

Tanmoy:

Some persons leave you with an impression, some persons leave you with a gap; Rahul was of the second type, and more -- who leaves you with a gap that you didn't know existed.

How do you come up with words of grief for such a person? And so soon? Articulation fails, all our sanity for grammar fails.

....

It is impossible for us to describe either concretely or coherently our relation with him because he truly left us with a gap we didn't know existed – necessarily therefore, it will have to be abstract.

Rahul was an important part of our life, we didn't see him often enough and even the little time he was around us it was always a challenge to keep him tied to us for long, however much we wanted it and tried, yet in some magical way he had occupied a large part of our lives, some abstract timeless part of our lives, with a promise to spend more time together in some abstract future or to have the strange feeling of having spent a longer time together in some unknowable but abstractly existing past. We'd complain about the real absence of his presence and yet be torn between regret and promise, and bargain for deals that didn't realise most of the times. Other times when we could snatch time away, and those were very recent conferences in the last few years (FASALs, Konstanz, Seoul, Paris, Delhi), and of course the six LISSIMs, the effects of those short but intense closeness lasted for a much longer time so as to make us feel assured of his abstract presence more than his real presence, occupying a large part of our lives. This extended abstract presence is what we are going to miss the most because those short bursts of real presence will no longer take place.

Speaking about Rahul in the past tense is extremely difficult for us as his friends and as people who have organised FOSSSIL's summer school LISSIM together with Rahul, Paroma, and Samar, because our summer school is always firmly set in the future time. It is always the 'next LISSIM'— because as soon as we meet up for the one, we begin to plan the ones to come. The busiest of us all in terms of travel and research activity—many low-cost airlines have been kept afloat flying Rahul to destinations that even they would have never imagined ticketing anyone to—Rahul was the one person who was always assured to be there in time—more accurately one day (or one week as it was the last time) early— for all the 'next LISSIMs' that were ever to come. In every possible way, Rahul was both the present and future of the small but transformative experiment that LISSIM was conceived to be—a non-hierarchical, intimate space full of questions, learning, and laughter, which is as rewarding for the teacher as the taught—he was the one in the generation after ours to take charge that the idea behind LISSIM continues to live and grow, intellectually and socially.

Ayesha:

Rahul's impact on the generative linguistics scene at LISSIM and particularly on the study of the syntax and semantics of all the Dravidian languages cannot be emphasised enough. The first few editions of LISSIM were Indo-Aryan heavy, because most of the organisers were in the North, and the Himalayas are far and expensive to travel to for students and faculty from the South. For the first few years, therefore interesting research questions in Dravidian languages were only occasionally posed, but once Rahul joined the LISSIM movement, there was a transformation within a couple of years. Rahul's extraordinary abilities to engage both theoretically and empirically with what was being discussed, to find the examples or ideas that

either made a simple query into a research problem or served as the key to unlock a gridlock, and his ability to do it in the most pacifist and relaxed manner ever, always taking the youngest and the least knowledgeable member in that group along but without the slightest hint of patronage, was an education not only for all the students in the group, but the two of us as well (and perhaps even more so). Every LISSIM that Rahul was part of led to exciting new work by the members of LISSIM's Dravidian group and Rahul in particular, often jointly and often in the same year, a testament to how completely he took the collaboration that teaching is. For now at least, a huge, yawning hole occupies the spots where the Dravidian group could be spotted during LISSIM, chatting peaceably in order to make the most insightful presentations of all, while the Hindi and Bangla groups mill around chaotically, frazzled by the pressure of LISSIM workshops. But we do know that Rahul has, in his short life, left us a legacy rich enough to have that hole filled. From the very 'next LISSIM' onwards.

One of the greatest joys of LISSIM for us over the last decade is always the fact that we get to spend an uninterrupted two weeks with like-minded linguists, and especially Rahul. Like he was with everyone else who knew him, Rahul littered LISSIM with the gift of his time, care, and gentleness. For a person who never made any demands for attention, he is in every frame of our memories of the last six LISSIMs—keeping us fed, keeping our throats lubricated, leading bands of hikers up the mountains twice a day, asking destructive questions in the kindest of manners, discussing linguistics and its future late into the night, undoing our laboriously balanced budget by designing LISSIM apparel and stationery, and joining in the long-lasting teasing and the arguments that signify friendship. In one such memory can be found a poem by Milton Berle that can serve our homage to Rahul, sent by him as part of a teasing exchange about Utpal Lahiri's predicament faced with languages that lack an 'even':

I'd rather be a could-be if I cannot be an are;
because a could-be is a maybe who is reaching for a star.
I'd rather be a has-been than a might-have-been, by far;
for a might have-been has never been,
but a has was once an are.

We are grateful to have known, loved, and learnt from Rahul. For us, Rahul was, and will now remain forever, an 'are'.

A final announcement: The core committee – or what's left of it – of the FOSSSIL EC briefly met on [28th July 2020](#) and decided to organise a pre-School, open-call, 2-day workshop based on an emerging theme(s) from Rahul's body of work in May/ June, 2021. FOSSSIL has also decided to publish an anthology of selected papers resulting from the workshop, to be edited by early-career (ex)-LISSIMERS. A workshop committee will see through the organisation of the workshop and the resulting publication. This event, we hope, will kindle interest in formal properties of Dravidian languages, especially the semantic ones, so that Rahul's academic legacy is carried forward and sustained meaningfully.