Tools and Technologies of Language Documentation

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Lecture-35

Lecture 35 : More about the use of pedagogical material

Hello everyone! This is Dripta. Welcome to the SWAYAM NPTEL course, Tools and Technologies of Language Documentation and you are listening to Lecture 35 of Module 7 which is Language Maintenance and Revitalization. The title of today's lecture is More about the Use of Pedagogical Material. In the last class, I already talked about revitalization and use of pedagogical material, I hope you remember that. Today, I will be giving some example of our field work from a project that we did from IIT Kharagpur. And I will, in detail, talk about how we plan to create the pedagogical material for our project, how did we find the target areas and collected data from field work.

and how did we collect the additional relevant information. Then I will introduce the idea of linguistic landscape and why contact languages for important for our project. And then, I will discuss different types of pedagogical materials and point out to some challenges that we face. So, the first question that we started when we started this work was do the children from various indigenous or lesser known linguistic communities use their language in school? And I will tell you that we worked in the state of West Bengal, which is the state of our institute and we tried to identify some areas and then, we started our work.

One very important question that we asked in the beginning was, are there punishments for speaking their home language in classroom? In the previous class, I already told you that this is a very common phenomena in Indian context and which is a very long and old tradition that children are punished for using their home language in classroom. So, we try to ask this question can we use their own language for teaching learning process? So, the first thing that we have to do is to understand language conflict. So, I will suggest a resource here which is an app that you can download from app store which is The

Teacher App meant for the teachers who actually come across such home language and school language conflicts. So, you can go to the app and download the small course and learn more about it. So now, you have to explore your own data.

What is happening to the children's language use? What is happening in case of your community or the community on which you are planning to work? And do they need revitalization through pedagogic intervention or do you need such interventions? So, when we started thinking about our work, we identified some extensively multilingual patches of West Bengal. There are two areas that we selected and one of them or some parts of it is also referred to as an ethnic corridor and it is also referred to as melting pot zone because there are many languages co-occurring together for years. So when we select the locations, of course, we had to understand the linguistic landscape. It means what are the languages which are located in our target area. And we conducted several rounds of fieldwork, both piloting and for data collection.

We also tried to understand the vitality issues, adjacent communities and their attitudes and the dominant linguistic communities who are affecting the language use of the children. So, these are the areas that we selected for our work. One area is located in northern Bengal. These three districts, we considered parts of these three districts: Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Coochbehar and these are located in the Himalayan foothills and there are many forest areas in between and several communities migrated to work in tea gardens. And, we also find that there are settlements of multiple communities in this entire Himalayan foot-hill zone, which borders with three countries and two states.

The other area that we selected is the southwestern part of Bengal, the districts of Jhargram, Bakura and Purulia, which can be considered as the extension of Chotanagpur plateau, which is attested as a melting port zone. And our target area in West Bengal borders with two states of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha. So in the map, you can see that there are the three target districts of Northern Bengal and the areas that are marked with different colours are the areas that we visited. So, the color coded data is not based on language data, this is based on the panchayat data that we collected from the local panchayats in all these locations, and you have different community names. I will also tell you that it is not the case that one community speaks the same language of the community, but you get some idea.

Like Rajbongshi marked with yellow, they speak Rajbongshi language in most of the cases. Santhali marked with green, they speak Santhali in most of the cases. But when you look at Munda or Orao for example, they do not speak their language in most of the cases, they speak some other language. This is a map for three target districts in the southwestern part of Bengal and again, you can find the different color coded community

details. Mahato is a covered umbrella term for community and they speak Mahatobhasha or Kurmali and at times, Mahatobhasha also has different variations as we observed.

And, if you consider Munda, unlike the Himalayan foothills area, here we found that in some patches speakers use Munda, but in some patches they have shifted. So, it is very different. The community names helped us to track the settlements. So, here I will have some data in IPA. By now, you are familiar with IPA.

So, you can easily read them I hope and I have also mentioned the name of the villages. So, we collected the data from these villages and we travelled there and got the data from the children. "mui aba bhat khachi", "mui akon bhat khaiti" and ""mui akhon bhat khauta", all these are different varieties of a same sentence "I am eating rice now" and you can understand that there are differences. So, I am not talking about the adverb, but if you can look at the verb you can see that the inflectional markers are changing. So, we focused on agreement and collected more such examples.

If you look at the data from North Bengal and again, we have collected data on agreement. You can see that I am not naming the languages here and not naming the locations but I want to look at the differences or transitions that you can notice... So I hope you are following the gloss So, in all these cases, the verbs are complex and they are carrying different inflectional markers.

So, you can understand that we have very rich data. So, these are some examples that we I could demonstrate. So, we have many such sentences in our repository which will be helpful for us to understand the theoretical aspects of language change in one hand and also to help us to create the pedagogical data. We understood through the several rounds of piloting and fieldwork that there are several contact languages in a high contact zone. So our focus was six multilingual districts as I have mentioned previously, and we found that there are several named and unnamed contact languages.

