

A MONTHLY OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA**OBITUARY**

It is with great sorrow we report the demise of **Prof. Chekuri Ramarao** (b. 1934), a prominent linguist and a distinguished Telugu literary figure, on 24th July 2014 at the age of 80. He was a life-member of Dravidian Linguistics Association and was closely associated with the activities of the DLA, ISDL and IJDL. He took his Ph.D. from Cornell University under the guidance of Gerald Kelly on 'Telugu nominalisation'. During his studies in USA, he was highly influenced by the lectures of Charles F. Hockett and the theories of Syntax by Noam Chomsky.

Prof. Ramarao collaborated with Prof. Bh. Krishnamurti in the preparation of *Dialect Dictionary of Occupational Vocabulary (Agriculture)*. He has a good number of books and articles to his credit both in English and in Telugu. Based on the

Chomskian model, he published a book on Telugu syntax entitled *Telugu Vaakyam*. He was also interested in traditional grammars and analysed the most popular grammar of Cinnaya Suri on the basis of Chomskian theories. He served as a member of the linguistic faculty of Osmania University, Hyderabad for more than thirty years. He was a good teacher of Linguistics, especially in Syntax and Field Linguistics. His researches are mainly on various linguistic aspects of modern Telugu ranging from Phonology to Semantics.

His important contributions include Telugu plural formation, Co-ordination or Sub-ordination?, Nominalisation, Passive in Telugu, Direct-Indirect in Telugu and several functions of quotative marker *ani*. He also wrote on Prosody and his book *Mutyaala Saraala Mucchatrlu* is still appreciated by scholars. He became a columnist and wrote *Cheeraatalu* column analysing the contemporary poetry of Telugu. He was a supporter of feminist writings and highlighted the 'newness and freshness in their expressions'. He served as the Chief Editor of Hyderabad Book Trust which brought out many progressive books. He was also the Editor for the *Bilingual Dictionary* published by Press Academy and the initiator of the *Newspaper Language Dictionary* in Telugu.

By securing the UGC award, he travelled to various universities and gave lectures on different topics in Linguistics. For his contributions in Telugu literature, he was honoured by Sahitya Academy award (2012), C.P. Brown Academy award and Justice Avula Sambasiva Rao award.

He is survived by his wife Ranganayaki, two sons and a daughter. His demise is an irreparable loss to linguistics in general and to Dravidian linguistics in particular. All the members of DLA and ISDL express their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Informed by Prof. A. Usha Devi

42ND ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTS (Continued from July 2014 issue)

Academic Events

The 42nd All India conference of Dravidian Linguists was well arranged in a serene setting at the Dravidian University which has a sprawling campus with beautiful greenery. About 200 delegates from India and abroad attended the conference. There were around 83 papers for presentation covering different topics ranging from phonology to semantics and from computational linguistics to clinical linguistics. Four plenary and four parallel sessions were scheduled so that each paper presenter got adequate time for effective presentation and deliberations. The parallel sessions were held at four different venues at the Bhasha Bhavan of the Dravidian University. Academic personae assembled in these venues which were named after eminent linguists of Andhra Pradesh as Shri Gidugu Ramamurti, Prof. Nagamma Reddy, Prof. Bh. Krishnamurti and Ganti Jogi Somayaji.

The much awaited and attention-grabbing events of the Conference were the academic sessions which commenced in the afternoon at 2 p.m. on 19.6.2014. Session 1 conducted in Telugu language was held at Shri Gidugu Ramamurti Seminar Hall chaired by Prof. K. Ramesh Kumar. There were five paper presenters. The first paper on *Verb formations in Ananthapur dialect* was presented by Prof. Rajeswari, Sree Venketeswara University, Tirupati. She has followed the classification provided by Prof. Bh. Krishnamurti on Telugu verbal bases and has enlisted the finite and non-finite verb forms which are typical in Ananthapur dialect. The second paper titled *Suravaram kathala Telengana Bhasa* was presented by Dr. B. Vanitha. She has enumerated the linguistic features of Telangana Telugu dialect found in the writing of Suravaram Pratapa Reddy. The third paper was *Kadapakatha sankalanam - bhāṣā pariśīlanam* by Dr. Rajeswaramma from S.V. University, Tirupati. The paper dealt with vocabulary and grammatical features of Kadapa dialect found in the written literature. The paper entitled *Telugu Bhasalo Puruṣādhipatyam* (The male dominance in Telugu language) was presented by Dr. Bhujanga

Reddy, Hyderabad. The study is based on language and gender domination and gender discriminatory vocabulary in Telugu. He suggested the necessity of coining new terms for some feminine words. The topic was controversial and a lively discussion followed.

