Introduction

to the inaugural volume of

Indiana Working Papers in South Asian Languages and Cultures (IWPSALC)

Welcome to the inaugural volume of IWPSALC. In creating this publication—inspired by progress reports like those published from 1965 through 1995 as the *Haskins Laboratories Status Report on Speech Research*—we seek to encourage scholars to publish discrete portions of their research while they work towards full papers.

Too often, our work only sees the light of day when we publish in peer-reviewed journals. We set lofty goals for ourselves, which can end up delaying dissemination of our work. This practice is a positive in that it is good for our science. We want to produce the best work that we can. But there are negative consequences to the practice as well: how much existing work currently sits somewhere in the cloud, on personal computers, and in field notebooks, unknown and inaccessible to other researchers?

We have created IWPSALC because we believe that much of what we do may be relevant and interesting long before it is ready for final submission. With this venue, we aim to encourage dialogue about the work we are doing and provide a platform for disseminating knowledge at multiple stages of the research process. We hope to cultivate—in ourselves, and in our colleagues—a habit of thinking hard about the work that we do in order to identify pieces which, although too small or not yet thorough enough for publication in larger journals, may nevertheless be of value to our fellow scholars.

The papers in this first volume emerge from a field methods sequence taught at Indiana University during Spring and Fall 2018.¹ Our language of focus was Laiholh, also known as Hakha Chin or Hakha Lai, and we worked with three native speakers over the course of these two semesters: Peng Hlei Thang, Thomas Thawngza, and Zai Sung. Peng, Thomas, and Zai were generous with their time and knowledge; none of the work in this volume would exist without them (though as always, authors take sole responsibility for any mistakes or errors).

While Hakha Chin is mainly spoken in the Chin Hills of western Burma/Myanmar, migration out of Burma/Myanmar in recent decades has led to the establishment of vibrant refugee communities in the United States and beyond. Our field methods class focused on Hakha Chin because it is spoken by 10,000 or more people right here in Indiana. Indiana is currently home to >25,000 Burmese refugees, with >19,000 people—mainly from Chin State—centralized in and around Indianapolis. An estimated 20 or more Chin languages are spoken robustly in Indianapolis, and we are working to build a community of collaboration with a diverse assortment of stakeholders: IU linguists and computer

¹ A number of Indiana University (IU) entities have supported not only the field methods class itself but also several of the research projects springing from it. In particular, we are grateful for the support we have received from IU's Department of Linguistics, Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, College of Arts and Sciences Ostrom Grants Program, Hutton Honors College, and the Social Science Research Commons.

scientists who seek to do research and be of service, graduate and undergraduate students who will become future scholars, and community members from diverse backgrounds and with diverse knowledge, interests, and needs. The publication of this volume contributes to the endeavors of all of these group members, and to our burgeoning community of collaboration.

The papers included herein are a small sampling of the work that began in Spring 2018, work which will be presented at future conferences, be expanded for other publications, and serve as the basis for future dissertations. Since much of the research is still ongoing, in a sense this volume provides a sneak peek at things yet to come. Topics touched on range from the phonetic to the syntactic to the descriptive.

Thank you for picking up this volume and showing interest. We hope the contents are of interest and we look forward to future conversations.

If you have work that might be a good fit for this journal, you can find us at <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/iwpsalc>.

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