

Two week in- house training for Ralte community for language documentation

With the support of GBS, Zo Indigenous Forum conducted two-week inhouse training for language documentatio for Ralte community, since we have some leftover of our budget with the permission of the GBS we have conducted two days training of language documentation at Government Aizawl North College under Mizoram University.

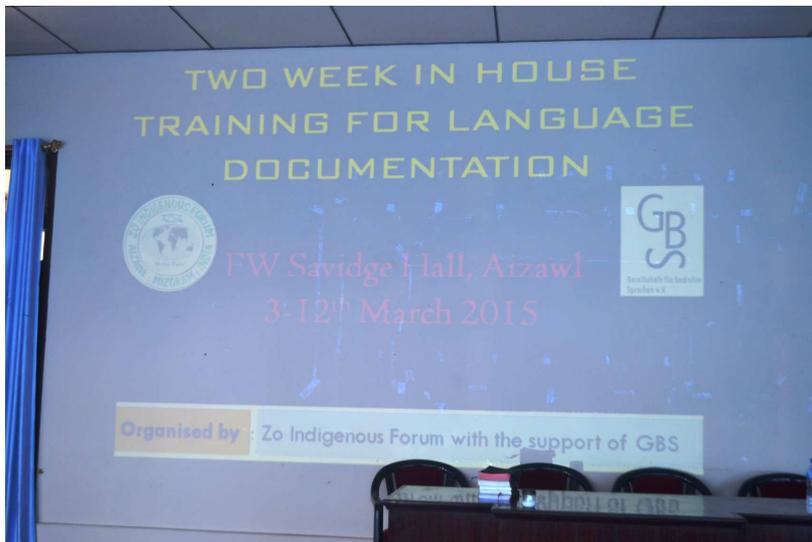


Degree of endangerment of Ralte

language: Ralte is a Sino-Tibetan language, spoken by Ralte tribe found scattered in and around the India and Burma border. According to the Ethnologue language of the world 2007, the population who speaks Ralte was 900 and the total Ethnic population was 34,000.

The Raltes zealously maintained their individual identity and resisted absorption into the folds of the Lushais or Mizo. As of today, most Ralte clans do not specify their tribe and carry on with their tribe name Ralte and (mostly uses Mizo tawng), the languages are still used by a few people even if some of their community members can't understand and speak.

There has been no documentation of naturally occurring conversation and earlier audio recordings are technically inadequate for high fidelity archiving. According to UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing 2009 which was released on 17th February 2009, 13 languages spoken by Zo Indigenous people were classified as threatened to extinction,



among them Tarau language has been termed as extinct language. The others are - Mizo, Bawm, Hrangkhawl, Paite, Thado, Hmar, Anal, Aimawl, Mara, Gangte, Kawm, Chawte, Tarau. Not only from this, one of the Zo language, Ralte is also at the tip of endangered, even a small people of them can speak and understand.

The Inhouse training: This is the pilot in house-training program on language documentation organised by Zo Indigenous Forum. The call of participants was

A Two Weeks in-house training on Language Documentation for Ralte community had been held in Savidge Hall, Upper Khatla, Aizawl, Mizoram from 3rd - 12th March, 2015. The training program was grace and inaugurated by the Hon'ble Speaker of the Mizoram Legislative

Assembly, Mr. Hiphei. Thirty participants including youth and women successfully completed the training program. (*Scanned copy of attendance attached*).

Two days training at Aizawl North College was also organised in 9th -10th of April 2015 at the College Campus, Dr H. Vanlalhraia, Ms Lalmalsawmi Sailo, and Mr J. Rochungchunga, Training Coordinator were the resource persons. Thirty five (35) students of different semester attended the training.

