

NISHITA GRACE ISAAC

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EDUCATION

Ph.D.,

Linguistics, Georgetown University

2021-2026 **Dissertation:** *Navigating Tensions and Conflicts in Search of Harmony: Teacher Ideologies between Colonial Legacies and Indigenous Futures in Tribal India*

My doctoral research explored how teachers working in rural Indigenous communities navigate the challenges of supporting students' cultural and linguistic identities and tribal heritage while meeting state curriculum expectations. I used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis to analyze interviews and fieldnotes.

M.S.,

Linguistics, Georgetown University

2021-2024 **Thesis:** *Impact of Covid-19 in Rural Vernacular-Medium Tribal Schools in India: Challenges, Responses, and Teachers' Resilience*

Selected coursework: Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism, Decolonizing Linguistics Language Policy, Research Methodology, Semantics and Pragmatics, Syntax, and Phonology.

M.A.

English Language Teaching, The English and Foreign Languages University

2017-2019 **Dissertation:** *Schoolscape, exposure, and language policy: A Study of the early childhood schoolscape of a tribal child*

Selected coursework: Approaches to Language Teaching, Materials & Curriculum Development, Language Assessment & Feedback, Academic writing, and English for Specific Purposes.

BA (Hons.)

English Literature | Minor: Philosophy, The Bhopal School of Social Sciences

2014-2017 **Thesis:** *The Price of Partition: An Analysis of Saadat Hasan Manto's Short Story "Open It"*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Batten University, Department of English, Norfolk

Course: ENG105: The Art of Writing

Assistant Professor

Fall 2026

- Serve as primary instructor for an undergraduate academic English reading and writing course, teaching critical reading, academic writing, research, and argumentation.
- Designed and developed the course syllabus, classroom policies, assessment guidelines, rubrics, and instructional materials to support course learning objectives.
- Planned and delivered lessons, developed worksheets and presentations, and provided detailed written and one-on-one feedback to support students' writing development and revision.
- Manage course operations, including attendance, grading, office hours, and student communication through Blackboard, while establishing clear guidelines for responsible AI use in academic work.

Georgetown University, Department of Linguistics, Washington, DC

Course: Language and Social Justice

Teaching Associate
Fall 2023

- Adapted and expanded an existing university curriculum for an undergraduate course, developing learner-centered modules, incorporating authentic materials, and learning activities.
- Used multimodal instructional strategies, incorporating readings, videos, visual media, guided discussion, collaborative group activities and guest speakers to increase student engagement.
- Designed flexible formative and summative assessments and provided individualized formative feedback to support student-led inquiry into socio-lingual issues
- Managed course delivery through Canvas LMS, including assignments, discussion boards, grading, course records, and communication across synchronous and asynchronous learning environments.

Georgetown University, Department of Linguistics, Washington, DC

Course: Language and Social Justice

Teaching assistant
Fall 2022; Fall 2021

- Supported undergraduate instruction under Prof. Lourdes Ortega by facilitating student learning, course implementation, and classroom engagement.
- Mentored students through regular office hours and individualized academic support, helping them navigate course requirements, complete assignments, and remain on track throughout the semester.
- Guided undergraduate research projects through formative inquiry-based feedback that supported student agency, critical reflection, and evidence-based argumentation.
- Led selected class sessions and facilitated discussions on topics including multilingual societies and linguistic injustice in educational contexts.
- Evaluated student work and assisted with course administration, including attendance tracking, assignment coordination, make-up assessments, and student communications through Canvas LMS.

The Silver Oaks International School, Hyderabad, India

Course: English Language

High School Teacher
June – July 2019

- Designed and delivered Grade 9 English instruction, developing standards-aligned lessons and materials targeting grammar, vocabulary, and integrated language skills across varied proficiency levels.
- Developed and facilitated interactive learning activities to strengthen reading and writing development among English language learners in academic contexts.
- Designed and refined assessments, worksheets, and skill-based learning tasks, using student performance data to improve instructional effectiveness and learner engagement.
- Employed translanguaging and scaffolded instruction to support language production, making assessment criteria explicit and guiding students in the development of academic writing skills.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Georgetown University, Department of Linguistics, Washington, DC
Initiative for Multilingual Studies | Principal Investigator: Hina Ashraf

