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A MONTHLY OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

ICDL-2016 & 44th AICDL

A BRIEF REPORT

(Continued from the last issue)

There was an overwhelming response for the conference. Hence every day three parallel sessions were conducted to accommodate a total number of 103 papers, in addition to the eight plenary talks. These sessions took place in the Humanities Auditorium, Conference Hall and Lecture Hall at the School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad.

On 16th June, session 1 was conducted after lunch. In the session held at the Humanities Auditorium, five papers were presented and the session on *Comparative Dravidian Linguistics* (CDL) was presided over by Prof. G. Umamaheswar Rao. P. Sreekumar in his paper *An Introduction to the History of the 200 years of Comparative Dravidian*

Linguistics (1816-2016) opined that having 200 years of development is a significant milestone and is enough for a discipline to start a serious contemplation of its past for a better future. Therefore, a comprehensive history of CDL is an imperative. A comprehensive history of CDL can function as a means to introduce the discipline to the future generation (pedagogic), evaluate new hypotheses (scientist's education) and moderate the new theories (disciplinary maturity) (Koerner 1976). He proposes an alternative framework and an alternate chronology (1816-1856-1961-1971-1933-2003-2013) based on the internal development of the CDL. Dr. K. Rajyarama's paper on *Dative in Dravidian: A Study in Comparative Reconstruction* studies the dative forms in all the four major Dravidian languages - Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada - and proposes that a comparative study of this nature across the four languages might throw light on the fact that where an alternate case form to dative is possible, it denotes the taking over of the dative by an alternate one and these functional domains can be determined by comparative reconstruction. Ganesan Ambedkar in his paper *Computational Analysis of DEDR* describes that DEDR (*Dravidian Etymological Dictionary Revised*) has around 5,550 related and relatable etymologies of 26 Dravidian languages, derived through various linguistic rules. By using the DEDR as a base, a computational program, written in Perl language identified the shared etymologies between or among the languages under each entry. Identification of shared

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etymologies within each DEDR entry also shows non-shared etymologies of languages within the Dravidian language family. The idea behind this paper is to identify the language left unidentified in each entry. Mamta Kumari's *Morphosyntax of Numeral System in Dravidian Languages* and Raunak Roy's *A Comparative Study of Munda and Dravidian Numerals* focus on the numerals in the Dravidian languages - Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu - and across the Munda language Asuri as well.

The session on *Morphology* had five papers. Basavaraja Kodagunti's *Compound Case Markers in Kannada* was about Dravidian languages and how the free morphemes, at the first stage, lose their meaning by frequent use, form adpositions and then develop into case suffixes through the grammaticalization process. Eventually the free morpheme will turn to a bound morpheme and undergo the process called case syncretism which will lead to the formation of Compound Case Markers. The other papers were: Leihaorambam Sarbajit Singh and Heisnam Kenny Devi's *Nambashi Adjectives*, Prasanth R.I.'s *Auxiliaries in New Malayalam*, Samiksha Bajpai and Rajesh Kasturirangan's *Compound Verbs in Hindi and the Role of Embodiment* and Heisnam Kenny Devi's *Problems in Manipuri Lexicography*.

The session on *Syntax* was held at the Lecture Hall Complex and was chaired by Prof. K.V. Subbarao. This session also had five papers. S. Rajendran's *Noun modifying Expressions in Tamil* studied the different types of Tamil pre (noun) modifiers. He further talked about the phrasal and clausal Tamil pre-modifiers in detail. Binu K.J. presented a paper on *Content Questions: A Comparison between Malayalam and Tamil* where he studies the

difference in word order of Content Questions of Tamil and Malayalam. The other papers were: Shereena P.H.'s *The Morphosyntax of the Agreement in Malayalam*, Arvind Iyengar's *Pronouns and Grammatical Markers in Hebbar Tamil* and Satish Kumar Nadimpally's *Telugu CPs in First Phase Syntax and Minimalistic Framework*.

The session chaired by Morey Dipak Tryambak had *Phonology* as its theme and the following papers were presented. Naorem Brindebala Devi and Ch. Yashawanta Singh's *Voicing Assimilation and Deaspiration Rules in Kakch* aimed at studying the morphophonemic changes occurring in Kakching dialect, a variety of Meiteilon/Meeteilon (Manipuri) when the derivational morphological features are suffixed to a root. The other papers presented in this session were Anusree Srinivasan's *Sonority Relations in Consonant Clusters in Malayalam* and Yangchen Roy and Anjali Nair's *Phonological Distribution of Malayalam Dative Case Markers*.