The last paper of the session was on the *Poetic Dictionaries in Telugu* by Mr. Praveen of Dravidian University, Kuppam. The scholar has dealt with the features of poetic dictionaries and highlighted their style and importance. The scholars participated in the discussion and the main issues of these papers were hotly debated. Prof. K. Ramesh Kumar, Osmania University thanked the paper presenters and concluded the session with his remarks.

Session 2 held at Prof. Nagamma Reddy Seminar Hall was chaired by Prof. G.K. Panikkar. The paper titled *Translational stylistics in Tagore's story 'The Postmaster'* was presented by K.N. Geethakumari, Senior Research Fellow, ISDL. The study aims at the stylistic patterns and devices employed in the Malayalam version of the story. The style of a writer is shaped by the linguistic choices he makes which include a number of syntactic and lexical variables. Various difficulties and issues in translating the story were seriously discussed. Dr. R.R. Thampuran, Dr. Naduvattom Gopalakrishanan and Dr. S.A. Shanavas actively participated in the discussion. In the second paper, *Nanna's inscriptions and the Sangham poetry*, Dr. T. Pavithran dealt with the Vattezhuttu inscriptions of Nanna which are a landmark in the realm of epigraphical studies. The paper presenter discovered and deciphered a four-line Vattezhuttu inscription of King Nanna. The deciphering of the various Vattezhuttu inscriptions are extremely helpful in understanding the characteristics of Nanna's period. Prof. G.K. Panikkar congratulated the paper presenters and talked about various strategies that can be followed in translating stories from English to Malayalam. He also commented on the beginning of Vattezhuttu inscription in Kerala which dates back to 8th c. A.D.

Session 3 on Bengala and Dravidian chaired by Prof. Sanghamitra Saha was held at Prof. Bh. Krishnamurti Hall. The papers are *Particles in Bengali and Tamil: A contrastive Analysis* by

Sourav Chakraborty, *The Lateral sounds in Bengali and Tamil: A contrastive Analysis* by Dhrubajyoti Das, *Divine elements in Bengali Mangalkavyas* by Amrita Das and *Brahmanism and Migration - The Iyengars of Godi Bero in Purulia* by Dr. Sanghamitra Saha. Sourav Chakraborty in his paper focused on the grammatical elements in Tamil and Bengali and pointed out the difficulties of native Bengali speakers while speaking, reading and writing Tamil. The native Tamil speakers also face problems in handling these basic skills in Bengali. He has framed certain rules which will help to reduce these problems. Dhrubajyoti Das made a contrastive study of lateral sounds in Bengali and Tamil. His analysis reveals that some lateral consonant sounds are absent in formal Bengali but present in formal Tamil. He has enlightened the problems faced by non-native speakers of these languages and suggested corrective measures for them. Amrita Das pointed out the cross-cultural interaction between Bengali and Dravidian based on her study of religious narratives or *Mangal kavyas*. She also revealed linguistic and cultural identity seen among them and spoke of rituals and practices described in ancient *kavyas*. Sanghamitra Saha dealt with Brahmanism and Migration of Iyengars to Bengal. She made ethnographic study of Iyengars settled in Bero in Purulia district. She described in detail how the Iyengar families migrated to the village and in course of time adopted some of the Bengali customs. Through this she pointed out the acculturation that took place in the community. There were thought-provoking and informative comments from the participants and the explanations of the paper presenters were stimulating.

