INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND STUDIES PROGRAM (84.017A)
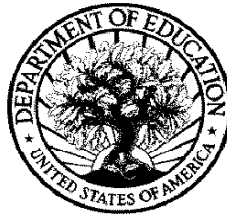
Fiscal Year 2007 New Grants Summary and Abstracts

International Education Programs Service
US Department of Education
6th Floor, 1990 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006-8521

Application No., Applicant and Project Director	Project Title	Type IM/RE	Years	Recommended Funding		
				FY 07	FY 08	FY09
P017A070007 **Highline School District 401** 15675 Ambaum Blvd, SW Seattle, WA 98166 David Cotlove	Speak YOUR Languages - Translation and Interpretation Program	IM	3	**$136,000**	$135,000	$131,000
P017A070019 **University of Michigan** Near Eastern Studies 3003 S. State Street Ann Arbor, MI 48128 Raji Rammuny	Advanced Arabic Communication Media Curriculum	IM	2	**$156,000**	$76,000	
P017A070021 **Cornell University** South Asia Program 120 Day Hall Ithaca, NY 14853 Anne Blackburn	Introductory Sinhala Curriculum Project	IM	3	**$39,000**	$46,000	$43,000
P017A070039 **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages** 700 S. Washington St., Suite 210 Alexandria, VA 22314 Martha Abbott	Foreign Language Enrollments in K-12 Public Schools	RE	3	**$140,000**	$135,000	$137,000
P017A070042 **University of Chicago** Center for Latin American Studies 5801 South Ellis Avenue Chicago, IL 6063 John Lucy	Digital Chicago Maya-Modern spoken Yucatec and K'iche', revised and online	IM	3	**$185,000**	$190,000	$189,000
P017A070062 **Asia Society -- Education** 725 Park Avenue New York, NY 10021 Elizabeth Cole	China and Globalization: China and the World in History and Today	IM	3	**$136,000**	$142,000	$141,000
P017A070075 **Georgia Tech Research Corporation** School of Modern Languages 505 10th Street Atlanta, GA 30332 Xiaoliang Li	Teaching Chinese for the 21st Century	IM	3	**$111,000**	$104,000	$114,000

Application No., Applicant and Project Director	Project Title	Type IM/RE	Years	Recommended Funding FY 07	FY 08	FY09
P017A070076 **University of Wisconsin, Madison** Center for Southeast Asian Studies 21 N. Park Street, Suite 6401 Madison, WI 53715 Marlys Macken	Tone Languages of China	IM	2	**$97,000**	$94,000	
P017A070078 **University of Washington** Language Learning Center 1100 NE 45th St., Suite 300 Seattle, WA 98105 Paul Aoki	E Par Bangla O Pr Bangla; Bangla Across Borders, An Elementary Bangla Language Course	IM	3	**$76,000**	$137,000	$76,000
P017A070084 **The University of Montana** Office of International Programs #32 Campus Drive, 4104 Missoula, MT 59812 Mehrdad Kia	Enhancing Proficiency and Accuracy: Instructional Materials in the Phonology of Arabic	IM	3	**$105,000**	$143,000	$138,000
P017A070085 **University of Pennsylvania** South Asia Center 3451 Walnut Street, P-221 Philadelphia, PA 19104 Haimanti Banerjee	Bengali Online Learning Modules for Intermediate and Advanced Learners	IM	3	**$51,000**	$52,000	$23,000
P017A070100 **American Councils for International Education** 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700 Washington, DC 20036 Dan Davidson	Online proficiency testing in reading and listening at the 2,2+,3, and 3+ range in Arabic, Central Asian Turkic, Persian, and Russian	IM	3	**$186,840**	$191,000	$191,000
P017A070102 **Trustees of Indiana University** CeLCAR P.O. Box 1847 Bloomington, IN 47402 John Erickson	Web-based Multimedia Uzbek Dialect Dictionary	IM	3	**$108,000**	$157,000	$153,000
				$1,526,840	**$1,602,000**	**$1,336,000**

Speak YOUR Languages - Translation and Interpretation Program

The Highline School District, an 18,000-student public school district just south of Seattle, WA, has developed the "Speak YOUR Languages" program which includes a Translation & Interpretation program for high-school students and an associated Student Interpreter program where students, after thorough training, apply their skills in the service of the schools and community.

