SALRC Annual Report 2006-07

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Abstract
The universities currently designated as National Resource Centers for South Asia together with other major American universities with South Asia studies programs have established the South Asia Language Resource Center (SALRC). The goal of SALRC is to meet the pressing need for human and material resources supporting the teaching and learning of the subcontinent's languages. Other U.S. universities with South Asia programs also collaborate in this effort. The new Language Resource Center (LRC) is an umbrella under which less-commonly-taught languages are being advanced. SALRC is creating and disseminating new resources for teaching and research on South Asian languages, mostly via the Internet; providing administrative support and pedagogical expertise for the South Asia Summer Language Institute (SASLI); developing a shared infrastructure for delivery and archiving of South Asia language resources; sharing infrastructure and approaches with other institutions having overlapping language interests; and offering workshops to North American faculty and students on pedagogy; language materials development and other areas of interest.

Nearly a half century of Federal funding for foreign language and area training has resulted in excellent print and audio resources for teaching the less commonly taught languages of South Asia, however, these resources are not centrally available. SALRC, as one of its undertakings, is collecting, refurbishing, and disseminating the best of those older resources in a way that eliminates the need for duplication and augments and enhances the new tools being developed specifically for the changing environment of language instruction in the United States.

Status/Impact
SALRC continues to develop its relationships in addition to working on the activities projected in the grant proposal.
By the final period of the grant, these include not only language materials development and a role in the national summer intensive language program but faculty development in areas of pedagogy and technology and the development of web-based tools for evaluating

language competence.

The staffing of the SALRC office continues at 3/4 time program assistant and a post-doctoral researcher.

Regular meetings of the SALRC Executive Committee are held in conjunction with the Annual South Asia Meeting (Madison, October) and the Association for Asian Studies meeting (location varies, March/April). The Executive Committee comprises two members each from the South Asia National Resource Centers, the American Overseas Research Centers, South Asian language teaching faculty and experts in language pedagogy or technology from outside of South Asian studies as well as the South Asia Summer Language Institute (SASLI) director.

Sub-contracting of multiple awards for materials development continued in the last year of the grant as well as a contract for the development of web-based testing in Hindi reading skills.

The SALRC listserve has been used extensively to communicate workshop offerings, job openings, conferences, information of specific interest (new websites, reference materials etc.).

Exemplary Activities

1. Workshops for summer language institute faculty. A week-long (half days) pedagogical workshop was held in Madison for faculty and teaching assistants from multiple campuses prior to the SASLI summer session, June 2006, "Developing Assessments for South Asian Languages," 30 attendees.

2. On-line assessments. The development of the first ever national assessments in South Asian languages began during this period. Excellent cooperation has been realized both with South Asia National Resource Centers as well as with other Hindi and Urdu teaching institutions outside of the NRCs.

3. SALRC Director acted as advisor to both serious applicants for the new Defense Department Hindi and Urdu Flagship initiative.

SALRC Funded Initiatives

1. Rehabilitation of Hindi Video Materials: The continuation of a project to rehabilitate selected Hindi video pedagogical materials listed on the priority list formulated by the teachers of Hindi at the Hindi & Urdu workshop organized by SALRC in January, 2003. This project involves the restoration and enhancement of both the quality and pedagogic utility of widely used Hindi materials by converting them into digital format and adding new exercises (including pre and post activities) and multimedia learning tools. Part II of this project continues with work on videos used for all levels of language learning

(novice, intermediate and advanced); work such as proofreading Hindi texts and their English translations, web development and designing and producing CDs.

2. Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) a criterion-referenced, web-based assessment developed by the Center for Applied Second Language studies at the Northwest LRC (University of Oregon). The SALRC is participating in the development of these web based assessments for South Asian languages. The following have been completed or are in process: 2006-2007: Hindi reading test (completed and in pilot testing nationwide); 2006: Urdu reading test (in development); Hindi listening test (in development). 5 U.S. faculty in each language have been involved in test creation and validation. Joint work scope and planning workshops supported by SALRC have been held multiple times in Eugene and New York.

3. Sindhi Online: Phase II: The overall goal of this project was to develop an online course in Sindhi at the beginning level using materials created for a classroom-based intensive Sindhi course co-taught at the University of Illinois in the summer of 2000. The target audience is adult learners, with special focus on college-age students. The materials are designed to be used as a self-guided study, but can easily be adopted in a university-level classroom-based course with a Sindhi-speaking instructor. Phase I development of Online Sindhi took place during the summers of 2003 and 2004. Phase II development completed lessons equivalent to the first half of the course, with coverage comparable to one semester of a college-level foreign language course.

4. Sindhi Digital Dictionary: The Sindhi Digital Dictionary is based on Mewaram Permanand's Sindhi-English Dictionary (1866-1938, non-copyrighted). The lexicographic information contained in Mewaram's Dictionary has been entered into a structured database (XML format) to construct the dictionary, which is comprised of more than 2,000 words. The digital dictionary provides the functionalities of search on Sindhi script or its English transliteration, a letter index, and a part of speech index.

5. Digital Urdu Ghazal Reader: The Digital Urdu Ghazal Reader is a digital version of a semester-long Urdu course reader created and used by Frances W. Pritchett at Columbia University. It can be used as the reader for a semester-long advanced Urdu class or as supplementary material for a first or second-year class. The interactive on-line reader aids students in orthography, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and cultural and literary context. Printable versions of the ghazals are also available in order to accommodate classroom work.

6. An Electronic Dictionary of the Tamil Verb: This grant is to support the recording of example sentences in Spoken Tamil for an electronic English Dictionary of the Tamil Verb. The main body of the work has already been completed with more than 17,500 entries; however the audio portion remains to be included. This uniquely satisfies current language needs in that there are no dictionaries of Spoken Tamil in existence, anywhere, and certainly no-online dictionaries. Recording audio examples of Spoken Tamil sentences is allowing the web version of this dictionary to become a reality. It will then be ready to be placed on the Digital Dictionaries of South Asia website.

7. Elementary Bangla Online: This project seeks to create an interactive online elementary one-year Bangla language course at the college level. Upon completion of the entire project, on-line activities will be adapted to a self-guided online learning course that will address not only speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, but also cultural contexts, focusing on Hindu and Muslim communities. The course will include topic-based dialogs, oral comprehension passages, and scripted reading selections, making use of audiovisual materials that the project team has been and will continue to collect abroad. Thus far, an overview of units 1-11 of the course has been made, materials for units one and two have been written, and authentic materials and photographs have been collected from Bangladesh.

8. Multimedia Textbooks for Two Dialects of Tibetan: This project produced two digital textbooks of ten lessons each on two Tibetan dialects, specifically the Kham dialects Kongra and Jol. THe materials developed are closely linked to Tournadre and Dorje's Manual of Standard Tibetan (MST) (Snow Lion 2003). MST has a consistent structure, with each of its 40 chapters consisting of a dialogue, a vocabulary list, and grammatical notes. While reviewing materials with Nicolas Tournadre, Garrett and Sparham also paid special attention to a set of native speaker recordings that Sparham had collected before the beginning of this grant. It was determined that these recordings were of a non-Tibetan Qiangic language, most likely Pumi. This dialect is tentatively being called the "Mili Dialect," after the region where it is spoken, though it is not believed to actually be a Tibetan language. The resulting materials for Kongra and Jol, as well as for Mili, have been uploaded and are now available online.