The parallel session held at the Conference Hall dealt with *Morphology*. D. Vasanta and Y. Vishwanatha Naidu's *Body Part Lexicon in Telugu: An Empirical Investigation*, Biswajit Das's *Dravidian Elements in Assamese Language* and G. Palanirajan's *False Friends between Tamil and Malayalam* were presented. At the Lecture Hall where the theme was *Semantics*, S. Kunjamma presented her paper on *Lexical and Grammatical Meaning in Malayalam* and G. Mayilsamy on *Verbs of Motion in Purananuru*.

[To be continued]
K. Rajyarama

RAMESWARAM AND SRI LANKA*from***A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

(Continued from the last issue)

Antiquity of Civilisation and Origin of Script

Dorling Kindersley's book *History of the World* writes: "Archaeologists have found nearly 100 Indus settlements within an area of 1,770 km. and the Indus civilisations probably covered a larger area than Mesopotamia and Egypt put together. However, in about 5000 BC farmers settled in the fertile land between Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq. The leading city state from 2700 BC until 2300 BC was Ur. Farmers from west (Iraq) moved to Indus in 2500 BC where cities like Mohenjo-Daro flourished with a population of 40,000. The Sumerians were credited with the invention of the script in 3500 BC, what is known as the Cuneiform script".

Interestingly, the word *Ur* is attached to most towns like Kanpur, Jabalpur, Tanjore, Urur etc.

Recent Development

On 16th September, a news item in *Times of India* titled 'Gadkari discusses 5 billion India-Lanka road links with Ranil' is interesting. In brief, it says "Shipping ministry sources claimed Asian Development Bank has shown interest to carry out the socio-economic feasibility study for the 23 km project linking Dhanushkodi and Sri Lanka boundary, requiring an estimated \$ 5.19 billion".

This appears to be a progress far better than the previous Sethusamudram Shipping Channel Project now dumped.

If this comes through, it can be a boon to pilgrims and tourists and also for the trade in the entire South East Asia. It will also strengthen the Indo-Sri Lankan relationship.

K.V.S. Krishna

BRAJ B. KACHRU PASSES AWAY

Braj Kachru, a Jubilee Professor Emeritus of Linguistics, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA passed away on 29th July 2016. He was 84.

Prof. Kachru was an authority on sociolinguistics, multi-lingualism, South Asian linguistics, applied linguistics and Kashmiri language. He encouraged the study of linguistic theory with its application to areas such as second language teaching, discourse structure and analysis of literature. In his opinion, linguists should concentrate not only on structural and theoretical aspects of language but also on the social and cultural dimensions. He coined the term *World Englishes* and demonstrated that the non-native varieties of English are rule-governed systems formed during the evolutionary process of second-language learning.

In his literary career spreading over half a century, he authored and edited over 25 books and more than 100 research papers. To name a few are the prize-winning *The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of Non-native Englishes*, *Indianization of English*, *The English Language in India*, *Asian Englishes: Beyond the Canon*, *A Reference Grammar of Spoken Kashmiri* and *A History of Kashmiri Literature*.

He held many influential offices and received many prestigious honours. He served as Visiting Professor at Hong Kong University and at the National University of Singapore. His service as an Honorary Fellow of English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad was quite praiseworthy.

Prof. Kachru's death is an irreparable loss to the fields of linguistics and English language studies.

On behalf of the Dravidian Linguistics Association, we express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Reported by S.N. Sridhar

DR. J. PRASAD - DIRECTOR OF SCERT

Dr. J. Prasad, former Vice-Chancellor of Sri Sankaracharya Sanskrit University, Kalady has taken charge as the Director of SCERT, Kerala. He is a close associate of the Dravidian Linguistics Association and the International School of Dravidian Linguistics. Our best wishes to him.

SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF QUASIMORPHEMES IN MALAYALAM AS A BIOLINGUISTIC RESEARCH TOOL

Introduction

In the 1960s, Eric Lenneberg proposed that language in human beings unfolded in two steps: i. Constitution of latent structure for language-readiness present in all humans regardless of ethnicity, signifying the innate nature of human linguistic ability, something not present in other animals; ii. Actualization process from latent to realized structure. This can vary with social and cultural environment which influences learning. The FOXP2 gene is linked to human speech and language, and there are similar gene hubs in Chimpanzees and Man, both supportive for the first part of Lenneberg's postulate. It has been suggested that (Lenneberg 1967) the degree of subnormal deviation from the mean capability of the innate structures deleteriously affects language-learning competency. If so, it is reasonable to assume that deviation above the average (mean) does facilitate learning competency.