As a nation, we face the challenge of creating a pipeline of young people with sufficient language skills to serve the needs of government and industry. Heritage language speakers, those who have learned another language before coming to the United States or learned it at home from immigrant parents, represent a national linguistic resource. But typically, such students feel tremendous social pressure to fit in to an English-speaking environment and, as a result, their heritage language skills are never fully developed and weaken from lack of use.

In our program, we offer students a vision of future careers where language skills are important. We train students to use their language skills as interpreters. And we provide opportunities for students to use their language skills as interpreters for the benefit of their community. Our students learn many ways to continually improve their English and heritage language skills and, in a self-reinforcing process, as their skills improve, they see themselves becoming increasingly competent and useful, and they work to improve their language skills even more.

By design, speakers of multiple languages participate in the program. This makes the program available to students in critical and seldom-taught languages. In just our school district, speakers of 17 languages have participated in the program: Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian, Cambodian (Khmer), Cantonese, Farsi, Hindi, Japanese, Pashto, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Samoan, Somali, Spanish, Urdu and Vietnamese.

With funds provided by this grant, we will produce materials (online and via CD/DVD's) for teacher self-study training, curriculum, and student self-study / review so that the Translation & Interpretation program and the Student Interpreter program can be offered in other schools and school districts throughout the United States.

Our program encourages students to direct their energies towards a career utilizing their language ability and motivates them to continue their language studies beyond high school. Expanded to schools across the nation, this program has enormous potential significance for the creation of a true language pipeline, to the security and economic benefit of our nation.

P017A070019
University of Michigan
Near Eastern Studies
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Ann Arbor, MI 48128
Raji Rammuny

Advanced Arabic Communication Media Curriculum

It has become quite evident, after September 11, 2001 that there is an increasing demand now and in the foreseeable future for Americans with advanced levels of functional linguistic and cultural proficiency in Arabic. Pressures to expand the Arabic programs in major universities in order to include advanced Arabic courses in communication media are nowadays intense, coming from Arabic language and non-language graduate programs, the federal government, and the international business sector

This proposal will respond to this challenge by developing a curriculum for Advanced Arabic Communication Media (AACM) in order to expand and enrich the already existing advanced Arabic language courses available at UM, as well as in other major Arabic programs. The existence of such a curriculum will encourage graduate students from a variety of disciplines interested in Middle Eastern studies to enroll in the advanced Arabic communication media courses that will be generated from this project. Thus, we will build stronger connections among faculty and students throughout the university, as well as between UM, the government and the business sector.

The proposed curriculum will include authentic materials consisting of video, audio and texts aiming to advance students' linguistic and cultural proficiency to ACTFL 2+/3 levels. We have already started collecting some of the materials from current publications available at UM libraries and from Al-Jazeera and other Arab TV networks. The selected materials will be integrated with modern learning technologies (computer, web, etc.) in order to make them flexible for use in the classroom, the computer lab, and for self-study. The AACM curriculum, upon completion, will be available for distribution in print and electronic versions.

The project director Raji Rammuny and investigator Waheed Samy have the requisite experience for selecting and developing instructional materials and in cooperation with UM Language Resource media experts to determine the technologies suitable for the AACM project. They are currently involved in developing a "pilot" module based on an Al-Jazeera panel discussion dealing with the current political situation in the Arab world.

The UM is particularly suited to house this project because of its highly developed Arabic program which provides training in language, literature, linguistics and culture at the BA, MA and PhD levels. We have a significant percentage of graduate students taking advanced Arabic language courses coming from a variety of disciplines besides Arabic language and literature, such as Anthropology, Business, History, International Law, Political Science, and Public Policy. In addition, the UM has a wealth of textual and technological resources, an extensive communications infrastructure, and several centers for evaluation of media-based programs. The key personnel who will be involved in the development of this project have the qualifications, expertise, experience and thorough knowledge necessary to insure a successful completion of the proposed Advanced Arabic Communication Media curriculum.

