

Three Day Short Term Programme on Addressing the Problems in Second Language Learning: Special Focus on Assamese and English Teaching in Assam

Department of Assamese and Department of English of Hemo Prova Borbora Girls' College, Golaghat organised a three day Short Term Programme on *Addressing the Problems in Second Language Learning: Special Focus on Assamese and English Teaching in Assam* from January 18th, 2018 to January 20th, 2018. It was a collaborative effort with the Teaching Learning Centre, Tezpur University. Initially 84 applications were received for the programme, from applicants presently engaged in teaching in University, College and Higher Secondary Schools in the districts of Golaghat and Jorhat. The number of final registered participants was 47. The primary objective of the programme was to focus on the teaching of and teaching through a Second Language more effectively to the students from a multilingual society. Alongside it also aimed at introducing the recent developments in Language Teaching and thereby creating awareness among the participants to get themselves interested in this hitherto overlooked aspect of prevalent education system. Since the objective of the workshop also involved the Second Language as a medium of formal instruction in educational institutes, it was kept open for participants from any allied subject and discipline. Accordingly, the organisers formed a panel of resource persons from among the distinguished experts in the relevant fields from different ace institutions spreading across India.

Day 1 (January 18th, 2018)

The inaugural session was presided over by Dr Bipul Ch. Bhuyan, Principal, H. P. B. Girls' College, Golaghat. The Principal offered a warm welcome to all the participants to the three day short term programme and hoped for an interesting and successful sessions in the following times. Professor Hem Kanta Phukan, Department of English, Debraj Roy College, Golaghat was invited as the inaugurator of the programme. The inauguration was followed by Co-ordinator Dr Deepa Phukan Baruah's speech on the purpose of the programme. Professor Phanindra Narayan Dutta Baruah was the distinguished guest and keynote speaker in the

inaugural session. Prof Dutta Baruah, Asst. Director (Retd.), CIIL, Mysore, delivered a speech on *Assam as a Linguistic Pool and Multilingualism*. The address was an enlightening one and Prof Dutta Baruah introduced several key concepts during his speech which were to be critical in next sessions of the programme. Earlier the participants introduced themselves to the

Prof. Phanindra Narayan Dutta Baruah also happened to be the resource person for the First Technical Session that followed the inaugural session that day. His session revolved around the topic of *Concept of Second Language in Assam and Identification of It'*. The session was an interesting and interactive one. Prof Dutta Baruah kept the participants spell-bound with plethora of ideas during his speech.

Resource person for the Second Technical Session was Prof. Madhumita Barbora, HoD, Dept of English, Tezpur University. Prof Barbora dealt with the topic *Language learning vs language acquisition and Language at home vs language of instruction*. Her topic happened to be a vital one for the entire programme as it focused on the problem area dealt with in the programme. Her session also engaged the participants in interactions to bring the problem area to the ground reality.

Resource person for the Third Technical Session was Dr. Seuji Sharma, Aast. Professor, Dept of Linguistics, Gauhati University. The topic of discussion for the session was *Problems in learning Assamese as a Second Language*. The main focus of the lecture was on teaching Assamese to students of different Mother Tongues and also using Assamese as a medium of instruction in the learning process of such students. This has been a typical problem in Assam where Assamese happens to be official First Language and medium of instruction in a multilingual society, and the learning process for the students with a different mother tongue is no more different from learning in a different language. Dr Sharma successfully winded up the topic while throwing some essential insights to the issue.

Day 2 (January 19th, 2018)

Professor Padmini Bhuyan Baruah, Department of English Language Teaching, Gauhati University, acted as the resource person for the First Session of the second day. The topic of discussion for the session was *Problems in Learning English as a Second language*. She started with the concepts of acquiring and learning languages and then moved on to touch the sociolinguistic aspects of language teaching which has been a neglected point of view in the prevalent curriculum. To elaborate the linguistic competence and linguistic skills, she

introduced the aspects of social knowledge and linguistic knowledge, acquired knowledge and constructed knowledge etc. Further she dealt with the aspects of learning environment and resources needed in language learning process.