Session 4 held at Prof. G.J. Somayaji Seminar Hall chaired by Prof. G. Uma Maheswara Rao had three papers: *Loss of some agreement features in Kumbi due to the contact situation* by Varija Nirbal, *Grammaticalization of Body-part terms in Assamese and Bodo* by Araiswring Basumatary and *Historical study of jargon used by coal mine workers of Andhra Pradesh* by Mendem Bapuji.

Kumbi, a dialect of Konkani, belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family and is spoken by Kumbi community. Their speech is highly influenced by local Dravidian languages like Kannada and Tulu. Varija tried

to show some convergence features related to agreement and she concluded that the loss of agreement in Kumbi is due to the influence of Dravidian languages.

Araiswring Basumatary spoke of several processes of grammaticalisation of body-part terms in Assamese and Bodo. Terms for different parts of the body have been grammaticalised to encode different information apart from their idiomatic usage. He has explained various processes of grammaticalisation such as phonological reduction, loss of syntactic freedom, semantic bleaching, etc.

Mendem Bapuji has collected the data from the coal mine workers of Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. Jargon is a kind of shorthand used among members of a particular group of people and the number of people using this is diminishing. Various techniques such as borrowing, simplification and association and exploration employed in the formation of jargon were also explained.

After the presentation of the papers, each and every paper was discussed thoroughly.

The most conspicuous and exhilarating of the academic events were the two endowment lectures, namely Prof. V.I. Subramoniam Endowment Lecture by Prof. H.S. Ananthanarayana and Prof. K. Nagamma Reddy Endowment Lecture by Prof. Panchanan Mohanty, chaired by Prof. K. Rangan. In his introductory speech, Prof. Rangan portrayed Professor VIS as an organizer par excellence, an institution-builder and a role model for young scholars to emulate. Prof. Ananthanarayana who held Prof. VIS in high esteem recounted how their intimacy developed due to their common interest in Linguistics and he paid tribute to Prof. VIS for his invaluable contribution to Linguistics. He then spoke on *Nominal Derivations in Indo-Aryan and Dravidian* which is based on a comparative study of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and Kēśirājā's *Śabdamañidarpaṇa*. Pāṇini derives nouns in Sanskrit generally from verb roots or bases by affixing a set of suffixes termed *kṛt* and the nominal form is called the primary derivative. Both of them talked of *Kṛdanta* primary noun and *taddhitanta* secondary noun as having formed by suffixation. The

analytical model provided by Pāṇini for Sanskrit helped the development of comparative linguistics in the 19th century.

Prof. Panchanan Mohanty, in the Endowment lecture, dealt with the *Law of Deaspiration in Indian Languages*. He spoke of the characteristics of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian and maintained that Dravidian languages are characterised by unaspirated stops. Examples were given from languages like Assamese, Konkani and Kashmiri and he concluded that deaspiration is a feature of Indian languages.

[To be continued]

Y. Viswanatha Naidu & K.N. Geethakumari

Suseela P. Upadhyaya Award for a Young Linguist

An endowment of Rs. 1,00,000/- (one lakh rupees) was contributed in memory of **Prof. Suseela P. Upadhyaya** for giving an award to a young linguist below thirty years who produces a good monograph or a couple of good research papers on any topic of modern Linguistics. It is to be judged by a committee of three senior linguists appointed by DLA and the award may be given during the All India Conference of Dravidian Linguists organised by DLA.

BOOKS DONATED

Prof. C.J. Daswani and Prof. Tilottama C. Daswani have donated 405 books from their personal collection to the library of International School of Dravidian Linguistics in memory of Prof. V.I. Subramoniam. The books are of immense value to linguists as well as to bibliophiles as they are of rare collections comprising different branches of Linguistics. The titles of the books will be serialised from the next issue onwards.

Bindu R.B.

