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CSI4001-Natural Language Processing and Computational Linguistics




























DIGITAL-ASSIGNMENT1

Topic: Revival of the Meitei (Manipuri) Language

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 (KOK)	"K"	 (SAM)	"S"	 (LAI)	"L"
 (MIT)	"M"	 (PAA)	"P"	 (NAA)	"N"
 (CHIL)	"CH"	 (TIL)	"T"	 (KHOU)	"KH"
 (NGOU)	"NG"	 (THOU)	"TH"	 (WAI)	"W"
 (YANG)	"Y"	 (HUK)	"H"	 (UOON)	"U"
 (EE)	"EE"	 (PHAM)	"PH"	 (ATIYA)	"A"
 (GOK)	"G"	 (JHAM)	"JH"	 (RAI)	"R"
 (BAA)	"B"	 (JIL)	"J"	 (DIL)	"D"
 (GHOU)	"GH"	 (DHOU)	"DH"	 (BHAM)	"BH"

Case Study: Revival of the Meitei (Manipuri) Language

Introduction

The Meitei language (officially known as **Manipuri**), a Tibeto-Burman language of Northeast India, has undergone a significant revival after centuries of decline due to colonialism, religious shifts, and linguistic assimilation. Once overshadowed by the Bengali script and marginalized during British rule, Meitei has reclaimed its indigenous script (**Meitei Mayek**) through grassroots movements, state-led initiatives, and digital adaptation. This case study explores its historical roots, cultural significance, decline, and modern revival efforts, highlighting its journey from near-extinction to revitalization.

Geographical and Cultural Presence

Geographical Spread: Primarily spoken in Manipur (**1.5 million speakers**), with significant communities in Assam (**168,000**), Tripura (**24,000**), and parts of Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nagaland.

Cultural Significance:

- Integral to Manipuri classical dance (Ras Leela) and **Sankirtana**, a UNESCO-recognized intangible heritage.
- Liturgical language for **Sanamahism**, the indigenous religion of the Meitei people.
- Preserves ancient epics like **Numit Kappa** (1st century CE) and **Khamba Thoibi** (11th–12th century CE).

Case Study Reference:-

<https://cottagereader.wordpress.com/2009/09/09/prose-the-new-faces-of-manipuri-language-during-renaissance-and-afterwards/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meitei_language

Number of Speakers

- **Native Speakers:** ~1.8 million (2011 Census), with 1.52 million in Manipur.
- **L2 Speakers:** Total speakers (L1 + L2) exceed **3 million**, making it the third most-spoken language in Northeast India after Assamese and Bengali.

Case Study Reference:-

<https://www.typosheque.com/research/tracing-meitei-mayek-and-ol-chiki>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meitei_classical_language_movement

Origins and Historical Significance

- **Antiquity:** Literary tradition dates back 2,000 years, with early texts like **Ougri** (ritual hymns) and **Yumbanlol** (6th-century copper plates on household ethics).
- **Classical Claims:** Advocates argue it meets India's classical language criteria due to ancient texts (e.g., Loiyumba Silyel, an 11th-century constitution) and uninterrupted literary heritage.

Case Study Reference:-

<https://cottagereader.wordpress.com/2009/09/09/prose-the-new-faces-of-manipuri-language-during-renaissance-and-afterwards/>

Decline and Loss of Significance

- **Script Suppression:** The Bengali script replaced Meitei Mayek in the 18th century after King Pamheiba's conversion to Hinduism and the burning of Meitei scriptures (*puyas*).
- **Colonial Policies:** British education systems prioritized Bengali and English, marginalizing Meitei. By the 20th century, the script was nearly extinct outside ceremonial use.

Case Study Reference:-

<https://www.typosheque.com/research/tracing-meitei-mayek-and-ol-chiki>

Language Script and Writing System

- **Meitei Mayek:** An **abugida** with 27 letters, each named after body parts (e.g., *Kok* for "head"). Uses vowel diacritics and lacks conjunct consonants.
- **Historical Evolution:** Originally an 18-letter script, expanded to 36 letters under Hindu influence, and standardized to 27 letters in 1977.