The Second Technical Session of the second day was also conducted by Professor Padmini Bhuyan Baruah. Focus of the session was on *Second Language Teaching Methodology for Teaching Language Skills to Older Learners*. This session engaged the participants with some teaching method related activities which were perfectly moderated by Prof. Baruah to achieve the desired goal of the session. Earlier she oriented the topic towards the teaching methodology by giving insights to intricacies like problems of teaching English as different from teaching other subjects, then moving forward to the conflict of older theories of language teaching and their impracticality in current language teaching situations, and finally leading to the classroom situations and desired classroom activities to tackle the same.

The Third Technical Session of the second day dealt with *Use of Appropriate Materials: Design and Adaptation, and Assessment of Learners*. Resource person for the session was Dr Debasish Mohapatra, Associate Professor, Dept of English, Tezpur University. The session was more of theoretical concerns focusing on the need and importance of proper language teaching materials. It also focused in the problematic issue of limitations of the textbooks in view of the language instructors and then consideration of the textbook as a credible source of learning by the learners. Dr Mohapatra also lectured on innovative ways of using the limited resources by optimizing the resourcefulness of the same.

Dr Debasish Mohapatra also happened to be the resource person for the Fourth Technical Session. This session dealt with the topic of *Activities on Material Designing and Adaptation*. This was more of an activity based interactive session and Dr Mohapatra cared to interact with each individual participant in order to actively engage them in the process while calling for new ideas from them.

Day 3 (January 20th, 2018)

Mr Tarini Kanta Goswami, Retd Officer-in-Charge, NERLC, Guwahati, acted as the resource person for the First Technical Session of the third day. The topic of discussion for the session was *Error Analysis in the Second Language and its impact as a medium in learning the Third Language*. Mr Goswami enlightened the participants with his experienced analysis of the issue. He started with the errors made by a speaker while using a Second language and elaborated it by citing concrete examples. He drew attention of the participants to the fact that a prevalent

grammar might prove futile in teaching a Second Language user about the intricacies and nuances involved in practical usage of a language. He called for periodical review of the grammar and bringing out necessary modifications to address the issues. Another vital focus of the discussion was to look at the language of one's own from a Second Language speaker's point of view in order to find out the problem areas of a particular language and treating those issues by providing necessary remedies. The session was an interactive one to enable the participants to examine the language in question from an outsider's point of view and thereby awakening the constructive linguist in them.

The Second Technical Session dealt with the issue of *Modern Technological Aids in Language Learning*. Dr Bhaskarjyoti Sarma, Associate Professor, ABILAC, was the resource person for the session. He introduced the participants with the process of shifting towards digitalised language learning process and elaborated the process of corpus making in machine language learning. His lecture also dealt with the challenges involved with UNICODE where task of separating script from language has posed as a major threat. He also enlightened the participants with the digitalising process of the Assamese language with his informed experience. During the session he responded to different queries of the inquisitive participants and thereby making the session an interesting and successful one.

Dr Sarma also acted as the resource person for the Third Technical Session of the third day, which dealt with the concept of *Emerging Concept of Cyber Education and How to Deal with Its Language*. The session was more of an extended field of the previous session which dealt with several overlapping ideas. In the current era of digitalised world, the society has been moving afoot towards digitalisation of every aspect of the day to day life. And as such, knowledge and education have also set foot on the digital world. But there is a vast difference between a physical classroom and a digitalised sea of information if a learner intends to learn something, and accordingly the approaches do vary. Dr Sarma in his lecture tried to expedite the process of digital learning and called for implementation of the easily accessible learning process. The topic of discussion was quite few for most of the participants and later on it was acknowledged by many of them.