Research Assistant
Fall 2022-Present

- Contributed to a federally funded K–5 Urdu–English DLI project focused on biliteracy development in a non-Roman, right-to-left language among immigrant multilingual learners in the US.
- Developed and iteratively refined a K–5 Urdu curriculum framework informed by Science of Reading principles, cross-national curriculum frameworks, teacher feedback, learner data, and program needs.
- Designed structured skill progressions aligned with NC CCSS, WIDA, and ACTFL standards to support instruction, assessment, and learner growth across grade levels.
- Designed and administered English and Urdu language assessments, including oral narrative tasks for K–5 learners, to evaluate curriculum effectiveness and generate standardized assessment resources for an LCT.
- Managed and analyzed longitudinal oral and written language datasets using mixed methods to examine biliteracy development and learner outcomes over one academic year.
- Supported research design, grant development, and methodological planning while overseeing IRB applications, protocol modifications, compliance documentation, and communication with review boards.

Georgetown University, Department of Linguistics, Washington, DC
Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center | Supervisor: Meg Monte

Research Assistant
January-August 2023

- Developed interview, questionnaire, and classroom observation protocols to gauge assessment-based needs analysis of educators teaching Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) in the US context.
- Analyzed classroom observations, interviews, and focus groups to identify instructional challenges and inform assessment supports and professional learning priorities.
- Co-designed and facilitated professional learning workshops for K–5 Urdu-English dual language educators, creating instructional resources that supported standards-based lesson planning and assessment.
- Developed ACTFL-aligned proficiency benchmarks and teacher-facing can-do statements to support learning-goal articulation, instructional alignment, and learner progress monitoring.

New Education Group - Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education (NEG - FIRE)
Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Volunteer Cooperating researcher
May 2022- July 2023

- Documented and critically analyzed the NGO's Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education intervention across five tribal districts, assessing its design, implementation, and impact on literacy outcomes.
- Evaluated K–2 literacy assessment tools used in multilingual classrooms, reviewing their alignment with theories of language development and early literacy acquisition and program objectives.
- Documented and analyzed collaboration among tribal community members, educators, and linguists using discourse analysis to inform community-inclusive approaches to multilingual material development.
- Investigated challenges in developing instructional materials for oral languages, applying linguistic analysis to issues of orthographic representation, standardization, dialectical variations, and curriculum alignment.
- Led project to gather teacher feedback, identifying gaps between instructional supports and curriculum implementation demands and classroom needs, providing insights for targeted professional development.

- Translated, adapted, and piloted the Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives (MAIN, 2012) from English to Hindi to assess oral language development among multilingual learners.
- Developed and piloted narrative-based reasoning tasks to examine multilingual children's linguistic performance across increasing levels of reasoning demand (non-reasoning, causal, and intentional).
- Co-developed language assessment tasks targeting phonological, phonemic, and semantic awareness in Hindi–English bilingual learners, drawing on frameworks from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and Bilingual Verbal Ability Tests (BVAT).
- Applied theories of bilingualism, language development, and psycholinguistics to the design and evaluation of multilingual assessment tasks.
- Supported a research project investigating literacy engagement and task performance among multilingual tribal learners through field-based data collection.

APPLIED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

24/7 Teach

Instructional Designer and Curriculum Developer **April 2026- Present**

- Designed an AI-supported professional learning framework and built Prepdeck, an AI co-pilot that helps educators develop AI literacy and integrate AI into instructional and administrative workflows.
- Designed safety guardrails and human-in-the-loop checkpoints to keep educator judgment central to AI-assisted decisions involving student data and instruction.
- Developed a rigorous AI evaluation methodology (Lattice) to standardize how we measure prompt and response quality, ensuring AI tools produce reliable, pedagogically sound results.
- Led QA reviews of asynchronous AI literacy courses, evaluating activities, assessments, and learner pathways to promote AI as a learning support rather than a substitute for learning.
- Developed a client-facing multimedia course demonstration, creating scripts, visuals, and narrated content to communicate course goals, features, and educational relevance to prospective stakeholders.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND PRESENTATION

Publication

Ashraf, H., **Isaac, N.G.** & Ortega, L. (In press). Building dual language bilingual education without a roadmap. *Language and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2026.2683521>.

