

**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH  
AND STUDIES PROGRAM  
(84.017A)**



**Fiscal Year 2009 New Grants  
Summary and Abstracts  
Research, Surveys and Studies**

International Education Programs Service  
U.S. Department of Education  
6th Floor, 1990 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006-8521

Application No., Applicant and Project Director	Project Title	Type	Years	Funding		
		IM/RE		FY 09	FY 10 (est.)	FY 11 (est.)
P017A090314 <b>The University of Toledo</b> College of Arts and Sciences 2801 West Bancroft Street, MS 944 Toledo, OH 43606 An Chung Cheng	Maximizing the National Resource: Chinese as a Model for Heritage Language Development with Community Involvement	RE	3	\$168,712	\$164,597	\$159,132
P017A090335 Center for Research in Computational Linguistics, Inc. 820 Calle Pluma San Clemente, CA 92673 Doug Cooper	No More Data Silos: Interoperable Digital Resources in Title VI	RE	3	\$154,684	\$174,501	\$180,509
P017A090350 <b>Modern Language Association of America</b> Office of Programs 26 Broadway, 3rd Floor New York, NY 10004-1789 Nelly Furman	Survey of Foreign Language Enrollments in U.S. Colleges and Universities, Fall 2009	RE	2	\$145,694	\$38,004	\$0
P017A090365 <b>The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System</b> Research & Sponsored Programs 21 N. Park Street, Suite 6401 Madison, WI 53715-1218 Sally Sieloff Magnan	A Study of Alignment of the Goals of the National Standards for Language Learning and the Goals and Expectations of Postsecondary Students of Less Commonly Taught and Commonly Taught Languages	RE	3	\$193,618	\$197,247	\$163,809
P017A090374 <b>The George Washington University</b> Office of the Vice President for Research 2121 I Street, N.W., Suite 601 Washington, DC 20052 Anna Chamot	South Asian Languages K-12 Research Study	RE	3	\$155,347	\$174,421	\$74,269
				<b>\$818,055</b>	<b>\$748,770</b>	<b>\$577,719</b>

**Maximizing the National Resource: Chinese as a Model for Heritage Language Development with Community Involvement**

This proposal seeks U.S. Department of Education funding for a three-year research project to conduct a comprehensive national survey of Chinese heritage schools in the United States regarding program profile, teachers, curriculum, available resources, instructional materials and technology used, teaching methods, and classroom practice. Because it takes many years of dedicated studies by adult learners to achieve a working language proficiency level for jobs in both government agencies and business sectors, much attention has turned to the so-called “native speakers” or “heritage speakers.” Heritage language speakers of critical languages provide a potential resource to meet market demands and strategic interests in a post 9/11 context. It is estimated that more than 70 percent of Chinese language instruction before college in the United States has been provided by community-based Chinese heritage schools (CHS). However, their efforts have largely been unnoticed by mainstream educators, because these community-based schools are operated by parents and community members and are outside the formal educational system. On the other hand, the CHSs are generally recognized as the most organized and the most numerous of the heritage language systems in the United States.

The Chinese teachers in Chinese community schools have been heavily recruited to teach in the K-12 school system due to the surge of interests in learning Chinese and the shortage of experienced Chinese teachers in the United States. Some public schools have started to grant credit hours to students who have studied in Chinese community schools.

The Alliance for the Advancement of Heritage Languages, consisting of individuals and organizations who share a commitment to advancing language development for heritage language speakers in the United States, is collecting heritage language program profiles in all languages in the United States. However, only 16 of more than 350 Chinese heritage schools are documented on the Web site (<http://www.cal.org/heritage/> ). With rigorous survey procedures and follow-up interviews as well as focus group discussions, the proposed project will provide a comprehensive picture of CHSs in the United States. In addition, the project will make use of technology to enhance both the data collection process and the dissemination of results. The project will identify and evaluate instructional materials to help improve instructional capacity. The project will determine the needs for improved programs and instruction in materials and resources for Chinese heritage education in the United States.

It will also provide both evaluative models and effective strategies for Chinese heritage schools to identify their strengths and weaknesses. The project Web site will serve both as a clearinghouse for resources and as a major center of interaction between administrators, teachers, policy makers, and parents interested in Chinese language education, particularly Chinese heritage education. The results of this project will allow for strategic planning and decision-making in heritage language education; an area of growing importance to national interest.

### **No More Data Silos – Interoperable Digital Resources in Title VI**

In 2006, a committee to review Title VI and Fulbright-Hays (FH) International Education Programs was established by the National Research Council (NRC) at the request of Congress and the U.S. Department of Education. Its final report, *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future*, was published by the National Academy of Sciences in 2007.