NEW ENROLMENT FOR LIFE-MEMBERSHIP

(July 2014)

1. **Dr. Usha S. (Dr.)**

‘El Salem’, Melamcode, Nemom P.O.
Thiruvananthapuram - 695 020, Kerala

STUDIES ON SANGAM LITERATURE

(Continued from July 2014 issue)

Vaiyapuri Pillai was a student of law and his method of analysis was based on logical conclusions in a scientific approach. Besides, he was attracted by western methods and theories. He stressed the need to utilize the above methods in Tamil research. Moreover, he was adamant that a diligent indexing should precede every grammatical and cultural study. His *History of Tamil Language and Literature in English, Culture of the Tamils in Tamil (Tamiḷar Paṇṇāṭu)* and other essays are classical examples of his approach to Tamil studies¹¹. Many a scholar before and after his times interpreted the second verse in *Puṛaṇānūru* on Peruñcōṟutiyan Cēralātan was interpreted to indicate the contemporariness of this Cēra monarch with the characters in Bharatam, on the basis of the reference that this Cēra king provided food to the warring groups in the battle of Kurukshetra¹². But Vaiyapuri Pillai scientifically established that the reference might be about a symbolic feast or feeding a group of artists who enacted the battle in his court¹³.

P.T. Sreenivasaiyengar and K.A. Nilakanta Sastri dealt with in detail the historical aspects of the Saṅgam Tamils in their works, *The History of the Tamils* and *The History and Culture of the Tamils respectively*¹⁴. V. Kanakasabhai Pillai in his *Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago* has concentrated his attention on locating the places available in the Saṅgam Classics. He has identified Vañci, Muziris, Tondi, Uṟaiyur etc. with modern cities and towns¹⁵. His identifications have stood the sands of time.

Contribution of Kerala University

M. Raghavaiyengar and S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, the honorary professors of the Tamil Chair created from the grant of Alagappa Chettiar have done yeomen service to the cause of Tamil. While Raghavaiyengar studied the impact of Tamil on Kerala on the basis of data from the Saṅgam works, Vaiyapuri Pillai opened the gates for the indexing of Saṅgam works. His student and successor to the

Recent Publications: **The Morphosyntax of the Dravidian Languages**, P.S. Subrahmanyam, 2013, pp. xxx + 687, Rs. 1,000/- (US\$ 100/-). **A Survey of Smṛiti Literature**, N.P. Unni, 2013, pp. 8 + 164, Rs. 200/- (US\$ 20/-). **A Contrastive Study of Case in Bengali and Tamil**, Sourav Chakraborty, 2012, pp. 136, Rs. 120/- (US\$ 5/-).

Tamil chair in the University, Prof. V.I. Subramoniam continued his work to its logical end. Soon the Tamil chair became a full-fledged department under Subramoniam in 1961. In the 60s of the 20th century, sporadic activities in Tamil research were carried out under the aegis of Subramoniam by a team of devoted students. Many of them have done indexing and preparing descriptive grammars for all the Saṅgam works and the epics like *Cilappatikāram*, Kampan's *Rāmāyaṇa* etc. using western linguistic theories of analysis. Besides, he insisted the M.A. students of the department to submit dissertations, mostly based on Saṅgam works. During that period, a method of cultural reconstruction was developed to study the culture of the Cēras by comparing cultural complexes available in the Saṅgam works with the cultural complexes existing in the modern society including the tribal population to reconstruct the ancient culture was formulated¹⁶. An attempt was also made to reconstruct the population of Tamilakam during the Saṅgam period¹⁷. Subramoniam commented that "the Manickavasagom formula as now amended is a convenient tool for calculating the population of South India and other parts of the world"¹⁸. In his preface to a book, Subramoniam says that the research methodology of cultural reconstruction formulated by M.E. Manickavasagom may not be acceptable to many, but no one has suggested another methodology. Until then, this methodology can be adopted¹⁹.

Footnotes

11. *History of Tamil Language and Literature and Tamilar Panpatu*.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. While Sreenivasaiyengar tries to describe the antiquity of the Tamils and describes the social history, rather than the political history, Nilakanta Sastri describes the Socio-Cultural history of the Tamils of the Sangam Age.
15. V. Kanakasabhai Pillai in his *Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago* (p. 10) and S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar in his *Cēran Vañci* (pp. 18-26) have tried to locate the twin cities of Vañci-Karuvūr in the west coast of Tamilakam.

