



Bulletin of the South Asian Language Teachers Association

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A Message from the President, Elliott McCarter

Dear SALTA,

It is with great pleasure that I write my first letter for this bulletin as the President of the South Asian Language Teachers Association. I carry forward the tradition of active engagement in the South Asian language community in this organization founded by pillars in our community: Susham Bedi, Surendra Gambhir, Vijay Gambhir, and Herman van Olphen. Upon the foundation of their industry, our past presidents – Gabriella Ilieva, Gautami Shah, Seema Khurana, Gyanam Mahajan, and Fauzia Farooqui – have built a strong community of pedagogists dedicated to advancing the study and teaching of South Asian languages and cultures at all levels. A new president can only hope to follow the path of such eminent leaders by walking it along with each member of the community.

Community has been the central concept driving SALTA's activities this past year. The pandemic has brought so many changes to our lives and practices since 2020. As we have found new ways to connect, we have realized just how important those connections are. Our new website, mysalta.org, continues to develop as a hub for information and opportunities for South Asian language professionals. The organization updated its by-laws this past year to increase transparency and strengthen its democratic processes. It also expanded the Executive Board to seven members to bring in a broader range of perspectives and specialties. The result has been a success, and there is still plenty of room to grow. Last year, our expanded board helped with writing projects, continued learning workshops, job placement, conference announcements, coordination with related organizations, book and article reviews, and planning for the conference in 2022.

Our Communication Director, Rajiv Ranjan, has worked tirelessly to present this bulletin. We are pleased to publish original research and reviews along with our news items here for the first time. Our Vice-President, Kusum Knapczyk, and Research Director, Divya Chaudhary, will share their thoughts on our recent and upcoming activities. I am extremely grateful to them and the remaining Executive Board members – Fauzia Farooqui, Peter Knapczyk, and Vasu Renganathan – who labored to manage this organization over the past year.

Mostly, I wish to express my gratitude to the entire South Asian language teaching community. Thank you for your continued participation in SALTA. It is your support that makes this organization a success.

I look forward to seeing you at our annual conference in Madison!



SALTA Conference 2022



A Message from SALTA Vice-President, Kusum Knapczyk

As a new member of the SALTA Executive Board, I am very excited about the new initiatives of this organization. I am especially looking forward to returning to a partially in-person conference this year and seeing many old friends and new ones on the banks of Lake Mendota this June. Being in Wisconsin during SASLI will allow us to meet many new instructors and form bonds across diverse South Asian languages. For those of you who cannot make it in person, I am looking forward to meeting you virtually as we use a hybrid model for this year's event. The openness of this platform allows us connect with this amazing intellectual community of language professionals all over the world.

2022 SALTA CONFERENCE
University of Wisconsin-Madison, June 24-25, 2022
Call for Proposals
Theme: Integration

The South Asian Language Teachers Association (SALTA) is pleased to announce a two-day conference to be held online and in-person (hybrid) in partnership with the University of Wisconsin at Madison on June 24-25, Friday-Saturday, 2022.

The theme of this year's conference in South Asian Language Teaching is "Integration." How do we integrate new pedagogic methodologies into our practices? How do South Asian language programs partner with other stakeholders in their respective institutions? How do curricula and materials intersect with one another inter-institutionally? This conference aims to bring together teachers of South Asian languages of all experience levels and all backgrounds to share and discuss these and similar questions to expand the horizon of South Asian language teaching.

We solicit proposals for panels on relevant topics as suggested by the themes mentioned above. Individual and workshop presentations will also be considered. Each panel will be 90 minutes long with 3-4 panelists/presenters; and individual presentations will be 20 minutes long. A proposal should include name(s) of presenters/panelists and a short description (250-500 words) of your proposed panel/presentation. Proposals and presentations should be in English. Please send your proposals to conference@mysalta.org by Friday, May 6, 2022. Selected panels and presentations will be announced by May 14.