Meanwhile, Noam Chomsky developed the theory of universal grammar, based on the proposition that all languages have common properties, especially a core semantics of minimal meaning-bearing elements or morphemes and principles allowing unbounded combinations of symbols, hierarchically organized, which together can be called as language 'universals' and constitute 'universal grammar'. The presence of a universal grammar can be due to two reasons: i. All languages descended from a 'Mother language'. Though disregarded as an improbability, this is not an impossibility since all human beings descended from the same original population.

ii. There is an innate faculty of language uniquely present in all humans. This faculty intrinsically harbours a Universal Grammar (UG) which provides a structured inventory of lexical items and the syntactical techniques to join them together (Chomsky 2004). It is because of this that all human languages demonstrate a universal grammar. The Lennebergian and Chomskian postulates can be combined together to suggest that there is a 'Faculty of Language' (FoL), a 'virtual organ' (VO), unique to human beings. The study of this virtual organ can be termed as Biolinguistics. According to Chomsky, the biolinguistic perspective views a person's language in all of its aspects – sound, meaning, structure – as a state of some component of the mind, understanding "mind" in the sense of 18th-century scientists as the result of such an organical structure as that of the brain. The FoL is an 'organ' of the body, along with all cognitive systems. For ease of understanding this, the Universal Grammar can be compared to the appositional ability of the human thumb which is akin to a 'particular knowledge of the thumb', the universal grammar in all languages to the various deeds that the human hand can do and the Faculty of Language to that part of the mind containing this knowledge. Or, to look at it in another way, if universal grammar is the output from a language programme, Universal Grammar is the software producing that output and FoL is the ability of the 'chips' wherein the UG is stored. Just as the ability of the chips for storage and processing can vary, the ability of neuronal cells to store and process language-related actions too can vary. The Faculty of Language is similar to the faculty of communication by dancing in bees, the faculty of navigation direction in migratory birds etc. All these presume that some part of the nervous system is devoted to this i.e., the Faculty of Language is a virtual organ inside the nervous system, most likely the brain. This is deduced from the fact that damage to certain areas of the brain is associated with language and cognitive damage, damage to the Broca's area causing motor aphasia with neurological agrammatism wherein grammar

morphemes are omitted, and damage to Wernicke's area causing comprehension aphasia. The virtual organ is not localised to any particular site in the brain but can be visualised as being in the 'chips' of neuronal cells distributed in unknown areas.

Biolinguistics can be approached in many ways. According to Boeckx, C. & Grohmann, K.K. (Boeckx, C. & Grohmann, K.K. 2007), the FoL should be studied as a branch of biology, at a suitable level of abstraction. Therefore, biological principles as for a human organ or organ system can theoretically be applied to the study of this organ too. This may be viewed as a linguist studying a linguistic object just as a biologist studies a biological object. It may be pointed out here that some linguists consider not the FoL but languages as 'human language organs' or even as natural animate objects that undergo evolution, and equate the changes in languages as the evolutionary equivalent of natural evolution of organs/organisms (Mendivil-Giró 2009). There is also severe opposition to the ontological view, the Biolinguistic perspective, advanced by Chomsky, on the ground that Biolinguistics is essentially the study of languages which are after all not physical objects but only abstract objects which cannot be created or destroyed, nor cause or be caused (Postal 2009).

The natural skepticism against studying the FoL as a virtual organ is understandable, the underlying question being how it can be separately studied from other virtual organs for umpteen numbers of cognitive functions that the human beings have but this really does not matter probably. The biologist too encounters this problem. For example, the function of the heart is heavily pinned to the function of many organs, yet there are enough methods to study it. The important thing is to take a stance and develop a suitable method. This paper describes such an approach.

The functions of many organs are evaluated by doing the so-called *Function* assays such as those for the liver, kidney, thyroid etc. Can the FoL be tested like this? But such methods will essentially be

testing the linguistic ability of a population using the language and be influenced by many factors that affect the input. Cross-language tests also will be meaningless but there might be a way out and this will be taken up later.