We have design the program to be participatory not just listening lecture and doing practical session, this makes the participants more space to explore the issues. The following topics were focused or taught in the training and, group discussions were conducted on each of every training days:

Day 1	Inauguration function Introduction of the program, participants, trainers and the training program itself.
Day 2	Overview of languages under threat to extinction Discussions.
Day 3	Mizo languages and languages/dialects under Mizo tribe/nations and current level of threat.
Day 4	Introduction of Language Documentation The importance and necessity of language documentation.
Day 5	What is language documentation? The usefulness of language documentation.
Day 6	Different methods of documenting languages - Recording, Capturing, Analysis, Archiving and Creating Metadata.
Day 7	Processing Documented Languages - Character encoding, Data encoding, File encoding and Physical storage.
Day 8	Tools for language documentation - Practical session.
Day 9	Half day practical session Closing function of the training Distributions of training completion certificates to the trainees

The trainer: The following experts were the resources person during the training.

- i) Dr H. Vanlalhraia, Asst Professor, Government Aizawl North College who has done language documentation under British Museum
- ii) Pu R. Vanramchhuanga, Ex-President of Mizoram Board of School Education who is also the chairman of Ralte Study Forum.
- iii) Ms Lalmalsawmi Sailo, Coordinator, Zo Indigenous Forum
- iv) Mr J. Rochungchunga, Training Coordinator, Zo Indigenous Forum
- v) Mr C. Lalremruata, Executive Director, Zo Indigenous Forum.

Collaboration with the speech community: Zo is a generic tribe comprise of different community of which Ralte was a part of it, while designing the project we have an informal consultation with Ralte Student League (RSL) and community leaders. During the training we are working with RSL and Ralte Study Forum, the newly formed organisation for revitalization of Ralte language.



Assessment: Before the training all the selected participants were given an assignment of pre-assessment training which is very important for designing the program and understanding the their level of understanding and expectation (*random selected copy attach*). At the end of the day, each participant were given a daily feedback form which is also important for the organiser and the resource persons to improve and for designing the future training program (random selected copy attach). At the end of the training each participants were also given a overall feedback (*random selected copy attach*)

We also conducted participatory assessment or reflection of our workshop in order to identify the strength, weaknesses, impacts and achievements, lessons learned and recommendations on how to improve the conduct of trainings. The participatory assessment includes project coordinator, facilitators/resource persons, representatives of Ralte Students League, Ralte Study Forum and selected participants.

Budget: Zo Indigenous Forum receive Rs 1,05,825.00 (1411 EUR) from GBS. After the Inhouse training is over, we still have we have balance of Rs 10,000.00 (134 EUR), with the permission from GBS we have conducted two days training at Aizawl North College which was not in the proposal. (*Internal Audit Copy attached*)



Results of the Training:

- The pilot in house-training program on language documentation started among Ralte community which was the first of its kind among the Zo Indigenous peoples community.
- 28 Ralte community members including elders, youth and women are trained in language documentation.
- 42 Students from Aizawl North College learn the need and importance of language preservation and documentation.

- Participants gained an in-depth understanding role of the role of language and how it relates to the indigenous culture and began to appreciate the indigenous values system, customs and traditional institution
- A local pool of trainers were created among the Ralte community
- Awareness among the speaking community and some college students on the need of increasing preservation of language
- Strengthening and understanding for the need of advocacy on preservation of language which was in danger of extinction.

Challenges: While the program was very successful, but we have the challenges that community members from rural areas cannot attend the program as they it was time to prepare their farm (jhum) land which is their main sources of livelihood. They cannot spare time to attend the program. We have suggested that if such kind of training to be organise again we need more collaboration not only with the civil society but with the community leaders and village leaders on what is the best time to do it.

Any other matters: As a result of our training, Zo Indigenous Forum and Ralte Study Forum agreed to make Dictionary of Ralte language, which will be an important mechanism to preserve the language, but our no financial resources has been secured yet which is still a challenges for both the organisation.

Attachment:

- i) Random selected Pre-Assessment
- ii) Attendance
- iii) Random selected Daily Feedback
- iv) Random selected Feedback
- v) Selected Photos
- vi) Media clips of the program
- vii) Copy of Certificate
- viii) Internal Expenditure Audit

Prepared by

J. Rochungnunga
Training Coordinator
 &

C. Lalremruata
Director, Zo Indigenous Forum