

Report on 'Language revitalization and community engagement'

February 13-17, 2023

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The intensive course 'Language revitalization and community engagement' was held during February 13th-17th, 2023. I, Sumittra Suraratdecha was invited as a lecturer from the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University in Thailand. The class was intended to be held as a five-day intensive lecture. There were local students attending the course. All of them have a good command of English. The students came from a wide range of majors, but all of them were interested in language diversity. Some had special interests in language revitalization programs prior to the course and chose to take the course to learn and broaden their views and perspectives on the current issues in the field. The course particularly addressed current issues and methods in language revitalization and the importance of community engagement. Some of the students did not have background knowledge in linguistics; however, all of them were interested in revitalization issues. Some of the students had a plan to pursue their revitalization projects abroad in Finland and UK, others were interested in the loss of local dialects in Japan, all of which contributed to building up their interests in unity in diversity issues.

The first class began with an overview of different approaches to linguistic revitalization, why and how linguists work to save languages and cultures around the world. This was followed by an experience sharing activity where students were required to share their opinions on different language revitalization programs taken place in different parts of the world. Here is the list of the links used to motivate idea exchange activity:

- <https://youtu.be/sVW-Dq7zCRU> (A case study of Black Tai: Intergenerational engagement)
- <https://youtu.be/t-qNpp6qGhM> (A case study of urak lawoi: an endangered language)
- <https://youtu.be/qCPlgXeo-YE> (research impacts)

Some of the optional assignments are as follows:

Designing for endangered languages | Irina Wang | TEDxUniversityofBristol (14.33)

<https://youtu.be/HvS5B-xMp1Y>

- He pūko‘a kani ‘āina: Creating Pathways for Indigenous Language Vitality | Candace Galla | TEDxJIBC (11.50)

<https://youtu.be/fvArPvKA4yk>

- Why Indigenous Languages Matter and What We Can Do to Save Them | Lindsay Morcom | TEDxQueensU (14.06)

https://youtu.be/g2HiPW_qSrs

After watching the documentary films, the students reported and shared their perspectives with the class. The first day ended with an assignment for student to think of their final project.

On the second day, the class continued with a lecture on language documentation and revitalization. This year the class spent time on understanding linguistic work as a whole on top of revitalization topics. Students were interested in knowing different fields of linguistics, contributing to the field work on revitalization programs. One of the new topic we discussed was SDGs, sustainable development goals. We also discussed new approaches and methodologies adopted in revitalization programs around the world. The third day of the class was the day students shared and exchanged their ideas on individual projects. The class also addressed a data collection plan. When this was done, students went to collect their data. For students whose data were to come from different stakeholders and organizations, the students were advised to contact those people/organizations ahead of time. The lecturer also helped to

connect students with researchers and scholars in the field in Finland and UK. On the final day, the class started with presentations and discussions on provisional analysis and consideration based on the survey results and how to connect them to future research, and supplementary lectures on research methodologies that would be useful for future research. The students were all very eager to participate and share ideas. The final assignments included final project presentations as well as reflections and responses to classmates' presentations.





Every year this course was inspirational and beneficial for the students as well as the communities they are working with. The topics students chose, the contacts they made to all peoples and organizations help encourage those not only the language revivalists, but the whole community to recognize the importance of their efforts. After the course one student planned her trip to Finland, the other to the Isle of Man in the UK. These students will grow and become a competent global citizen who provide great supports to languages and cultures of the world.