We plan to complete this project in two years and seek $245,724 from the U.S. Department of Education and contribute $54,054 cost sharing.

P017A070021
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South Asia Program
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Anne Blackburn

Introductory Sinhala Curriculum Project

The South Asia Program at Cornell University requests $134,222 to develop language acquisition curriculum for introductory colloquial Sinhala. The three-year project will produce pedagogically current and culturally appropriate multi-media instructional materials for the study of colloquial Sinhala (an Indic language, one of the two official languages of Sri Lanka, spoken by the majority of the population) in colleges and universities, and by American personnel involved in U.S. governmental and non-governmental activities. The grant period runs from August 2007 to August 2010. During this time the curriculum will be developed, tested, refined, and published.

The proposed introductory curriculum is intended to provide a full set of language learning materials, in print and audio-visual formats, for use by teachers and students. There are four components to the curriculum: a Student Textbook, a Teacher's Guide, a Student DVD/CD package, and a Teacher's DVD/CD package. The curriculum will be suitable for use in university classrooms, in other language teaching environments, and be students working independently. It will cover two semesters of introductory Sinhala, and may also be used in an intensive 6-8 week session. The proposed curriculum is intended to protect U.S.-based instruction in the Less Commonly Taught Language of Sinhala. The curriculum will be developed by two authors, both accomplished in Sinhala and language instruction, in collaboration with the Principal Investigator, a specialist in Sri Lankan religion, literature and culture. One author is Cornell University's Sinhala Lecturer, the most experiences Sinhala language instructor in the UnitedStates The second author is a linguist from East Tennessee State University, one of the few American language acquisition specialists train in Sinhala, and familiar with Sri Lanka.

P017A070039
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
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Martha Abbott

Foreign Language Enrollments in K-12 Public Schools

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proposes to conduct a comprehensive national survey of foreign language enrollments in U.S. schools. This proposal is the continuation of previous periodic surveys conducted by ACTFL that will provide a comprehensive picture of foreign language enrollments in U.S. schools for the K-12 level. Survey procedures used in prior studies will be re-evaluated given the new technologies available but will retain similar data so that comparisons may be made with previous enrollment surveys. Additional data collection procedures will be used in order to produce reliable and valid results.

The public school enrollment data collected by ACTFL in recent years provide the only complete source of national enrollment figures on foreign language education at the K-12 level. Without these data, there would be no way to track the progress and trends of foreign language study in the United States. Indeed, even the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement relies on these data for inclusion in its annual reports on educational statistics. With the current initiatives regarding critical needs languages, there are no baseline data from which to judge the success of these initiatives. The Modern Language Association (MLA) has been funded to conduct the next in their series of surveys of foreign language enrollments at the higher education level. This K-12 survey is a critical corollary to that information so that we can track growth and trends across levels.

In addition to the standard written report and analysis produced by past surveys, the current project will utilize technology to enhance both the data collection process and the dissemination of results. The ongoing availability of current national enrollment statistics that will result from this project will allow for strategic planning and decision-making in this area of growing importance to the nation's educational system and national interest.

P017A070042
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John Lucy

Digital Chicago Maya-Modern Spoken Yucatec and K'iche', Revised and Online

The Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Chicago proposes to revise and enhance its widely used courses in Yucatec Maya and K'iche' Maya. First developed at the University of Chicago in the 1960s with support from the then Office of Education, these courses have since been widely distributed and form the basis of nearly all Yucatec Maya and K'iche' Maya teaching programs in the U nited States As such they are national resources that need to be preserved and developed if they are to continue to serve this vital function. However, the courses are showing their age: the orthographies used in the courses are nonstandard and not well-suited for modern educational needs, the basic course content, essentially unchanged over the past forty years, has become increasingly outdated, and there is a need for providing modern pedagogical guidance and resources. This current project, therefore, has three main objectives:

• Modernize and extend the course presentation: this will include updating the Maya materials to contemporary standard orthographies, providing a Spanish translation, and formatting the entire course for World Wide Web and other forms of electronic delivery;
• Revise and enhance the course content: this will include additional recording of basic dialogues to provide dialect and gender variants, updating the grammatical descriptions, adding cultural notes on usage, and consolidating vocabulary lists into a searchable database;
• Improve and support course pedagogy: this will include providing a supplemental learner's orthography to guide pronunciation, developing a teacher's manual and materials to support targeted aural/oral activities for each lesson, and creating a supporting set of authentic materials, audio-video recordings, and other digital resources (e.g., digital dictionaries).

The considerable experience and expertise of the key personnel along with a well- developed plan for implementation and evaluation ensure that the project's objectives will be met. Key staff are at the forefront of linguistic and applied research on modern spoken Yucatec Maya and K'iche' Maya. The project takes advantage of ample institutional infrastructure and resources to ensure that digitization of course materials and subsequent presentation in World Wide Web format will conform to international standards. The project will be implemented in stages, subject to ongoing and final evaluation including significant classroom pre-testing in our own and other programs, and presentation at conferences for critique and dissemination.

The *Digital Chicago Maya: Modern Spoken Yucatec and K'iche'* project is one element in a larger effort to maximize access to cultural and linguistic resources for Mesoamerican indigenous languages. In its final format, this project will be leveraged by other projects that will extend this project's impact and go a long way toward remedying the current lack of high quality, accessible materials for learning these languages.

P017A070062
Asia Society
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Elizabeth Cole

China and Globalization: China and the World in History and Today

The Asia Society's Education Division is requesting $441,473 from the United States Department of Education over three years to develop Chinese language materials for K-12 learners entitled *China and Globalization: China and the World in History and Today*.

This project will create standards- and content-based, thematically organized language learning materials and resources that will be available online. The materials will be articulated both for grade clusters and language proficiency, so that they will be appropriate as much for the young student beginning Chinese as for the high school student who either may be beginning Chinese or continuing study begun in earlier grades.

The goal of the project is to increase students' understanding of China and globalization, defined as the interconnectedness of the world in both the ancient and modern times, as a part of language learning. The project will achieve this through infusing relevant content learning into language development. Hence, the expected outcomes are meaningful and rich units of study and assessment, based on the curricular framework of *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), that will engage students in both social sciences and historical content as an integral part of studying the Chinese language. Currently available Chinese-language learning materials, by contrast, rarely provide historical, socio-economic and arts content for students; rather, they generally focus on the elements of language learning (vocabulary, characters, grammatical patterns, and, to some extent, cultural familiarity). It is this gap that the proposed project aims to fill.

Under the overarching theme of *China and Globalization*, Asia Society will create three interdisciplinary language learning modules (nine units per year) that will be available for teachers and students nationwide on its educational website, AskAsia.org. The modules, addressing sub-themes of Environment, Trade and the Exchange of Ideas, will be organized based on lessons that include Chinese language learning materials, cultural resource materials, and teachers' guides. Web-based technology will allow inclusion of audio-visual materials to aid students in developing skills in various communicative modes, as well as to make the units lively and engaging.

The globalization content will be created for the project, with some cultural materials already created by Asia Society's Museum and Performing Arts Programs to be adapted for use in the project, particularly on the early process of globalization in history through China's role in the Silk Road. It will also draw from Asia Society's materials on environmental challenges created by its Center on U.S.-China Relations. The holdings of its prize-winning educational Web site, AskAsia.org, will also provide valuable resources to adapt for language learners. Based on the theories of second language acquisition, this rich array of content will be tailored to age- and proficiency-level appropriate and engaging learning materials for K-12 Chinese language learners.