Any measurable physical characteristics of a population will be having a normal distribution, with some having values above and some below the mean, but with values acceptable as being within normal limits. It is well accepted that many physical features are determined both by genetic as well as environmental factors. Several twin and family studies suggest the presence of heritable genetic effects upon endurance and muscle strength (Costa A.M. *et al* 2012). Fitness parameters such as speed, balance, cardio-respiratory fitness, adiposity, static or isometric strength, explosive strength or power and dynamic (sometimes called functional) strength etc., have genetic basis and are inheritable (Maes, H.H. *et al* 1996; Beunen & Thomis 2006). Let us take a characteristic such as muscle mass and physical strength. It is conceivable that a population 'A', whose members are involved in rigorous physical activity over many generations, will have a genetic superiority over a population 'B' of the same ethnicity, whose members lead a lax life with regard to physical activity, for acquiring muscle mass and physical strength. If the FoL is an organ like muscles, it is reasonable to expect such a situation with regard to it too. Studies suggest that inheritable genetic factors affect all aspects of language but more so for syntax and phonology than for the lexicon, suggesting that the evolution of syntax and phonology differs from that of the lexicon (Stromswold 2010). Therefore, by the same analogy, a population 'C' whose members are devoted to rigorous learning processes of language and other subjects (which also need high knowledge of language) over many generations can be expected to have a more 'robust' FoL and benefit more from further teaching than a population 'D' who have not been exposed to educational benefit over many generations.

Recent Publications: **The Contribution of Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri to Sanskrit Literature with Special Reference to Vyākaraṇa**, P. Visalakshy, 2013, Crown ¼, pp. 428, Rs. 900/- (US\$ 81/-). **A Contrastive Analysis of the Phonological Systems of Bengali and Malayalam**, Dhruvajyoti Das, 2014, pp. xii + 140, Rs. 220/- (US\$ 20/-). **Studies on Bangla from a Broader Perspective**, G.K. Panikkar, Syamala Sasidharan & Sourav Chakraborty (Eds.), 2015, pp. 216, Rs. 230/- (US\$ 23/-).

However, this is impossible to be tested in practice since techniques of measurements will not be as exact as in the case of physical parameters, and there will be many confounding factors. It might, however, be possible to test this indirectly but before going into this, two other matters need to be discussed, on the language and the parameters to be selected for study.

A linguistic form that bears no phonetic-semantic resemblance to any other linguistic form is a morpheme and the meaning of a morpheme is sememe (Bloomfield). It is assumed that each sememe is a constant and definite unit of meaning, different from all others. According to Bloomfield, though a morpheme can be described phonemically since it consists of one or more phonemes, since these phonemes (phonetic resemblances) are not connected with resemblances of meaning, no meanings can be attributed to the phonemes.

[To be continued]

V.N. Bhattachiri

HONOUR FOR H.S. ANANTHANARAYANA

Dr. H.S. Ananthanarayana was honoured on 21st August 2016 as *Sanskrit Scholar* when the Karnataka branch of Vishva Samskrita Pratisthanam celebrated Sanskrit Day. He was also presented *Dr. B.S. Ramakrishna Rao Memorial Award* for his contribution to the spread of Sanskrit language and culture. He is a former President of the Dravidian Linguistics Association and is a former Member of the Governing Council of the International School of Dravidian Linguistics. Even now he actively participates in the deliberations of the Dravidian Linguistics Association and the International School of Dravidian Linguistics.

KERALA NATAKAM FOUND AMONG GUNDERT COLLECTIONS

M. Sreenathan, Dean and Controller of Examinations, Malayalam University, Tirur has found a wide variety of invaluable books including the rare book titled *Kerala Natakam* of Thunchath Ramanujan Ezhuthacchan among Hermann Gundert collections at Tubingen University, Germany. The book refers to different communities critically delineating how they evolved in Kerala. It also throws light on the social milieu of Kerala during Ezhuthacchan's time. Besides, it provides a new version about the origin of the word 'Malayalam' which is described as from *Malakkala* meaning 'groups of mountains'.

K. Jayakumar, Vice-Chancellor of Malayalam University said that the University would publish it under the *Gundert Archive Series* jointly initiated with Tubingen University.

[Courtesy: **The Hindu**, 19.8.2016]

PROF. KARTHIKEYAN NAIR New Director of Kerala State Institute of Languages

Prof. Karthikeyan Nair was the former Director of Higher Secondary Education, Kerala. He is a well-wisher of the Dravidian Linguistics Association and the International School of Dravidian Linguistics.

NEW ENROLMENT FOR LIFE-MEMBERSHIP (August 2016)

1. **Yatmi Luikham** (*Membership No. 1272/2016*)
Khararphung, Ukhrul – 795 142, Manipur
2. **Daimalu Brahma** (*Membership No. 1273/2016*)
Vill. Rangamati, P.O. Tipkai, Kokrajhar District – 783 337, Assam