Paper Presentations

Isaac, N. G. (2026, March). *Sacred tongues and secular spaces: Religion as a contested site in tribal teachers' language ideologies*. Paper presented at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.

Isaac, N. G. (2025, March). *Territorial tongues: The nexus of language, land, and learning in rural India*. Paper presented at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Annual Conference, Denver, CO.

Ashraf, H., & **Isaac, N. G.** (2025, March). *Heart of heritage: Teachers' beliefs about biliteracy goals in an Urdu dual language bilingual education program*. Paper presented in the colloquium *Dual language bilingual education in non-dominant partner languages: Expanding the research base* at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Annual Conference, Denver, CO.

- Ashraf, H., Ortega, L., & **Isaac, N. G.** (2024, October). *Equity in dual language immersion for LCTLs: Bridging gaps through collaboration*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Immersion and Dual Language Education, Salt Lake City, UT.
- Isaac, N. G. (2024, March). *Theorizing from and with praxis: Implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education in Indian tribal schools*. Paper presented at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Annual Conference, Houston, TX.
- Ashraf, H., & **Isaac, N. G.** (2024, March). *Advancing LCTLs in DLI education: Lessons from an Urdu DLI program in the United States*. Paper presented at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Annual Conference, Houston, TX.
- Isaac, N. G. (2023, July). *Enabling tribal agency and voices: Creating bilingual books for marginalized communities through collaborative methodologies*. Paper presented in the symposium *Fostering participatory action research methods in applied linguistics* at the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) World Congress, Lyon, France (presented online).
- Isaac, N. G. (2023, March). *Developing multilingual books to support mother tongue multilingual education for Indian tribal children*. Poster presented at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Annual Conference, Portland, OR.
- Isaac, N. G. (2022, December). *Enabling tribal agency and voices: Creating bilingual books for marginalized communities through collaborative methodologies*. Paper presented at the INPART Summer School, Department of African Studies and Linguistics, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.
- Isaac, N. G. (2022, May). *"It's not good for us": Teachers responding to online education during COVID-19 in rural and tribal India*. Poster presented in the HaBilNet2 Colloquium *Supporting well-being as it relates to growing up and living in a language contact setting*, Harmonious Bilingualism Network (HaBilNet), Frankfurt, Germany.
- Isaac, N. G. (2022, March). *Going virtual during COVID-19 in rural vernacular-medium schools in India: A study of teacher resilience*. Paper presented at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Isaac, N. G. (2020, March). *A tribal child's schoolscape: From politics to pedagogy*. Paper presented at the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics (GURT 2020), presented virtually.

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS AND COMPETITIVE FUNDING

- **HaBilNet Research Grant**, \$11,000, Harmonious Bilingualism Network (HaBilNet), 2024–2025.
- **INTPART Scholarship**, International Partnerships for Excellent Education and Research (INTPART), University of Cape Town. Competitive award covering travel, accommodation, and participation in the INTPART Summer School on multilingualism and language development, Cape Town, South Africa, 2022.
- **HaBilNet Colloquium Scholarship**, supporting participation in the invitation-only HaBilNet Colloquium on bilingualism and language development, Frankfurt, Germany, 2022.
- **Initiative for Multilingual Studies Travel Grant**, covering travel costs from the United States to Frankfurt, Germany, 2022.
- **HaBilNet Travel Award**, covering travel costs from India to the United States. Competitive award supporting a presentation at the Georgetown University Round Table (GURT 2020), Washington, DC, 2020.
- **Graduate School Merit-Based Financial Aid**, Georgetown University, 2021–2025.
- **Conference Travel Grants**, Graduate Association of Student Affairs (GASA), Georgetown University, and Department of Linguistics, Georgetown University, 2021–2025.

- **Sponsored Participation**, GIAN Course on language policy, linguistic human rights, language imperialism, linguistic genocide in education, and language ecology, taught by Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas

AREAS OF TEACHING EXPERTISE

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| ▪ English Composition and Academic Writing | ▪ Qualitative Research Methodology |
| ▪ Developmental and Corequisite English | ▪ Language and Literacy Development |
| ▪ Business and Professional Communication | ▪ Language Assessment and Testing |
| ▪ Language and Social Justice | ▪ Multilingualism and Language Education |