Founded in 1956, Asia Society is the leading global pan Asian organization working to strengthen relationships and promote understanding among the people, leaders and institutions of the United States and Asia. We seek to increase knowledge and enhance dialogue, encourage creative expression, and generate new ideas across the fields of policy, business, education, arts and culture. Asia Society's Education Division, with its staff expertise and track record in leading important initiatives in Chinese language and international education, is uniquely placed to undertake and successfully complete this project.

P017A070075
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Xiaoliang Li

Teaching Chinese for the 21st Century

China's meteoric rise has spotlighted a glaring gap between America's growing need for language and culture specialists and the paucity of trained personnel. The risk to national economic and security interests, though incalculable, is nonetheless real. Equally alarming is the gap between the burgeoning numbers of young Americans eager to equip themselves linguistically and culturally to deal with the Chinese on their own terms and the antiquated teaching methods used to train them. Every year a new cadre of bright, highly motivated students enters our Chinese programs, and every year massive numbers drop out before attaining proficiency.

Georgia Tech proposes to meet this challenge with an innovative three-year, six-course learning program, informed by state of the art approaches to language teaching and enhanced by creative use of multimedia materials. Delivered online and in DVD format, this program promises to minimize the intimidating specter of Chinese exoticism, maximize learning flexibility and effectiveness, and reach the broadest possible audience.

Georgia Tech brings to its mission a strong team in Chinese pedagogy, more than a decade of experience teaching non-Chinese majors, expertise in multimedia design and development, instructional technology know-how; 21st century technological recourses, and unflagging administrative support. Situated in a cosmopolitan metropolitan area, Tech is positioned to play a key role in equipping the new South to take its place on the global stage. At the same time, its resources will be available nationwide and worldwide to Americans anxious to engage themselves with the new China.

P017A070076
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Marlys Macken

Tone Languages of China.

More than half the world's languages are tone languages. Asian tone languages are structurally similar to one another and quite different from African tone languages. The most widely spoken language in the world is Mandarin, an East Asian tone language and the national language of China. Of the more than 250 languages spoken in China, the main languages are Mandarin (northern Chinese), Cantonese (a Yue language spoken in southern China), and the southern Chinese Min (e.g. Xiamen) and Wu (e.g. Shanghainese) languages. A major minority language of China is Hmong, a classically East Asian tone language unrelated to but remarkably similar to Mandarin and especially to the southern Min, Wu, and Yue Chinese languages. Native speakers of English have considerable difficulty learning tone languages. Chinese (all the Chinese languages) is a class 4 language, meaning that educated English speakers require about 1,300 hours to attain the native-like proficiency of an educated native speaker of Chinese. In contrast, Spanish and French are class 1 languages, which means that educated English speakers require on average 480 hours to attain a comparable proficiency (Foreign Service Institute index).

Project. This project develops materials and adaptable templates for the teaching of Mandarin and Hmong, and any tone language of China at the high school and college level: (i) Dictionary-dialogue template system—an interactive Web-based dictionary linked bidirectionally to dialogues and audio recordings, user template, Mandarin dictionary-dialogues, and Hmong dictionary-dialogues; and (ii) Audio-visual template system— that delivers audio and video files with commentary and cued text loaded from external files for thematic units, user template, five software subcomponents, eight Mandarin thematic units, and eight Hmong thematic units. These materials incorporate media and technology to enhance language instruction, are technologically and pedagogically innovative and unique and expected to be effective, and have the additional merit of flexible use: they can be used interactively by students at high school and college levels, heritage and non-heritage student; can be adapted and expanded easily by teachers to incorporate local authentic materials and thematic units—an important non-textbook teaching tool; and can be easily and straightforwardly adopted for any Chinese tone language (and with minor extension to southeast Asian tone languages like Vietnamese, Thai, and Lao). Mandarin Chinese is a critical language as e.g. identified by the Department of Defense.

