

Hemanga Dutta, Postdoctoral Research Scholar, MIT

Sponsored by : USIEF, Fulbright commission

Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics and Contemporary English, EFLU

Duration of the programme: September 1st, 2014 to August 31st 2015



I am pursuing my post doctorate programme at the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge on the theme of “Laryngeal contrast in Assamese” under the supervision of Professor Michael Kenstowicz.

Summary of the project:

The Indic languages are well known for the four-way /p,b,ph,bh/ contrast in their stop systems that freely combines [\pm voice] and [\pm spread gl] at three points of articulation. In this presentation we examine how these contrasts are expressed in Assamese in four contexts: prevocalic, presonorant, word-final, and preobstruent. Our principal finding is that aspirated stops modify their minor point of articulation in word-final position to replicate aspiration as

noise either in the release of the stop or during the constriction while in the preobstruent context aspiration is largely lost leading to neutralization with the plain stops. In addition, the voicing contrast is also largely neutralized in preobstruent position. These modifications are analyzed in the licensing by cue framework of Steriade (1997, 2009)

Academic talks and presentations:

I along with Professor Michael Kenstowicz delivered a talk on my project “Laryngeal contrast in Assamese” at Phonology circle meeting at MIT, on 9.3.2015

I am going to deliver a talk on the theme of “Constraints, Loan words and phonotactics: Evidence from Assamese” at Marshall Polinsky Lab meetings of Harvard university on 6.5.2015.

My paper titled “Code mixing, Language attitude and Tenglish” got selected for presentation at Salsa conference to be held in the University of Texas on 17-18th April 2015.

Participation:

I attended the Annual Phonology meet at MIT in the month of September, 2014

I attended the NELS conference at MIT in the month of October, 2014.

Cultural activities

I performed Indian contemporary music at St.Episcopal church, Brooklyn, Boston as part of the Massachusetts Musical Chapter organized by Fulbright commission, USA on 8.3.2015.