. In (5) the emergence of Hindi as a contact language is not negated. It is the way which the speaker assumes that his/her interlocutor believes about how Hindi became a contact language that is being negated. The effect is to reinforce अपने बलबूते पर.²

5. हिंदी सम्पर्क भाषा अपने बलबूते पर बनी है । किसी के बनाए नहीं बनी । Compare (3b).
'Hindi became a contact language on its own. No-one made it one.'

The intention of this type of instruction is not to have students master fixed idioms similar to the four-character expressions (成语) of Mandarin. For a non-native learner to hazard a fixed idiom like पेट में चूहे कूदना (mice to jump in one's belly => 'to feel very hungry') may strike listeners as pretentious or silly. Rather, students are encouraged to learn, not lexically fixed idioms, but flexible templatic constructions that are idiomatic and elegant yet do not call undue attention to themselves.

These options are intended for fluent learners wishing to acquire higher levels of fluency.

¹ The complete paper will include a sample of exercises designed for this purpose from Malhar 2001-2002.

² Put more abstractly: Denial of a (conjectured) denial is a contextually justified rhetorical move. Compare the usually disallowed negation of a compound verb in दीपिका पादुकोण ने जेएनयू में जाकर कोई गुनाह नहीं कर लिया as signaling the rebuttal of accusations of anti-nationalism leveled against D.P. (See next page for glossing.)

References

Ghalib, Mirza. XIXth century (rekhta). nukta-chiñ hai gham-e-dil us ko sunā.e na bane

Malhar 2001-2002: <https://lgessler.com/malhar/cmpnd2vrb.html>

Malhar 2001-2002: <https://lgessler.com/malhar/banaaenabane.html>

Jun Da: lingua.mtsu.edu/chinese-computing/newscorpus/chengyu/DaJun_6thPedagogy.pdf

- 1a. *mahaṅgāi-ne logō.kī kamar tor dī*
inflation-ERG people's waist breakGAVE
'Inflation has broken people's backs.'
[m.facebook.com/LernzyNews/posts/223524266187885]
- 1b. *baṛh.tī mahangāi-ne ām ādmī.kī kamar tor-kar rakh dī hai.*
rising inflation-ERG common person's waist break-GER PUT GIVEN has
'Increasing inflation has broken the back of the common man.'
[www.jagran.com/uttar-pradesh/muzaffarnagar-skyrocketing-food-prices-21375994.html]
- 2a. *umar vah cīṅgāri hai jo har insān-ko jalā detī.hai*
age that spark is that each person-ACC burn GIVES
'Age is the spark that burns every person.'
[m.facebook.com/TheLostSonnet/posts/1183197695030453/?locale=es_LA]
- 2b. *napharat.kī āg insān-ko jalā-kar rakh detī.hai*
hate's fire person-ACC burn-GER PUT GIVES
'The fire of hate burns a person up.'
[bhaskar.com/news/PUN-LUD-HMU-MAT-latest-ludhiana-news-031503-274256-NOR.html]
- 3a. *koviḍ aspatāl nahī banā-yā.jā sak.ā hai.*
Covid hospital not build-PASS could has
'A Covid hospital has not been able to be built.'
[prakashprabhaw.com/index.php/khabar-hatke/lok-dal-sunil-singh/detail]
- 3b. *koronā aspatāl banā-e nahī banā hai.*
Corona hospital make-PSTPRT not be.made has
'A Corona hospital has not been able to be built (despite efforts).'
[ultachasmauc.com/mask-new-rule-1-lack-fine-pragya-ka-panna/]
- 4a. *saty-ko c̣hupā-yā nahī jā sak.tā*
truth-ACC hide-PST.PRT not PASS can
'The truth cannot be hidden.'
[m.facebook.com/111284783903574/videos/653079931993281...]
- 4b. *saty c̣hupā-e nahī c̣hup.tā*
truth hide-PST.PRT not hides
'No matter what the truth will out!'
[scnchindi.blogspot.com/p/about-us.html]
5. *hindī sampark bhāṣā apne bal.būte-par banī hai. kisi ke banā-e*
Hindi contact language own power-on become has anyone GEN make-PST.PRT
nahī banī.
not was.made
'Hindi became a contact language on its own. No-one made it one.'
[https://ww.in.freejournal.info/756181/1/]
- fn2. *dīpikā pādukon-ne je.en.yū-mē jā-kar koī gunāh nahī kar-liyā*
Deepika Padukone-ERG JNU-to go-GER anycrime not do-TOOK
'Deepika Padukone did not commit any crime by going to JNU.'
[http://globaltoday.in/2020/01/10/]