The work on Hmong complements and deepens that on Mandarin, provides a direct foundation for implementation of any southern Chinese Min or Wu language, and will provide critically needed teaching materials for a significant minority language of Wisconsin, Minnesota, California, and North Carolina, and several countries in southeast Asia (Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and Myanmar) as well as the southern provinces of Guizhou, Hunnan, Guanxi, and Yunnan, in China. Mandarin and Hmong are the two less commonly taught Asian languages targeted for K-16 priorities by the State of Wisconsin. The language structure content of the materials focuses on those east Asian tone language structures particularly difficult for speakers of English as a first language: tone, tone sandhi, compounding, classifier systems, and verbal aspect. The work on each language will directly contribute to the analysis of the other. Effectiveness of the materials and templates will be evaluated through formative and summative expert evaluation, student and teacher evaluations, and linkages to ACTFL assessments. The dictionary-dialogue template system is web-based and can be implemented in a distance education course. The web-based audio-video template system can be installed on any PC or MAC. The P.I. has developed working prototypes of each of the two primary template systems, conducted research on east and southeast Asian tone languages, has longstanding established partnerships with high school and UW language teachers, and will work with State Department of Public Instruction and national resource sites to coordinate product development.

P017A070078
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E Par Bangla O Pr Bangla; Bangla Across Borders, An Elementary Bangla Language Course

We propose to develop a twelve-lesson interactive one-year elementary Bangla language course at the post-secondary level. Bangla (also Bengali) is the official language of Bangladesh, the world's third most populous Muslim nation, and the state language of West Bengal, India. With over 200 million speakers, Bangla ranks sixth among world languages. It is one of twelve less commonly taught languages (LCTL) identified by the U.S. State Department's Strategic Languages Initiative as being of strategic importance to the United States. The number of programs offering Bangla to American students both here and in South Asia has been on the increase. Despite this new interest in its study and despite its size and strategic importance, Bangla has lagged behind most other major Indic languages in the development of teaching materials. The project addresses the urgent need for language learning materials in Indic languages, one of the critical language areas listed in DOE invitational priority 1. It will build on material already developed, funded by the South Asia Language Resource Center (SALRC) between 2005-07.

This pioneering course will be the first in Bangla to take a communicative/task-oriented approach emphasizing performance and proficiency in the target language as well as understanding of Bangla culture. It will include authentic materials such as audios of actual conversations and videos shot on location. The course will integrate all four skills, reading, writing, speaking and listening and present a balance between Hindu and Muslim cultural contexts and between the speech of educated Bengalis in both West Bengal and Bangladesh. A story telling of a friendship between two young Bangladeshi women, one Hindu and the other Muslim runs throughout the book and provides the unifying thread. The story is set in Bangladesh and West Bengal.

The course will consist of four components: 1) a textbook with teacher's notes 2) a workbook with grammar exercises 3) a multi-media compact disk with videos and audios 4) an online component using Moodle, an open source courseware tool as the delivery environment. In addition, all materials will be available on a CD. Materials will be in standard colloquial Bangla spoken by educated Bengalis in Bangladesh and West Bengal and written in Bangla script using Mukti, a Unicode Bangla font. This project will be conducted over three years and provide the equivalent of a two-semester or three quarter university course in elementary Bangla. It will target a mixed population of heritage students and students with no previous background in Bangla language and culture.

P017A070084
The University of Montana
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Mehrdad Kia

Enhancing Proficiency and Accuracy: Instructional Materials in the Phonology of Arabic

The College of Arts and Sciences and Office of International Programs at The University of Montana request funds to support a project titled "Enhancing Proficiency and Accuracy: Instructional Materials in the Phonology of Arabic". Department of Education funds will support the production of an integrated set of supplementary instructional materials for teaching Modern Standard Arabic; the most widely understood Arabic dialect, at the introductory, intermediate and advanced levels in undergraduate language programs throughout the United States. Our request is for $406,090 over a period of three years.