Conference registration is free. Teachers of less-commonly taught South Asian languages are especially encouraged to apply. To register, please click the following link: <https://forms.gle/vTpTvXUhDZrmMCYa9>

Research and Working Groups

In summer and fall 2021, SALTA offered many professional opportunities to its members. Divya Chaudhry, senior Hindi-Urdu Lecturer at Vanderbilt University, Sai Bhatawadekar, Associate Professor and Director of the Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii, and David Flaherty, master's student in Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte hosted weekly virtual co-writing hours for SALTA members. The writing groups were bolstered by the reading group on second language acquisition led by Rajiv Ranjan, Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics, Literature, and Cultures at Michigan State University.



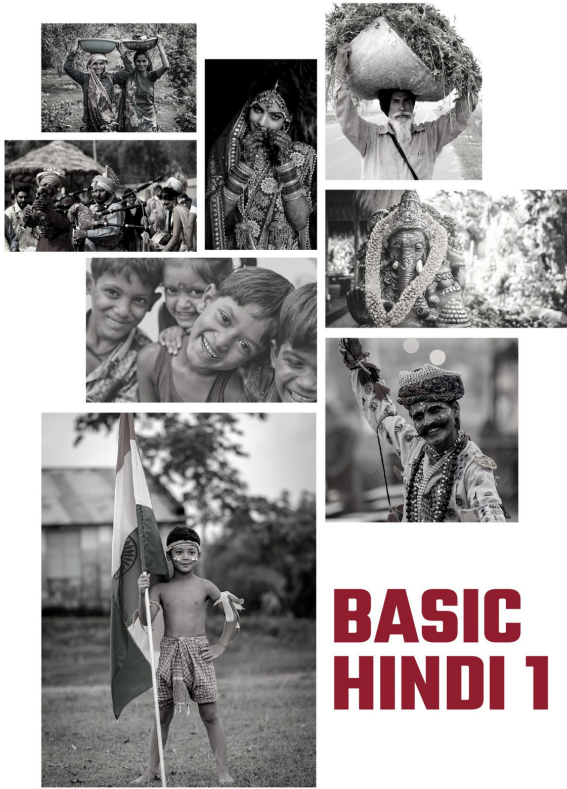
Divya Chaudhry
RESEARCH DIRECTOR, SALTA

In addition to initiatives advancing SALTA members' scholarly interests, there were several opportunities for teachers' professional development. Ritu Jayakar, Web Developer at Penn State University, took the initiative to host a weekly Urdu study hour for community members interested in advancing their knowledge of Urdu. The initiative culminated in a six-week Urdu for Hindi Speakers virtual workshop in the fall of 2021 led by Sunil Bhatt, Assistant Professor of Teaching at the University of British Columbia. Finally, Shilpa Parnami, Lecturer in Hindi at Boston University, launched a Teacher Learning Group in the fall of 2021. The group, intended for pre-service and experienced K-16 South Asian language teachers, engages with current developments in second language acquisition theories and their implications for classroom teaching.

SALTA expresses its utmost gratitude to these members who dedicated their time and expertise in the service of the SALTA community.

For information on upcoming SALTA events, visit: <https://mysalta.org/groups-and-events> . If you have suggestions for future SALTA events or would like to lead one, please contact divya.chaudhry@Vanderbilt.Edu.

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM THE SALTA COMMUNITY



RAJIV RANJAN

Basic Hindi I is an online, interactive, and tech-enhanced textbook that promotes speaking, listening, reading, writing, and cultural skills. Each chapter in this book has clearly stated learning outcomes, a review of previous chapters, reading/listening sections, study abroad section, relevant grammatical items, and cultural notes. The pedagogical approach in the book is mixed and informed by the socio-cultural approaches and the generative approaches of the Second Language Acquisition theory. The mixed theoretical backgrounds match diverse learning and teaching philosophies and styles. Following the learning outcomes guided by American Council of Teaching Foreign Language (ACTFL), this textbook aims for the novice learners to attain intermediate low to mid-level proficiency level. The textbook incorporates pictures, audio-visual materials, and activities developed on the H5P platform to keep learners engaged. The book is available here:

<https://openbooks.lib.msu.edu/II151/>

Review available [here](#)

To Teach or Not to teach Code-mixed English?