Some languages are moving towards standardization. You have already understood what standardization is. And we also found that these link languages or contact languages are becoming the primary language of several communities and these community members are using the link languages for decades. So, we also found that the older members use the contact varieties and they are not using the indigenous or their home languages. So, we found that the established contact languages are endangered too, dominant languages are killing even the contact languages which are used for cross community interaction.

So, we recorded the data transcribed with IPA as we have seen in the examples. And we validated the transcribed data and cross checked wherever we had confusions. I hope you

remember the class where we talked about how to mark the confusions in IPA. So, we did in the similar way. And then we created a data bank for developing pedagogical material because that is a major target for us.

So, we also marked if we can have multiple forms. So, at this point if you can keep in mind the idea of MTB-MLE or MLE. So, this is going to be useful. So, when we have multiple forms of words or sentences, we recorded that and we can consider these in one set of materials to use in multiple locations. So, we are using certain data and putting them in one set and planning to use them in multiple locations.

So, you have seen the map and linguistic landscaping is major for creating the pedagogical material. So, we started doing some area-based mapping. What do we mean by area-based mapping? So, we wanted to select the areas. So, the target was to select areas to specify our materials, which set of materials will be used in some specific areas. So, the linguists in our team, needed the help of the community members and the teachers from local schools.

Different set of TLMs will be created for different locations which we are doing and then, we have to keep in mind that these pedagogical materials are not village based, but cluster based. So, if you think about very specific location, maybe you want to revitalize language from your village only, then you have to consider data from your village, but here we are working in a broader area, so we are considering clusters. So, we found that the linked languages are endangered too. That is a major finding from our field work. So, I can name some linked languages and many of them are known as languages now like Tea garden Sadri, Rajbanshi, Kurmali and some linked languages do not have any names; they just use some local names or are identified with the place names.

So the link languages need revitalization efforts too. So we are trying to use the link languages in the planning for pedagogical intervention. So, if you ask this question at the point, can we revitalize them through the pedagogical material? The answer is yes, because our target for using pedagogical material for language revitalization is very specific and we already discussed about the importance of using pedagogical material for language revitalization. So, the data that I have discussed with you from agreement and you can understand that I am trying to focus the nature of verbs because it is quite complex. So, we can create worksheets with multiple varieties or languages.

So, maybe there can be something like fill in the blanks, match the following, etcetera. At times, we also use the picture cues for creating such worksheets and we use multiple languages. For example, if there is a blank, the child may select from three or four options that are given to him or her. So, we will put different varieties there and child can

also have the freedom to select more than one variety for the blank. So, we also create word cards, as I briefly told you previously.

 If you keep bilingual education model that I discussed previously, you can have the dominant language and the indigenous or lesser known language together in the word card; you can also add pictures. We create audio or video materials with data and it can be used as an additional material, if you have the facility in the target school or center and community members can add to the resources. It is not something like you are producing some kind of pedagogical material and that is the end of the story. You should keep it open so that community members can add more materials to it. So, we talked about language shift data.

 We also got some data on language shift while interviewing the teachers, because if you want to create some pedagogical materials, it is important for you to understand the teacher's views. So, our work included teachers' interviews and teachers, first of all, told us that the children have language based difficulties, what kind of mistakes that the children make regularly and you can figure out that this is happening because of certain language conflicts. We noted that some schools or teachers have negative attitudes towards the children's language and they do not allow children to speak their language, but we also found that some teachers are welcoming the children's languages and at times, they are using it in the classroom if they can speak the variety or language. So, we marked the influence of the dominant language and also we have to keep in mind that there can be different dominant languages in same area. So, we found that Odia, Santali, Hindi and Bangla are four dominant languages in a same area.

 So, you have if you are adopting a bilingual education model. So, you have to select one of them, one of the dominant languages based on the children's language use pattern. So, we all talked about diffusion previously, in terms of shift. So, here if we consider diffusion of features related to shift and we also try to get some idea if the teachers are aware of it. So, one question is how to reach the children? So, we have to question our roles, I mean the roles of the linguists.

 So, if we are developing some pedagogical material for use in school or Sunday classes or home based education, whatever it is, the role of linguist is very important. As I told you that linguists are collaborating with the community members at times and if you are a linguist and a community member, you can also collaborate with others. So, but what kind of role you are playing is very important. You should not impose your own thoughts while developing the materials. There is a chance of imposing some bias while creating or implementing the materials.

if you are a community member you can have such bias. If you are a linguist, which is I mean who is not from the community, you can also carry your own bias. So we have to be aware of it and after we develop the material, we have to test the validity of the material. I talked about the app that we created for Mundari community previously, so we tested it with the children whether they like it or not, whether it is user friendly or not. So, it is not that we are creating some pedagogical material and we think that it is important, we did an important piece of work and it will be useful for children without discussing or showing it to the children, then it is of no use.