The proposed materials will consist of three components: 1) the manuscript for a textbook of 250 to 300 pages that provides a comprehensive introduction into the sound systems of Arabic and English; 2) the manuscript for a teacher's manual of 50 to 75 pages to accompany the textbook; and 3) a Web-based CD with detailed illustrations and animated drawings demonstrating the positions and movements of speech organs for how Arabic and English sounds are made. All three components build on increasing research evidence that proficiency and accuracy in learning a foreign language increases when students and adults are taught greater phonological awareness and how the movement of speech organs feels when the sounds of the target language are produced. The student textbook and teacher's manual will be structured around twelve topics devoted to the history, culture and dialects of the Arab World, the production of Arabic and English consonants and vowels; contrasting word-stress, intonation and rhythms; and rapid Arabic and English speech, among others. The CD will provide illustrations, animated drawings, and interactive exercises detailing the physical production of Arabic and English sounds.

The materials development team will consist of experienced Arabic teachers and curriculum specialists from The University of Montana, The University of Texas at Austin, and West Point Military Academy. Student and teacher responses from pilot tests at three field sites will provide valuable feedback for making revisions and producing the final manuscript. Our proposal responds to the Department of Education's 2007 Competitive Preference Priority One for material development projects focusing on critical languages.

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Haimanti Banerjee

Bengali Online Learning Modules for Intermediate and Advanced Learners

There is an urgent need to develop learners' communicative competence in Bengali (or Bangla), which has been designated as a critical language by the National Security Language Initiative. The South Asia Center at the University of Pennsylvania proposes to create a set of 100 online Bengali learning modules[1] to move learners from the Intermediate-Low level to the Advanced-Low level on ACTFL's[2] proficiency scale. The proposed materials will be developed over a period of three years.

The proposed modules will use authentic written and spoken materials to help second-year and third-year learners develop their reading and listening comprehension skills. The content will include topics relevant to area studies and learners' interests, such as politics, the environment, entertainment & media, history, religion, economics, literature, society and culture, and women and gender issues. The criteria for selection of texts and designing the accompanying exercises for each module will be in keeping with the Standard 1.2[3] that focuses on the understanding and interpretation of written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

The reading and listening activities for each module will focus on a holistic comprehension of Bengali along with the syntactic and sociolinguistic features. The proposed materials will fill the need for pedagogically sound Bengali materials that will expose the learners to written and spoken language as it is used in the target culture, and the learners will be able to interact with the materials in linguistically meaningful ways. This will be an important departure from the existing Bengali materials that tend to use scripted texts with a focus on a few pre-selected grammar points and contain mainly 'survival' language.

These modules will be readily accessible over the Internet, at no cost, to all types of learners- -classroom learners, independent learners, heritage learners and non-heritage learners. Easy accessibility of these listening and reading modules will free classroom time to enable instructors to do more face-to-face interactive communication.

The module developers are experienced Bengali teachers and they are comfortable using the required technology. The South Asia Center will collaborate with different institutions at different stages of the project. The materials will be field tested at Penn, Cornell, and other Bengali-teaching institutions in the U nited States They will be also tested in the popular overseas Bengali immersion programs, such as American Institute of Indian Studies and American Institute of Bangladesh Studies.

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[1] Reading comprehension modules: 20 (Intermediate Low-Mid), 20 (Intermediate-Mid-High) and 10 (Advanced-Low); Listening comprehension modules: 20 (Intermediate Low-Mid), 20 (Intermediate- Mid-High) and 10 (Advanced-Low).
[2] ACTFL: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
[3] *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century,* a collaborative project of ACTFL, AATF, AATG, AATI, AATSP, ACL/APA, ACTR, CLASS/CLTA, & NCSTJ/ATJ
<http://www.actfl.org/files/public/execsumm.pdf>

P017A070100
American Councils for International Education
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Washington, DC 20036
Dan Davidson

Online proficiency testing in reading and listening at the 2,2+,3, and 3+ range in Arabic, Central Asian Turkic, Persian, and Russian