Bhatia, Tej K. 2020. To teach or not to teach Code-mixed English? FORTELL, 40: 20-32. FORTELL is an associate of International Association of Teachers of English as a foreign language.

Link: <https://www.fortell.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/40-issue-January-2020-20-32.pdf>

Abstract: The aim of this paper is four-fold: (1) to examine the unique multilingual context of English in India; (2) to examine Hinglish, one of the verbal outcomes of multilingual India; (3) to shed light on code-mixing and code-switching as bilingual phenomena distinct from other hybrid linguistic systems, and (4) to address the question of English language pedagogy in India with special reference to 'teach or not to teach the code-mixed' variety of English (Hinglish) in India. The paper argues that it is timely and urgent to address the legitimacy and challenges of teaching code-mixed English (e.g. Hinglish) in India. The theoretical underpinning of this paper is derived from the current research on World Englishes, psycholinguistics of multilingualism, language acquisition/ learnability, and classroom pedagogy.

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM THE SALTA COMMUNITY

Siting the Indian Writer in Translation: The 'Writer in Context' Series

Sukrita Paul Kumar

What happens when a Krishna Sobti, an Amrita Pritam or an author such as Bama or O. V. Vijayan is brought into the classroom of an English Department or that of a Centre for South Asian Literature in India or abroad? Such iconic writers from different Indian languages are often fondly prescribed in 'Area or Culture Studies' too. In fact, we need to question what happens when a keen reader – may very well be non-academic – craves for a comprehensive understanding of an Indian writer translated in English. Are such readers left befuddled by what seem like culturally specific nuances imbedded in the text or are they then left to simply read a novel or text like any other? We are aware that in our richly multilingual Indian literature, each language flows over a bedrock of a distinctive tradition of oral and written literature. Since a keen reader or a student of these texts is not likely to be equipped with the knowledge of the original language, should he or she then not be provided with the knowledge of the likely departures from the original text by way of the invisibilization of the distinctive linguistic features of the original writing and the losses of culture in the translated text? How would the reader get to comprehend the writer's creative interventions in language? Also, how would a student access the cultural context or the literary tradition from which the original text may have evolved?

We also know that for the sake of smooth 'readability' editors and publishers generally tend to standardize English language, thus many a time sacrificing the cultural rootedness found in the original text. The language of translation should actually be allowed to stretch to accommodate culture. But what inevitably comes under the ken is the insular translated text in "proper" English without an adequate amount of supporting critical tools that would help grasp its import fully. For literary and cultural studies, it is crucial to engage with different ways of accessing the multilayered meanings that are woven into the text by the very context of its creation. For instance, in Krishna Sobti's epic novel *Zindaginama*, a whole new dimension opens up with the sheer knowledge that the novel was created primarily out of the pain of Partition and the author's anguish of having witnessed the violent collapse of the composite culture of the subcontinent. The writer Rahi Masoom Raza's angst regarding Hindi/Urdu politics is duly apprehended only by getting to know of the historical context of the evolution of these languages.

This may indeed stand out as the most prominent problematics of both accessing as well as teaching a translated text. Even though many works by major Indian authors are found in English translation now, there is not much assurance of their close correspondence with the original writing. The question of the appropriateness of the translation calls for both a close attention of the reader as well as an engagement with the issue of the pedagogy required for the teaching of translated texts. What needs to be confronted squarely is the glaring paucity of suitable material for the interested reader to fully appreciate an Indian author in translation; this is also imperative for the teaching of Indian authors translated into English. The 'Writer in Context' Series to be published by Routledge, with Sukrita Paul Kumar and Chandana Dutta as the series editors, with nearly a dozen books in the making as of now, aims to cater to this glaring gap. The conceptualization of this series may be perceived as a significant intervention in the historical evolution of the study of Indian literature in English translation.