“Advancing uses of new technology in foreign language and international studies” was a key Congressional concern. The NRC committee reported that current efforts to “*effectively apply developments in technology to ... support of language instruction suffer from a dispersion of resources,*” and that Title VI and FH programs “*could do more to maximize the potential created by current technologies.*” They stressed the need for “generic tools” and “common platforms” in using technology, and concluded:

*“A national technology infrastructure could significantly enhance the nation’s capacity for education in critical and less commonly taught languages.”*

Traditional approaches have not met this challenge. Harvesting metadata and building databases help inventory dispersed content, but they don’t unite standalone data silos. Haystacks are easier to find, yet needles – e.g. definitions of words in less-common languages – remain elusive.

But helping teachers build common platforms (or programmers write generic tools) that query all Title VI projects for entries in every known dictionary, audio, or image resource could be as easy as embedding Google maps or Amazon book searches – if we, like them, had a technology infrastructure, built from interoperable resources, and delivered using Web-based services. This project will do the basic research and surveys required to get us there. We will:

- Survey and identify specialized materials already developed with Title VI funding, and appropriate for adaptation or implementation as digital lexical resources;
- Research and develop “best practices” guidelines for providing access to these resources via interoperable Web-based services; and
- Test, evaluate, and promulgate these “best practices” by building a reference model of generic tools and common platforms, including a one-click dictionary search tool.

These tangible results will actively involve current stakeholders in Title VI programs, and help assemble the critical mass that brings voluntary adherence to “best practice” guidelines.

Our primary focus is on bilingual dictionaries in electronic and paper form, because of:

- their central importance to foreign language study and research at all levels, including K-12 and postsecondary education;
- the opportunity they provide to address this International Research and Studies (IRS) competition’s competitive priority on a broad scale, dealing with the many critical Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) that use non-Roman scripts;
- their suitability to task as cornerstone Web services – such as dictionary lookup – that will enable and encourage leading-edge infrastructure applications; and
- the huge existing (and ongoing) investment made by the Title VI programs – in just the past five years, 17 IRS and Technological Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access (TICFIA)-funded projects have created resources for Albanian, Arabic, Cambodian, Hindi, Nepali, Swahili, Tamil, Uzbek, Yoruba, and dozens more.

The proposal is submitted by the Center for Research in Computational Linguistics, which pursues a highly successful program of lexical resource development with the National Endowment for Humanities (NEH), the National Security Education Program (NSEP), and U.S. Department of Education support. We are joined by an advisory board of federal grantees, including IRS and TICFIA project directors who will collaborate in making project data and services available.

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### **Survey of Foreign Language Enrollments in U.S. Colleges and Universities, Fall 2009**

Since 1958, with the continuous support of grants from the U.S. Department of Education, the Modern Language Association (MLA) has been collecting, processing, and reporting data regarding student enrollments in languages other than English in American colleges and universities. In our last survey, we reported on enrollments in fall 2006; we are now applying for a grant to continue our series of surveys of enrollments in languages other than English in the fall 2009. It will be our twenty-second.

Preparation of the survey, information gathering, data analysis, and dissemination of the results will extend over an 18-month period from August 2009 to January 2011. The response rate to past enrollment surveys has consistently registered over 97 percent and in 2006 reached 99.8 percent of the 2,795 postsecondary institutions teaching languages other than English. Our surveys include detailed responses from Associate of Arts (AA), Bachelor of Arts (BA), Master of Arts (MA), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree granting colleges and universities. Reports of the number of students enrolled in language courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels are filed on paper or online by registrars or offices of institutional research. In our final report, through narrative text, tables, and charts, we contextualize and explain our research and findings, point out any noteworthy changes, present data over time, compare enrollments in foreign languages with enrollments in higher education overall, provide information in actual numbers and percentages, and indicate the geographic distribution of language enrollments. Our last survey reported on enrollments in 15 commonly taught languages (in 2006, these were, in order of size: Spanish, French, German, American Sign Language, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Latin, Russian, Arabic, Ancient Greek, Biblical Hebrew, Portuguese, Modern Hebrew, and Korean) and 204 less commonly taught languages.

As we have done with each previous survey, at the conclusion of the fall 2009 survey we will broadly disseminate our findings through a press release, wire services, and in print; the Associated Press noted that 142 media outlets picked up the story from them in the two weeks following release of the 2006 survey alone, not counting Internet sites and blogs, school newspapers, and radio programs. Our reports are publicly accessible on the MLA Web site at [http://www.mla.org/2006\\_flenrollmentsurvey](http://www.mla.org/2006_flenrollmentsurvey). This multi-media coverage attests to the continuing public interest in developments in the nation's study of languages other than English. MLA enrollment surveys are also the standard resource for teachers, program and school administrators, researchers, and educational publishers.

