



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 Workshop on Sociolinguistics 9th-14th April 2018

The Centre for Endangered Languages (CEL), Sikkim University (SU) in collaboration with the CEL, Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Arunachal Pradesh organised a Workshop on Sociolinguistics from 9th-14th April 2018 in Itanagar.

The Registrar of RGU, on his inaugural remarks, shared his ideas about endangered or lesser known languages. He also congratulated the team members for achievements done so far in the Centre, and suggested to accomplish the task within the stipulated time for the sustenance of the Centre.

Following the inauguration of the workshop, the first session started with a lecture from Prof. Simon S. John, Coordinator of CEL, RGU on “Language, Folklore and Culture” where he described the basic meaning of language, folklore and the culture adopted by the community. He even discussed the differences between text, texture and context in data collection from the native language consultant.

Dr. Samar Sinha, Coordinator of CEL, SU shared his ideas on “Endangered Language Documentation” in context of the Northeast India with special relevance to the languages of Sikkim and Darjeeling Himalayas, a linguistic ecology hotspot with shared history, culture and demography. He also distinguished language documentation in its pre-1995 and post-1995 paradigms, and also focussed on endangered language documentation from an ecolinguistic perspective.

Ms. Lisa Lomdak, Assistant Coordinator of CEL, RGU talked on “Preliminary Notes on Languages/Language Varieties of the Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh.” She highlighted on the areas where the Monpas are settled and discussed a comparative data set collected from various places.

Ms. Pratima Chhetri, Research Associate from the CEL, SU highlighted the methodology and workflow of the CEL, SU. In her talk titled “What we do in the Field?,” she discussed on field techniques and other best practices. She also talked on data handling in the field collected, data transferring, digitisation processes in Flex, a software for data processing, and meta data creation.

Ms. Rumi Deuri and Mr. Kaling Dabi discussed the “Social and Cultural Life of the Meyors,” an ethnic community of east Arunachal Pradesh. Based on the field trip conducted by the CEL, RGU, they spoke on the audio-visual documentation of the socio-cultural life of the Meyor tribe in Walong village. Their presentation highlighted the daily life of the Mayor tribe, about their culture, structure of houses etc.

Dr. Lienjang Zeite, Research Associate of CEL, RGU presented on “Documenting the Kasiks of Arunachal Pradesh.” She discussed the language scenario in Northeast India. In her talk, it is known that Kasik is one of the most endangered languages in Arunachal Pradesh, and spoken in

three villages in Tirap district.

Dr. Wichamdinbo Mataina, Assistant Professor of CEL, SU gave a talk on “Data Processing in Language Documentation.” He discussed about how to process linguistic data for audio as well as video files using the workflow developed by the CEL, SU. He explained how the data are recorded, transcribed, translated, annotated and archived.

Dr. Jumyir Basar, Associate Professor of Anthropology at AITS, RGU delivered her lecture on “Ethnography and Beyond.” She highlighted ethnography as an anthropological inquiry, audio-visual documentation, and on the location the researcher and the community. She also discussed various methods and techniques employed in ethnographic studies.

Ms. Chera Devi (JRF) and Ms. Rejhoney Borang (SRF) from CEL, RGU spoke on “The Tangams - Sociocultural and Linguistic Aspects” and “Brief Grammatical Sketch of Tangam,” respectively. Based on the field survey, the Tangams in Kucing village of Arunachal Pradesh are lesser known communities among the other constituent communities of the Adi tribe. The CEL team, RGU have conducted audio-visual documentation during the fieldwork. A grammatical sketch of Tangam showing the sub lexical sketch grammar of Tangam was presented followed by discussion on consonant clusters, consonant sequence, geminates, syllable structure, tone and phonological processes.

Ms. Pabitra Chettri, Technical Assistant cum Archivist gave a lecture on “Building a Dictionary: Paper to Multimedia” where she discussed about building a dictionary from a software called FLEx (Fieldwork Language Explorer). She carefully explained the process of data entry in flex and exporting files for backup as well as app creation.

Ms. Hima S, Research Associate of CEL, SU discussed the final module of the CEL, SU workflow — on “Finding the Pulse of the Language: Data Analysis.” She gave an overview of the workflow and stressed on the process of analysing morphological data into three parts. Basically she discussed every step involved in the analysis — Input - baseline, lexicon, transcriptions imported from Elan; Process - analyse on flex, formulate the grammatical rules; and Output - sketch grammar.

Mr. Wanglit Mongcham, Assistant Coordinator of CEL, RGU discussed on “Aspects of Verb Morphology of Tibeto-Burman Languages.” He described the typology of morphological forms, and verb and its categories in detail.

The Coordinator of CEL, SU was asked to give a brief presentation on “Overview of CEL, SU” highlighting the work, achievement, progress and the financial status of the CEL, SU.

The Coordinator of CEL, RGU also shared his experiences on “Fieldwork and Audio-visual Documentation.” He stressed on document and documentation. He also briefed about different types of documentation as well as pre-documentation and post- documentation stages. He also briefly made reference to the tools — video camera, still camera, recorder, laptops — required during the process of documentation in the field. He discussed on how to overcome the problems and to tackle the issues in the field.

The CEL, RGU have produced a documentary film “Ngok Miri Dekke Yoyo-Gaga Goktuanam Kiding” which means “Those songs and lullabies I used to sing” on the Minyong variety of Adi community. The film was made by Mr. Kombong Darang, Documentation Officer of CEL, RGU in collaboration with the other professionals. After the show, Mr. Kombong gave a short description on rituals observed by the community, and his experiences in documenting the rituals as well as aspects of film making with the community members in its natural setting. In his discussion, he expressed that any documentary film making involves a good script, which in turn involves good

research. In addition, he highlighted various film techniques to deal with the subject and various topics discussed the film.

Prof. Madhumita Barbora, the Coordinator, Dr. Arup Nath and Dr. Dhanapati, Assistant Professors from the CEL, Tezpur University also attended the workshop. They gave a short overview of their Centre. They highlighted their academic programmes in Linguistics and Endangered Languages, a modular course designed for certificate, diploma and MA degree. In addition to the modular course, the CEL, TU offers the courses in Language Documentation and Revitalization, and Language, Society and Endangerment under Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). They discussed the activities done so far in terms of research, teaching and facilities of the Centre, and highlighted on the publication of learners book in six languages.

An intercluster meeting of the Northeast cluster comprising of CEL, SU, CEL, RGU, and CEL, TU was held along with the workshop. The meeting discussed the course of action to be carried out jointly in the coming days.