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM THE SALTA COMMUNITY

Soon after the publication of the book *Decolonizing the Mind* by the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o in 1986, Indian literature in translation got a boost and began to be generously incorporated in the syllabi of English Departments in India and abroad. But what got waylaid was the creation of adequate critical tools to examine the translated authors within their context. The works by the eminent activist writer in Bengali, Mahasweta Devi, or the "anchalik" writings by the Hindi writer, Phanishwarnath Renu, have to be located within their socio-literary traditions if only to cognize the power of their pen. The weight of their defiance of the accepted norms of creative writing in their respective languages can be appreciated only with the knowledge of what they actually flouted. The importance of the Kannada writer Devanuru Mahadeva's work too can be estimated only after one is familiar with the backdrop of the modernist writing in his language. Indira Goswami as an Assamese writer of eminence stands taller if apprehended in the context of her participation in the political negotiation with ULFA. It was with such thoughts in mind that the 'Writer in Context' series was planned. Each volume of the Series will include amongst some other features, a judicious selection from the writer's oeuvre, some key critical essays, notes on translation and highlights on the writer's use of language, memorabilia and a bio-chronology of the author.

The focus of the 'Writer in Context' series is post-Independence writers from different Indian languages. This generation of 'modern' writers, whether it be Vyankatesh Madgulkar from Marathi or Indira Goswami from Assamese or for that matter in any other Indian author, evolved with a heightened consciousness of change and resurgence fanned by modernism, postmodernism, progressivism and other literary trends and fashions, while at the same time being rooted in tradition even when they defied it. The aim is to present the dynamics of creative writing from within the complex self-reflexivity of the Indian writer situated in such culturally resonant times. Reputed scholars from different educational institutions are engaged in researching and editing volumes on writers across many Indian languages. The first of the Series, *Krishna Sobti, A Counter Archive*, is scheduled for publication in September 2021 soon to be followed by the volume on the Urdu writer Joginder Paul.

<https://www.routledge.com/Writer-In-Context/book-series/WIC>



TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

RITU JAYAKAR



Ritu Jayakar
Pennsylvania State University

Ritu Jayakar is an Adjunct Instructor for Hindi at Pennsylvania State University. She teaches introductory summer intensive courses and advanced Hindi courses. She enjoys incorporating technology, universal design, and project-based themes while teaching Hindi. She is always looking for new ideas and challenges. She earned a master's degree in Hindi-Urdu Pedagogy from Kean University, N.J in 2018. Recently she took upon herself to learn *Nastaliq* script to develop a better understanding of hardships faced by learners of a new script. It has been an incredible and informative journey! She is thankful to the SALTA forum, for organizing Urdu study groups and workshop where Hindi instructors could learn from each other's experiences and some Urdu experts.

She has been involved with CARLA's Teacher Training program for last eight years where she facilitates workshop on transitioning to teach language online focusing on the three modes of communications. She works as Accessibility and User Experience Consultant for Penn State's Outreach and Online Education. She lives with her family in a scenic valley of State College in central Pennsylvania and enjoys long walks, knitting, yoga and audio books. Ritu Jayakar's CV can be found [here](#)

Learn to Speak Hindi Quickly!



EASY Hindi

FREE
ONLINE
AUDIO

A Complete Language Course
and Pocket Dictionary in One

- Focuses on daily communication
- Structured, progressive lessons
- Illustrations, exercises and detailed cultural notes

TUTTLE

BRAJESH SAMARTH

BOOK REVIEWS

Book Review: Easy Hindi

BY DR. ELLIOTT MCCARTER
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Easy Hindi lives up to its title in that it is a pared down primer designed to bring the learner to early levels of conversational Hindi proficiency rapidly. The lightness of the text allows it to achieve a balance between linguistic and cultural information while maintaining its proficiency orientation. Across nine thematically arranged chapters, *Easy Hindi* seeks to develop the learner's acquisition of linguistic elements (grammar, vocabulary, etc.) through conversation-based lessons centered on culturally appropriate topics.