The Fourth Technical Session of the third day involved group discussion among participants on the basis of the lectures delivered so far. Resource person Professor Arun Ch Bordoloi, Retd HoD, Department of English and Retd Vice Principal, H. P. B. Girls' College, Golaghat, conducted it thoroughly. The participants raised different queries on the basis of the lectures in

previous sessions of the programme. Prof Bordoloi responded to each and every query by providing solutions very lucidly. Several issues like intonation and nuance of speech, which did not come into purview of the lectures, were raised by participants. Professor Bordoloi shed light on those issues. He also stressed on creating different innovative environments within the classroom, citing from his experienced knowledge. The session was an interesting one with perfect blend of learning and humour which are considered as essential elements in a language learning classroom to ease out the learning process. He also reviewed the language learning methods in order to provoke thoughts among participants. He drew attention of the participants to the fact of knowledge gap between learner and instructor, and called for innovative approaches instead of a rigid approach of dealing with individual learners, as problems in the learning process vary in each individual learner.

The third day concluded with a valedictory session marking the end of the three day short term programme. The session was chaired by Dr Bipul Ch Bhuyan, Principal, Hemo Prova Borbora Girls' College, Golaghat. The event was graced with the presence of Professor Mrinmoy Kr Sarma, Director, Teaching Learning Centre, Tezpur University as the Chief Guest. Dr Swapna Rani Borah, Asst Professor, Teaching Learning Centre, Tezpur University, who was the Programme Observer during the term, offered a review of the activities of those three days and expressed satisfaction on the successful conduction of the entire programme. Prior to that Co-ordinator of the programme, Dr Deepa Phukan Baruah, HoD, Department of English, H. P. B. Girls' College, Golaghat, kept her speech on motive behind organising the programme and expressed gratefulness to the eminent resource persons while offering her thanks and congratulations to the participants from different educational institutions ranging from Higher Secondary Schools to University levels for successfully completing the programme. Apart from offering the written feedback during each technical session, a number of participants were found quite eager to offer their verbal feedback and expressed their gratitude for conducting such a programme which they found highly beneficial. A large number of them in their speech held the view that the programme would have been more beneficial if it had been of a longer duration of at least one week instead of just three days. It was quite apparent from the feedback that the duration of the programme had affected in diving deep into the topics of discussion of the programme. Each and every one of the speakers praised the resourcefulness of the subject experts and requested the organising collaborators to conduct another such programmes with a longer duration. The enthusiasm did give an impression of successful completion of the programme. Professor M. K. Sarma in his valedictory speech expressed his satisfaction on

successful completion of the programme and thanked the participants for actively co-operating the organisers to successfully conducting through the programme. He also informed the gathering of that session about the future plans of conducting larger events focusing on such themes, mentioning the current short term programmes as “tip of the iceberg”. The session came to an end with the distribution of Certificates of completion all the 47 participants followed by a group photography session.

Photo Gallery



The Registration desk



The Inaugurator's Speech



Dignitaries of the Inaugural Session



Co-ordinator's Speech



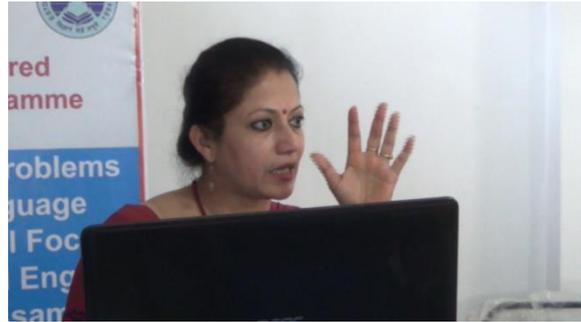
Keynote address by Prof. P. N. Dutta Baruah



Participant interacting during a technical session



Group activities during a technical session



Prof Padmini Bhuyan Baruah during a session



Participant interacting during a technical session



Participants taking part in activities



Participants during a technical session



Participants in group activity



Dr Debasish Mohapatra during a session



Mr T. K. Goswami being felicitated before a session



Dr Bhaskarjyoti Sarma during a session



Prof Arun Ch Bordoloi during a session



A participant sharing his experience



Prof. M. K. Sarma during his speech



The Principal during valedictory speech



Offering vote of thanks



Participants and organisers together at the end of the programme