Case Study Reference:-

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/meitei-script-manipur-history-8317655/>

Revival and Preservation Efforts

The Meitei language's revival is a multi-faceted effort involving legislative reforms, educational integration, digital adaptation, cultural advocacy, and technological innovation. Below is an in-depth exploration of these initiatives:

1. Legislative and Policy Interventions

- **Manipur Official Language Act (1979 & 2021 Amendment):**
 - Initially recognized Meitei written in the Bengali script. The 2021 amendment mandated a full transition to Meitei Mayek by 2033, requiring government documents, education, and media to adopt the indigenous script.
 - Newspapers, the last holdouts using Bengali script, were given an ultimatum to switch to Meitei Mayek by 2023, accelerating the script's public visibility.
- **Scheduled Language Status:**
 - Meitei was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in 1992, granting it federal recognition and enabling state-led preservation programs.

2. Educational Integration

- **Curriculum Overhaul:**

- Meitei Mayek was introduced in Manipur's schools in 2005, replacing Bengali script in textbooks and exams. Universities like Manipur University now offer courses in Meitei literature and linguistics.

- **Teacher Training:**

- Workshops and certification programs equip educators to teach Meitei Mayek, addressing initial resistance from older generations accustomed to Bengali script.

3. Digital Adaptation and Technological Tools

- **Unicode Standardization (2009):**

- Enabled digital compatibility, allowing Meitei Mayek to be used on smartphones, websites, and social media. Google Keyboard and community-developed apps now support typing in the script.

- **AI-Powered Language Tools:**

- Platforms like *meiteimayek.com* offer translation, transliteration, OCR, and speech recognition tools to digitize historical texts (e.g., *Puyas*) and modernize content creation.

4. Cultural and Grassroots Movements

- **Revival of Sanamahism:**

- The indigenous religion's resurgence has reinstated Meitei Mayek in rituals and scriptures, countering centuries of Hindu and colonial influence.

- **Media and Arts:**

- Vernacular newspapers (e.g., *Poknapham*) transitioned to Meitei Mayek by 2023, while Manipuri cinema and music increasingly use the script to reach younger audiences.

5. Challenges and Future Goals

- **Generational Resistance:**

- Older populations struggle with Meitei Mayek's complexity, preferring Bengali script for daily use. Literacy campaigns target youth to bridge this gap.

- **Technological Gaps:**

- Limited font styles and transcription of historical texts into Meitei Mayek hinder broader adoption. Projects to digitize *Puyas* (ancient manuscripts) are ongoing.

Case Study Reference:-

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/meitei-script-manipur-history-8317655/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meitei_classical_language_movement

<https://www.meiteimayek.com/>

Current Status and Future Prospects

- **Official Recognition:** A scheduled language in India's Constitution (8th Schedule) and the official language of Manipur.
- **Challenges:**
 - Older generations' reliance on Bengali script and limited digital fonts.
 - Need to transcribe historical texts into Meitei Mayek.
- **Future Goals:**
 - Achieving **classical language status** to secure federal funding and academic support.
 - Expanding literature in Meitei Mayek and integrating it into public signage and banking systems.

Case Study Reference:-

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meitei_language

<https://www.typotheque.com/research/tracing-meitei-mayek-and-ol-chiki>

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/meitei-script-manipur-history-8317655/>

Conclusion

The revival of the Meitei (Manipuri) language stands as a testament to the resilience of cultural identity and the power of coordinated efforts in linguistic preservation. From the brink of script extinction under colonial and religious pressures to its modern resurgence, Meitei's journey reflects a multifaceted struggle against erasure. Legislative mandates like the **Manipur Official Language Act (2021)**, educational reforms, and digital innovations such as Unicode standardization have collectively reinstated Meitei Mayek as a living script, bridging ancient heritage with contemporary relevance.

However, challenges persist. Generational divides in script adoption, limited digital infrastructure, and ongoing ethnic tensions in Manipur underscore the fragility of linguistic revival in a globalized world. Despite these hurdles, Meitei's resurgence—marked by its use in media, education, and governance—exemplifies how language revival is not merely about preserving words but reclaiming history, dignity, and autonomy.

Looking ahead, achieving **classical language status** and expanding digital tools for Meitei Mayek will be critical to securing its future. The case of Meitei serves as a blueprint for other endangered languages, demonstrating that revival is possible through policy, technology, and grassroots activism. Ultimately, its survival hinges on intergenerational transmission and the unwavering pride of its speakers—a reminder that language is the soul of a people, and its preservation is an act of resistance against cultural oblivion.