Easy Hindi's approach to grammar is well suited to the goals of the text. The topics are covered efficiently and not burdened by over explanation or bogged down by the minutia of minor exceptions to major grammatical patterns. The format of the charts demonstrating grammatical forms uses full-sentence examples instead of isolated words. Combined, they allow the focus of the book to remain on conversation while providing the essential architecture for language development.

The exercises in each chapter are similarly efficient. They are varied enough for a learner to demonstrate their fundamental acquisition of the material and not tediously long. They translate well to manageable classroom and homework exercises that do not require a lot of explanation for students to perform since they are familiar tasks such as fill-in-the-blank, matching, true/false, and the like. These exercises allow for quick formative assessments throughout the course of study. The book provides an answer key to the assignments, also making self-study possible.

In addition to the book's lightness and efficiency, two other features stand out. First, the book includes self-assessment questions that are reminiscent of the ILR Self-Assessment ("Can Do Statements"). With overlap between the questions in the text and those in the ILR Self-Assessment, a learner can externally gauge their progress against an established standard. The second feature is the cultural information provided in the text. The "Cultural Notes" are brief and often directly tied to language learning and linguistic tasks (e.g., "How to Show Appreciation," and "Social Media Phrases"), demonstrating the connection between language usage and social norms.

Easy Hindi is geared towards college-level and adult learners. Though self-study is possible, a learner would greatly benefit from an instructor, guide, or language partner to get the full potential of this book. In an undergraduate classroom setting, an instructor would likely need to supplement this text to develop skills in other proficiency areas (e.g., reading, presentational modes of speaking), but may find the arrangement of the text useful for structuring a course around the same topics and functions.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book Review: Easy Hindi

BY DR. RAJIV RANJAN
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Easy Hindi as it promises is a complete basic Hindi language book based on a thematic approach to language learning. The book has eleven chapters starting with a chapter on the Hindi writing system. Chapters two to eleven cover common themes which are crucial for any novice learners, such as introductions, asking directions, shopping, family, celebrating birthdays, invitations, planning a trip, Indian cuisine, and reporting a lost item. It also includes cultural notes, grammatical notes, an answer key and an English-Hindi and Hindi-English dictionary, which make this book very comprehensive and a complete package for Hindi language learners/instructors.

Easy Hindi is very consistent and easy to follow. Each chapter has stated goals and a checklist at the end which helps users to understand and check if they have achieved them. Chapters start with a graphic conversation followed by vocabulary, cultural notes, grammatical notes, and pattern practices based on the conversation and grammar points. Grammar topics are introduced in each chapter in a thoughtful progression that help users to gradually acquire linguistic knowledge. The cultural notes in each chapter are very well described which help users to use their linguistic knowledge in different sociocultural situations. This book also comes with a free online audio which can be used to develop listening skills. The content of the book is appropriate for the novice level and the cultural notes are unbiased. English and Hindi texts are also accurate and there are few grammatical or spelling errors.

Any scholarly work such as *Easy Hindi* always has the possibility of further improvement. This book is printed in black and white. Colorful pictures may be added to enhance the appearance and appeal of the book. Each chapter has one conversation which limits the exposure to diverse types of conversation in any given situation. Additionally, when the graphic conversation is of more than one page, the second page appears after the no-graphic page and breaks the tempo of the reading, which may confuse users. Not all chapters have activities based on reading/listening, and task-based activities. If the book promises to boost daily conversation, it should have a few task-based activities for each situation/chapter. Unlike chapter 2, grammar points in other chapters are brief and may require more instruction. The book could benefit from also further proofreading. For example, on page 25 oblique form of “I” is replaced by the oblique form of “We.”

