



CENTRE FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

(A central university established by an Act of Parliament of India, 2007 and accredited by NAAC in 2015)

Report **Six day Workshop on Grammatical Variation and Analysis** **5th-10th March 2018**

The Centre for Endangered Languages, Sikkim University in collaboration with the Indo-Norwegian Cooperation Programme (INCP) project (based at the University of Delhi) organised a Six day Workshop on Grammatical Variation and Analysis from 5th-10th March 2018. It was conducted at the Cauvery Hall, Sikkim University.

The theme of the workshop was variation in Linguistics. The workshop was led by Professor KV Subbarao, (retired) University of Delhi; Professor Tor A. Afarli, Norwegian University of Science & Technology, Trondheim, Norway; Professor Ayesha Kidwai, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Dr. Tanmoy Bhattacharya, University of Delhi, and Mr Karthick Narayanan, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Following the call for participation, a total of twenty four participants which include twelve (12) from the Centre for Endangered Languages, Sikkim University; two (2) from the Centre for Endangered Languages, Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar; one (1) from Tezpur University, Tezpur; two (2) Assistant Professors from the Department of Lepcha, Sikkim University; four (04) from Department of Nepali, Sikkim University; three (03) from University of Delhi and one (1) from English and Foreign Language University, Hyderabad participated in the workshop.

On 5th March 2018, the inaugural session was chaired by the officiating Vice-Chancellor Professor Pratap Chandra Pradhan and was attended by Professor Irshad Ahmed, Dean of School of Languages and Literature; and the workshop leaders. Dr. Meiraba Takhellambam, Assistant Professor CEL, SU gave the welcome speech and welcomed the invited guest, the experts and the participants.

Dr. Samar Sinha, the Co-ordinator of Centre for Endangered Languages, Sikkim University welcomed the guests and the experts by offering ceremony khada to Dr. Kabita Lama, Associate Professor and Dr. Aruna Rai, Assistant Professor from the Department of Nepali; Dr. Lienjang Zeite, and Rejhoney Borang from Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar; Sourabh Chetty from Tezpur University; Chandrika Baruah, Padmabati Achom and Nivedita Verma, University of Delhi; and Lama Mando from English and Foreign Language University, Hyderabad.

The co-organiser of the workshop, Dr. Tanmoy Bhattacharya, the co-PI for the Indo-Norwegian Cooperation Programme introduced the workshop theme of variation in Linguistics. He stressed that variation is most commonly studied within the sub-discipline of Sociolinguistics. However, in both sociolinguistics approaches to variation as well as studies of variation which do not set any sociolinguistic variables, concentrate mostly on (morpho)phonology. The reason syntactic/morphosyntactic variation studies are so few in number and do not constitute a part of

the tradition of variation studies, is because they are not easy and straightforward to carry out.

On his remarks, Professor Irshad Ahmed commended the Centre for Endangered Languages for their endeavour to document endangered languages. He also remarked that rescuing languages is a service to humanity, and he elaborated how variation in languages justify the living character of language.

The officiating Vice-Chancellor Professor Pratap Chandra Pradhan, in his remarks from the Chair, highlighted the need of documenting endangered languages, and pointed how the younger generation is attracted to the language of opportunity which is one of the main reasons for the endangerment. Dr. Wichamdinbo Mataina, Assistant Professor CEL, proposed the vote of thanks.

The first talk in the academic session was given by Professor Tor Afarli on “The verb phrase and its immediate surroundings: An EXO view.” Professor Afarli discussed the motivation for decomposing the verb phrase into a light verb projection (variously labelled v, Voice, Pred, Caus, Tr,...) and a main verb projection, and argued that an analysis in terms of Pr(ed) + V is the most appropriate one. He elaborated using the look upward towards T analysis, asking how tense (and other verb-related inflection) is related to the verb. Taking language mixing data into account, he argued that Pr contains a tense element that is valued by tense in T. He proposed the look downward to the complement domain of the main verb, trying to throw some exoskeletal light on the double object alternation and the locative alternation.

The second talk of the day was presented by Ms. Chandrika Baruah on “Variation on Dative Case expressions across Assamese dialects.” She discussed on ways at analysing variation observed in dative case expressions in ditransitive occurring in the two different dialects of Assamese viz. the Eastern dialect and the Rangia variety of Assamese (a sub-variety of Western Kamrupi Assamese). She concluded by pointing out that variation between the Eastern and the Western dialects of Assamese is in the Vocabulary (speaker’s knowledge) which determines the insertion of a phonological exponent in the PF component of Grammar and not in the computation and the structure along with its functional terminals is uniform in both the dialects. The bundles of morphosyntactic and semantic features that constitute morphemes are not determined by the Vocabulary.