At a time when knowledge of foreign languages is recognized as an advantage for the expansion of global economic partnerships and considered a significant factor in world events, the MLA provides an essential service through its enrollment surveys, not only to educators, but also to public and private agencies and the nation's political, social, military, and business communities. In view of recent events, security concerns, and economic pressures, we expect that the proposed 2009 enrollment survey will again be received with intense public attention.

### **Goals of Postsecondary Students and the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning**

The U.S. *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (Standards) represent the greatest movement in U.S. history for setting goals for language instruction across languages, instructional levels, institutions and states. Despite the Standards' learner centered orientation in describing what language students should know and be able to do, research on the Standards since their creation in 1996 has not investigated whether the goals of the Standards do, in fact, reflect the goals of students at any level of instruction, in any languages. This marked absence of the student perspective is striking, especially given increasing efforts to implement the Standards more broadly, extending their impact from K-12 into postsecondary instruction as well as from Commonly Taught Languages (CTLs) to Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs). If student goals do not align with the Standards, or if students do not believe they can attain the goals of the Standards, educational reform based on the Standards should be questioned.

The proposed study, *Goals of Postsecondary Students and the National Standards for Language Learning*, investigates the alignment between the Standards and the learning goals of postsecondary students through a large-scale national survey of postsecondary students of many diverse languages at the beginning of the first and end of the second year of study at institutions that receive significant Title VI funding to support instruction in LCTLs. The study's mixed method design consists of a written survey based on statements taken directly from the Standards, and simplified cognitive interviews. In the survey, students will be asked if each content statement represents a goal for them and if they expect to attain this goal by the end of their degree programs; the survey will be administered to approximately 20,000 students nationwide. The cognitive interview will probe students' understanding of the Standards statements and their goals, beliefs and expectations. It will be conducted with a subset of 200 students. The survey data will be analyzed with descriptive statistics to show how students' goals and their expectations of attaining them align with the Standards, how students rank order these goals, and which of the five goal areas (the "five Cs") of the Standards are most important in these rankings. Inferential statistics will be used to investigate differences between the CTLs and the LCTLs and between students at the beginning of the first year of study and at the end of the second year of study. Multiple demographic variables will provide controls and offer routes to probe findings in depth through the cognitive interviews. In the interviews, the researchers will ask students to think aloud while they are doing the survey and to respond to probe questions about their understanding of the Standards and about their goals and expectations. These interviews will be transcribed and analyzed by themes to provide indications of the reasons behind students' goals and beliefs.

The findings of the study will be disseminated by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and through conference presentations and publications; they will also be shared with an ongoing task force to review the impact of the Standards. The results of the study will inform the design of foreign language programs, the development of foreign language curricula, the implementation of the Standards at the postsecondary level and in critical LCTLs, and possible revisions of the Standards themselves.

### **South Asian Languages K-12 Research Study**

The current state of language instruction in K-12 for Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Marathi, Nepali, Panjabi, Sinhala, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu in the United States presents a clear case of the challenges that the United States faces in building South Asian language expertise to meet economic and national security challenges of the twenty-first century. These languages are spoken by a large contingent of the world population (one in four people worldwide) and collectively represent politically, culturally, and economically significant nations, including India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. There is a need for concerted nationwide efforts between institutions and heritage communities to effectively teach these languages to school-aged children. Articulation of the language programs from elementary through college level would provide a reliable pipeline providing the nation with urgently needed advanced level speakers of South Asian languages.

Heritage communities have a daunting task in addressing the teaching of their respective languages to their children. Funding, teacher training, appropriate instructional materials, and administrative infrastructure are limited at best. Despite the establishment of three successful Hindi high school programs, all of the South Asian heritage communities face substantial obstacles in supporting their language learning efforts.

The South Asian Languages K-12 Research Study is designed to document and describe all of the South Asian Language programs for K-12 age students in the United States. This will allow the South Asian language community to marshal and strengthen existing resources for the teaching of these languages. The research will identify currently used resources and areas of need, and is designed to answer the following questions:

- (1) What is the current state of South Asian language education for K-12 school-aged students in the United States?
- (2) What do teachers and administrators involved in these programs report as the needs of their programs?

The George Washington University – in collaboration with The Alliance for the Advancement of Heritage Languages, the South Asian Language Resource Center (SALRC), an external evaluator, and an advisory board of scholars, administrators, and national South Asian heritage community leaders – will develop and execute a three-year study to gather comprehensive data on South Asian language programs (credit-bearing and non-credit bearing) from communities across the United States. Upon completion of the research study and evaluation of existing resources and an overview of needs, a final report will address the short-term and long-term actions that should be implemented to strengthen South Asian language programs for school-aged learners in the United States. The report will be published and the findings disseminated in professional language teaching conferences.