

An Indian-Australian research partnership

Project Title:

Project Number

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IITB Department:

Research Academy Clusters:

Highlight which of the Academy's CLUSTERS this project will address? <i>(Please nominate JUST one. For more information, see www.iXXXXX.org)</i>	
1	Material Science/Engineering (including Nano, Metallurgy)
2	Energy, Green Chem, Chemistry, Catalysis, Reaction Eng
3	Math, CFD, Modelling, Manufacturing
4	CSE, IT, Optimisation, Data, Sensors, Systems, Signal Processing, Control
5	Earth Sciences and Civil Engineering (Geo, Water, Climate)
6	Bio, Stem Cells, Bio Chem, Pharma, Food
7	Semi-Conductors, Optics, Photonics, Networks, Telecomm, Power Eng
8	Humanities and Social Sciences

The research problem

The UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger lists over 150 languages in South Asia (including India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bhutan and Bangladesh) that are critically or severely endangered (scoring 3-5 on the

Language Endangerment index). While there are well-understood socio-economic and political reasons for this loss, the main impetus for their demise is the fact that most of these languages remain unwritten and undocumented. Such language loss deprives us also of the cultural wealth and folk knowledge that lies embedded within these linguistic systems. This project aims to document one or more of languages of this region, including a full grammatical description as well as native speakers' narratives. Such documentation is a necessary first step to any revitalisation methods that could be adopted to encourage the survival of these languages.

Project aims

1. Grammatical description of the language/s: phonetics, phonology, syllable structure, word formation rules, syntactic rules, idioms, core lexicon etc.
2. Collection of narratives - stories, life accounts, cultural experiences etc.
3. Evaluation of the endangerment index, assessment of the population and the geographical spread
4. Creating a digitized archive of the data collected

Expected outcomes

1. Comprehensive language documentation
2. Digitized archive that can be built upon and available for use for others

How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?

Language sits at the centre of many of the themes and areas of research within Humanities and Social Sciences. It is critical in understanding human behaviour, psychology, society and culture and thus, an understanding of any language can inform and enrich our understanding of the Human Sciences themselves .

Capabilities and Degrees Required

1. A Masters Degree in Linguistics from a good university, with adequate background in the core areas of theoretical linguistics. MPhil will be strongly preferred.
2. Experience in data collection and field techniques. Prior experience of fieldwork in the proposed area and contact with native speakers will be favourably weighted.
3. Fluency in the dominant language (or alternative contact language) of the area of fieldwork.
4. A precise proposal, of about 1000 words, that discusses specific languages to be documented, their special grammatical features as well as the need to document them must be included.

Potential Collaborators

Dr Stephen Morey, Latrobe University

Select up to **(4)** keywords from the Academy's approved keyword list (**available at www.iitbmonash.org**) relating to this project to make it easier for the students to apply.

Endangered Languages, South Asia, Natural Language Documentation