Ms. Lama Mando presented her work on “Compounds and Mixing in Syrian Arabic.” She discussed the nature of compounds in Arabic. Within Synthetic Genitive Constructs (SGC), the first element obligatorily lacks a definite article, whereas the second element can optionally be definite or indefinite. She further elaborated mixing into non-compositional compounds is not as flexible as mixing into compositional ones; it is not acceptable to mix the head, the modifier or both. The only acceptable way is to use an English equivalent which may not be a compound in English as in “capital” and “mermaid.” Although mixing into such compounds is not acceptable in general.

On the second day of the workshop, Dr. Tanmoy Bhattacharya delivered on “The syntax of argument indexation in the languages of India: A case of Macro- or Micro variation?” He initiated the discussion by posing two questions - Where is variation to be located (Lexicon, Syntax, LF)? and What is the extent of variation (Macro or Micro)? His discussion on the Central Magdhan Prakrit languages showed how the Middle Indo-Aryan spread out in time and space which shows up in the present day Indo-Aryan viz. Magahi, Maethli, Angika, and Kurmali. The contact effect the Central Magdhan Prakrit languages underwent because of its close contact with the Tibeto-Burman languages and Austro-Asiatic language especially Munda could be seen on the argument

mapping processes of Pronominalisation, cliticisation and affixes. The paper concluded with a discussion on the origin of Pronominalisation.

On “Variation in Complex Predicates in Hindi: An exoskeletal Approach,” Nivedita Verma proposed a Minimalist-Lexical based derivation of Compound verbs and a comparative between an Exoskeletal based model of analysis of Compound verbs in Hindi. Padmabati Achaom discussed the mood and modality in Meeteilon in the paper titled “Mood and Modality in Meeteilon: A DM/ Exoskeletal approach.” Professor KV Subbarao discussed “Tibeto-Burman Typology.” He sketched the typological features of Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in North-East India. He also discussed the forward control and backward control with respect to Mizo.

On the following day, Professor Subbarao delivered his talk on “Variation in Mizo in Time and Space” where he discussed the multiple ways of encoding time and space in Mizo. He also presented how the modern day Mizo used by the younger generation is different for the one used by the older generation, and chartered how English has brought about variation in Mizo.

Professor Ayesha Kidwai made an in-depth study of Grierson’s *Linguistic Survey of India* on Kuki-chin languages, Naga languages and the Tibeto-Himalayan languages and mapped out how the languages of each language family show affinity towards a certain way to handle the *alienability split*. In her talk “Possession - Agreement Splits: A Survey of Grierson’s Linguistic Survey” she discussed about how the *alienability split* can be used as a diagnostic tool in the study of languages. On the third session of the day, Dr Meiraba Takellambam and Ms Hima S from the Centre for Endangered Languages, Sikkim University presented “A Sketch Grammar of Magar” based on the fieldworks conducted by the Centre in Sikkim, and got inputs from the experts present. The day concluded with the introductory session on “FLEX: Dealing with lexicon” in which the subject expert Mr Karthick Narayanan introduced the participants to the use of Fieldworks Language Explorer (FLEX), a software used for managing and analysing linguistic data.

On the fourth day of the workshop, Mr. Karthick Narayanan did a hands-on session with the participants regarding “FLEX Publishing Dictionaries, Interlinearisations and concordance” and discussed how to make input text and sentences entries and edit entries in FLEX. In the second session, Professor Tor Afarli gave a talk on “The variable Morphosyntax of adjectives.”

Sujoy Sarkar, Coordinator, SPPEL, CIIL, Mysore conducted a hands-on session on the development and elicitation of “Sociolinguistic profile in a field situation” where the participants were divided into groups, and each group prepared their questionnaires and conducted field interviews.

On the penultimate day of the workshop, Karthick Narayanan continued his hands-on session on “ELAN: Transcriptions and time aligned annotations.” The participants were trained on ELAN, a software to edit audio and videos and make time aligned transcriptions. It was followed by Sujoy Sarkar’s session on the “The Sociolinguistic Profiles and Fieldwork” where the different groups presented their findings. The presentation was followed by a lively discussion on the various issues.

On 10th March 2018, Karthick Narayanan continued with his hands-on training on “ELAN” and the participants chopped and sliced video files, and made transcriptions on those files. In the final session, the Coordinator of Centre for Endangered, Sikkim University gave a vote of thanks bring an end to the six day workshop.