However, there are several features that make *Easy Hindi* uniquely useful and worth keeping. First, the graphic conversation with the Roman transliteration and English meaning at the beginning of each chapter is particularly helpful. Users of this book can quickly go through those graphic conversations and adopt key phrases and vocabulary applicable to the situations described. Second, the exhaustive list of commonly used vocabulary and idiomatic phrases provided can be easily accessed. Third, the size of the book comes in very handy for any traveler. Overall, *Easy Hindi* is a good book that can be used by teachers and all types of Hindi learners, including students, self-motivated learners and travelers.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book Review: Intermediate Hindi Textbook

BY DR.KUSUM KNAPCZYK , DUKE UNIVERSITY

Intermediate Hindi Textbook

मध्यवर्ती हिंदी पुस्तक



A Complete Reader for II and III Year Hindi Language Learners

Brajesh Samarth, Ph.D.

Edited by Kashika Singh

I was delighted to review the *Intermediate Hindi Textbook* written by Dr. Brajesh Samarth (edited by Kashika Singh). This reader is a noteworthy addition to the resources available for Hindi language students. Intermediate and advanced level textbooks are much needed and relatively few in comparison with introductory works. They serve to address the needs of diverse learners from heritage and non-heritage backgrounds. This book is well-written with a variety of cultural components as well as rich vocabulary and idiomatic expressions that support students' transition from intermediate to advanced levels.

The textbook is largely a reader and all students would benefit from the cultural nuances available in the authentic Hindi stories found within it. Students will get a glimpse of a few historical places and get to know their relevance. This book covers a variety of topics such as weddings, Holi, weather, Indian attire, cricket, music, and *vastu-shastra*, providing an interesting range of themes for students of Hindi. The rich information surrounding culture provides much needed context for student learning. The straightforward manner in which these topics are presented is useful as it provides entry points for discussions around cultural diversity in India. Having this information woven into narratives or stories would further engage students and provide figures for empathy and discussion. An instructor using this text might choose short passages, news articles, film and video clips, or similar supplementary material to add lived context to the information.

By no means is this a dry and boring reader. Humor, emotions, and drama are essential parts of language learning and are well represented in this book. Chapters like "Pikki" and the folktale "Teen Thag aur Bhola Brahman" tell stories and describe personality traits through adventurous journeys that are sure to amuse students. The book starts with a few chapters on dialogues, but later chapters have paragraph-length texts. The activities after each chapter allow students to apply new knowledge in a variety of ways, including speaking and writing projects.

In addition to these core exercises, there are activities designed for students to expand their knowledge through external research. These were well-constructed and balanced though some would have been improved with model answers and some additional background information to assist instructors and get students started. For example, Chapter 5 poses a research question about Hindi authors and literature that may be challenging for even instructors who may not be well-versed in the biographies of Hindi authors. An instructor using the text will need to be aware of activities and prepare accordingly. A benefit is that such research questions can be easily transformed into formal presentation projects.

A textbook with lengthy reading passages will necessarily contain lengthy vocabulary lists (compare with Usha Jain's *Intermediate Hindi Reader*, for example). The words are presented serially instead of alphabetically to assist the reader as they progress through the text. Vocabulary acquisition is a major undertaking at the intermediate level and this book provides a wealth of new words and phrases for students. An instructor using this text will need to curate these lists (some of which contain over 200 words) in order to create targeted vocabulary sets for student learning.

Samarth's *Intermediate Hindi Textbook* is a valuable contribution to Hindi language learning materials. It is appropriate for high school, university, and adult learners. The twenty-seven chapters of the text provide a framework around which an instructor could design a two-semester course.

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The South Asian Language Teachers Association is SALTA is a non-profit (503c), professional organization registered in the state of Tennessee whose objective is to advance and improve the study and teaching of South Asian languages and cultures; to promote research in the field of South Asian languages, linguistics, and literatures; to further the common interests of teachers in the field; and to facilitate communication and professional cooperation among its members. More information at <https://mysalta.org/>