

From the Hindi Department, University of Jodhpur (India)

## Some Undecided Hindi Phonemes\*

By MOTI LAL GUPTA, Jodhpur

I have taken for my study the standard form of Hindi, tipped as the national and official language of India. This form of Hindi is an adaptation of the Khari Boli, belonging to the Western Hindi group of languages, according to *Grierson*. It is spoken over a vast area of Northern India and is followed in almost all the parts of the country, leaving some far off rural areas. Sometimes there is a controversy over its status, and one of the arguments advanced against it is the nature of some of its phonemes which I call 'undecided' – may also be called 'ambiguous'.

The commonly accepted vowel phonemes are 12, and the consonant phonemes 33. Out of these the following ones are still undecided –

Vowel  $|ai|$  equivalent to  $[ai]$  and  $[\varepsilon]$   
 $|au|$  equivalent to  $[au]$  and  $[\sigma]$ .

The phonetic symbols are the same but they represent different phonemes from place to place and situation to situation, as also from person to person.

$|r|$  being reduced now to  $|ri|$  and  $|ru|$ .

The phonetic symbol continues but its importance at its phonetic level no longer exists.

Consonant  $|ŋ|$ ,  $|\tilde{n}|$ .

The symbols are there but they are neither spoken nor written having yielded their places to  $|n|$  and for all purposes reduced to  $[ŋ]$ ,  $[\tilde{n}] \sim |n|$ .

$|s|$  having become one with  $|s'|$ .

New sounds have crept in but symbols have not been devised. They are having a double phonemic representation.  $|\underline{nh}|$ ,  $|\underline{mh}|$ ,  $|\underline{rh}|$ ,  $|\underline{lh}|$  and the like.

\* The paper in full will be published in *Phonetica*.