American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS (American Councils) has developed a Web-based testing system to successfully administer online exams that are secure, reliable, cost-effective, and able to reach more examinees throughout an extensive range of test centers. The goal of this project is to expand on the existing operational exam design and online delivery system to create and support regularly available, operational online proficiency testing in reading and listening at the 2, 2+, 3, and 3+ range in Arabic, Central Asian Turkic, Persian, and Russian. The testing modules, which will be supported and refreshed on an ongoing basis, will reflect standard proficiency-based guidelines and modes of communication. This need for critical foreign language testing is particularly vital given the extensive level of training time required for an English-based language learner to reach full professional competence. As learners progress, assessing language skills at higher levels of proficiency becomes even more imperative. American Councils' Web-based testing program will help to address the current need for robust models for web-based language assessment, which will inform language teaching and learning. To this end, the online delivery system will provide access to the assessment instrument in a variety of locales and will allow for customization in order to meet the needs of stakeholder programs, institutions, and individuals.

For the past 30 years, American Councils has remained committed to the preparation of successive generations of U.S. students, teachers, and professionals in the linguistic and cultural sophistication essential to maintain American leadership in world affairs. The importance of this mission has also re-emerged on the U.S. national security agenda, with an emphasis on producing sufficient numbers of language-competent citizens at higher levels of proficiency in Russian, Arabic, Persian, and Central Turkic languages. Through this project, American Councils will improve testing and assessment resources for these critical languages.

Web-based Multimedia Uzbek Dialect Dictionary

This proposal seeks three years of funding to support a project to develop a Web-based multimedia dialect dictionary for the critical Turkic language of Uzbek, which can be used to train English speaking students acquire advanced speaking and listening proficiency in Uzbek dialects as they are spoken in Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and other countries of Central Asia, in addition to enabling them to attain advanced reading and writing skills.

A major problem that English-speaking students confront in their study of Uzbek is the significant difference between the standard literary language, which they are primarily taught, and the wide range of dialectal variation of the colloquial spoken language encountered in the different regions of Uzbekistan, such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Khwarezm, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, and the Ferghana Valley, as well as in northern Afghanistan. This problem is further complicated by the lack of instructional materials specifically designed to train English-speaking students in such dialectal variation. As a result, it is often exceedingly difficult for such students to achieve advanced levels of proficiency in listening comprehension of Uzbek dialects without spending a prolonged period of time in the field. The proposed project aims to remedy this problem by creating a multimedia resource that can be used as a self-learning tool by students to listen to, compare, and study the linguistic variation of Uzbek dialects and the literary language online.

The project builds on work for the Title VI Uzbek Dictionary Project at Indiana University, scheduled to be completed in 2008. The Uzbek-English and English-Uzbek dictionaries produced by the latter project will each contain over 40,000 words, along with approximately 25,000 examples of usage, making them the most comprehensive Uzbek dictionaries designed for English speakers to date.

The Uzbek dialect dictionary project proposed here comprises four main parts:
1) A Web-based searchable multimedia application will be developed for a comparative Uzbek dialect dictionary, which will make the work of the Title VI Uzbek Dictionary Project available online and which can be expanded in stages to include new text data and audio recordings from various Uzbek dialects, as well as images of cultural objects.
2) Audio recordings will be made of the words and expressions collected for the Uzbek Dictionary Project in the standard literary language and the Tashkent dialect (which can be supplemented by recordings in other Uzbek dialects as additional funding is obtained for future projects). They will then be processed into separate audio files and added to the online dictionary.
3) Additional examples of complete sentences will be collected and recorded in the standard literary language and the Tashkent dialect to provide fuller comparative coverage of the phonological, morphological, semantic, lexical, and syntactic features of linguistic variation.
4) An online interactive audio primer will be created to train students who have studied the Uzbek literary language to comprehend the different phonological and morphological features of the Tashkent dialect.

Finally, the multimedia Uzbek dialect dictionary will become an essential online resource for students and instructors in Uzbek language programs throughout the United States—especially for the three course levels of Uzbek taught at Indiana University, the distance-education program in Uzbek sponsored by the Title VI Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region, as well as the courses offered at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where it will undergo extensive pre-testing for revision. The web-based multimedia dictionary will allow both students and instructors to suggest changes and additions online, which can then be incorporated into updated and expanded versions of the dictionary database.