16. S. Agasthiyalingam on *Patirūppattu*, Rm. Sundaram on *Pattuppāṭṭu*, A. Kamatchinathan on *Narriṇai*, S.V. Subramaniam on *Cilappatikāram*, M.E. Manickavasagom on the *Culture of the Ancient Chēras* (A Study in Cultural Reconstruction) etc.

17. Paper presented at the First International Conference-Seminar on Tamil Studies held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 1965.

18. *Culture of the Ancient Cheras*, p. iv.

19. V.I. Subramoniam's foreword to a book by Meenakshisundaram Pillai.

[To be continued]

M.E. Manickavasagom

WANTED

Technical Assistant at a consolidated salary of Rs. 14,000/- pm for Automatic Language Translation (Bengali to Malayalam and Malayalam to Bengali) project.

Qualification: B.Tech. (Computer Science)/MCA/M.Sc. (Computer Science)

Knowledge of Bengali, Malayalam and Linguistics is desirable. Qualification can be relaxed for those who have experience and aptitude in Automatic Language Translation. The application showing the age, qualification, experience, etc. may be sent to the Director, International School of Dravidian Linguistics, V.I. Subramoniam Memorial ISDL Complex, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 586. **The last date for receiving the application is 15th September 2014.**

WANTED RESEARCH FELLOWS

Applications are invited from scholars who are qualified in Linguistics or related subjects in Dravidian languages, to prepare a data bank for appointing as Junior Research Fellows (M.A., M.Phil.), Senior Research Fellows (Ph.D.) and Senior Fellows (Senior Academicians). The *Curriculum Vitae* may please be sent to the Director, International School of Dravidian Linguistics, V.I. Subramoniam Memorial ISDL Complex, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 586. **The last date for receiving the application is 30th August 2014.**

Recent Publications: **The Contribution of Melpūttur Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri to Sanskrit Literature with Special Reference to Vyākaraṇa**, P. Visalakshy, 2013, pp. 428, Rs. 900/- (US\$ 81/-). **A Contrastive Analysis of the Phonological Systems of Bengali and Malayalam**, Dhruvajyoti Das, 2014, pp. xii + 140, Rs. 350/- (US\$ 35/-). **Veṭṭakkaḍa Iruḷa Tuṇḍumallige - Ballads and Dictionary – Three Dialects**, R. Perialwar, 2014, pp. 8 + 112, Rs. 150/- (US\$ 15/-).

36TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF INDIA (ICOLSI-36)

The Department of Linguistics, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram will host the 36th International Conference of the Linguistic Society of India (ICOLSI-36) from 1st to 4th December 2014. The areas of interest include all aspects of theoretical and applied linguistics with particular focus on languages and linguistic applications relevant to South Asia.

Abstracts in English should be sent so as to reach the Organising Secretary before 30th September 2014. Queries related to registration as delegates, submission of abstracts, etc. may be addressed to Dr. S.A. Shanavas at:

36thicsiconference@gmail.com
dravling2013@gmail.com

For further details, log in to:

<http://www.lsi.org.in/lsi.img/ICOLSI-1.pdf>
<http://linguistlist.org/confservices/LSI2014>

Reported by Dr. S.A. Shanavas

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FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL LIFE-MEMBERS OF DLA

Life-members of Dravidian Linguistics Association who have not yet furnished their e-mail address are requested to send it to ijdlisdl@gmail.com immediately. This will enable us to send the *DLA News* by e-mail, if required. If there is any change in the residential address, kindly give the information to the DLA office at the earliest. Please be kind enough to inform your phone number also.

Contribution to Prof. V.I. Subramoniam Endowment Fund

11.07.14	Managing Partner M/s Amsset Steel Corporation	Rs.	5,000.00
TOTAL AS OF LAST MONTH		Rs.	4,20,000.00
CURRENT TOTAL (Including FD)		Rs.	4,25,000.00

DLA News Endowment Fund

17.07.14	Dr. Ganesan Ambedkar	Rs.	14.00
TOTAL AS OF LAST MONTH		Rs.	1,87,497.00
CURRENT TOTAL		Rs.	1,87,511.00