

A Method to Familiarize Students with The Grammatical Gender of Hindi Inanimate Nouns by Drawing On Parallels with The Grammatical Structure of Gender in The German Language

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Hindi poses a challenge to beginners when it comes to the grammatical gender of non-living things (inanimate nouns) as, unlike English, Hindi has grammatical gender for them as well. Moreover, there are no articles before nouns which can provide students a hint of the gender of the object, unlike in some languages i.e. der (for masculine groups), die (for feminine groups), das (for neuter groups) in German language. The identification of the grammatical gender of nouns for non-living things must be learned by heart as they are needed for noun declension in the Hindi language. Most learners of Hindi are confused by this complex grammatical situation. In Hindi, the genitive case is usually created by using the following inflectional affixes: का /ka:/ (for the singular form of masculine nouns), के /ke:/ (for the plural form of masculine nouns), की /ki:/ (for plural and singular forms of feminine nouns) before nouns. As noted earlier, in the German language, nouns usually make their gender known by means of articles and adjectives in front of nouns. Thus, when teachers give a new word to a student for the very first time, s/he could use a pattern similar to the German. The article would familiarize the grammatical gender of inanimate Hindi nouns for Hindi learners, if the inflectional affixes mentioned above (का /ka:/, के /ke:/, की /ki:/), which indicate genitive cases, are used before inanimate nouns. For example: का नमक /ka: nəmək/ (salt), की हवा /ki: həwa:/(wind). As a matter of fact, it has been identified that the interest of beginners towards the Hindi language has begun to decrease gradually because the grammatical gender of non-living things (inanimate nouns), is quiet difficult to understand. Therefore, this study draws attention to how both students and teachers can address the problems associated with learning and teaching the grammatical gender of non-living things (inanimate nouns) in the Hindi Language.

Keywords: *Hindi, German, Grammatical gender, Inanimate nouns, Genitive case*

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