We have to consider the usage. Then this question arises, what kind of pedagogical material we are planning to create? Is it a physical material, like I mentioned worksheet or word cards? It can be a short text with games which has to be level appropriate, we should not give a very complex sentences and words to beginner or beginning level children. We, at times, also use digital material like recorded stories or multilingual stories which is kept in some digital space. Audio or words with visual representation, we focus on verbs as I told you because that is marking a major morphosyntactic conflict area. Reaching out can be a problem. So, may be you have created a good amount of pedagogical material for revitalization, but how will you reach out to the children or how will you reach out to the community, who can use it for their children.

So, one possible network is the community network that you can use. Through the community network, you can promote your work or spread it. We also use academic networks to spread the revitalization initiative materials. So, at times schools adopt them. I already told you that in government schools, there are different slots at times, where they have a weekly class for promoting the local language.

At times, in private schools also, there are provisions of weekly class or bi-weekly classes where these materials can be used. We have seen that at times, parents are willing to teach the traditional language or home language to the children. So, they need such materials and they used it for home based education as well. So this is a new way to revitalize the lost linguistic forms and pedagogical intervention is something which is very important as I told you to revitalize languages. You can consider different levels of endangerment when you are talking about such materials and create them, design them for   implementation.

So, there are scope to put the data from indigenous languages along with the contact languages. How we are using the linked languages which are endangered too, but there is a scope to add more languages. If you remember the map. So, I told you that there is Munda and Kurmali together, Rajbanshi and Sadri together. So, following MTB-MLE material or MTB-MLE framework, you can basically use more than one languages

together while developing such pedagogical materials.

So, I am coming back to the idea of multilingual pedagogy that I introduced in the previous class. So, I hope you remember the different models that I discussed and also different pedagogical interventions. I also mentioned the policy initiatives in Indian context, who is emphasizing the use of multilingual pedagogy, for example, NEP 2020 and NCF 2005, they recommend that either mother tongue based or multilingual education will be useful for us. So, now you have to select a model. I will give you the examples that I discussed previously may be an immersion based model useful for you, may be a bilingual education model is used for you, may be MTB-MLE model is useful for you.

So, you have to select your model based on the situation after you conduct your fieldwork. May be while conducting the field work, you will be able to figure out which model is going to be useful for you. And if you are a community member, you have more layers in your mind you can consider them while creating the material. So, the kind of approach that we are taking currently is a mixed method approach. So, we are using partial immersion and partially bilingual education model.

You can also say multilingual at times, because at times, we do not have enough speakers who have the fluency. May be there are speakers in another location, but in one village there is no speaker who is using the older forms or the ancestral languages. So, for bilingual education model, we need to use some dominant language of the area and develop material which is not confined to the material in one language. So, that is very important and because we are talking about Indian context, you have to keep in mind that unlike western countries, we need to deal with extensive multilingualism. It is not that we are talking about two, three or four languages.

There can be 10-15 languages in one area. So, these kind of complexities are there. So, you have to understand the importance of contact languages in this regard. So, coming to the conclusion, we have to identify the targets, what kind of targets we are having in our mind before we start the intervention program, before we start the revitalization program. Is it something like creating the program for revitalization only or you have a long term plan in your mind, maybe you will promote it through the schools through different steps. As I told you, maybe you will offer the target language as an additional subject through formal schooling and then gradually, move to a medium of instruction model.

So, I talked about the planning part, planning for creating the pedagogical material, what kind of material do you need and what kind of planning do you need, do you have enough data, background data for the language, have you done piloting and all these different

ideas, that we need before we start conducting the field work. We need some data on location. If we are absolutely sure about the location of the location of one language, but we need to consider the adjacent languages and also the linguistic landscape. And the sample data is very important for us, that is why we do piloting, we collect data from piloting or from word, sentence and context based narrative. We try to understand the structure of the language and then we conduct a more detailed field work and collect more data from these three areas.

 And then, when we have enough data, transcription and validation of data, we put it in a data bank and then create the pedagogical material. And when we create the pedagogical material, we share it with the community. At times, we have seen that such materials have been created, shared with concerned academic circle, but not shared with the relevant community members. So, then there is no point that the materials are created, but not shared with anyone. It is not being used, it is not being implemented for the reason of revitalization.

 And how the intervention is related to multilingual pedagogy is another question, because now we are moving towards a very multilingual pedagogy centric framework. So, you need to understand the nature of intervention for your revitalization method, what kind of understanding do you need which you can take from multilingual pedagogy. So, these are the references. Thank you!