



New Indo-Aryan languages are spoken mostly in the Northern part of the South Asian subcontinent, in Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

Almost four out of five Indians and the great majority of people in Pakistan and Bangladesh are mother tongue speakers of New Indo-Aryan. Assami, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Panjabi, Sindhi and many more languages go back to Vedic Sanskrit, which is preserved in an unique early text corpus of the Indo-European language family, the Rigveda.

The starting point of New Indo-Aryan languages and literatures is commonly set at about 1000 AD. The most important of these languages, at least in a political sense and in terms of numbers of first and second language speakers, is Hindi, which not only one of 22 official "national languages", but also the constitutional "link language of the Indian Union".

Hindi is rich in traditional and modern literature. Modern indology/Modern South Asian Studies in Uppsala focuses on contemporary Hindi as language of the media and fine literature as well as medieval Hindi religious texts reflecting the multicultural sources of South Asian society and religion. Hindi and Urdu are grammatically almost identical, but vary in script and vocabulary to a large extent.



Braj, Avadhi, several forms of Rajasthani and other tongues are usually regarded as Hindi dialects, and just like Khari Boli, the basis of Modern Standard Hindi, have an old tradition of literary writing.



From the early 19th century onwards, creative writing in South Asia has gone through significant changes related to the impact of and confrontation with Western forms of narrativity. Modern indology in Uppsala tries to understand and explain changing patterns of literary reflexivity and identity constructions in the context of colonial and postcolonial knowledge discourses. It actively contributes to recent efforts to strengthen the interdisciplinary South Asia Forum at Uppsala University, the collaboration with academic partners at several Indian universities, the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) and the European Association of South Asian Studies (EASAS).



Heinz Werner Wessler is working on contemporary Dalit literature in Hindi. The former "untouchables" of India have started to utter the Dalit voice in several Indian languages including Hindi in recent decades and to discover genuine Dalit perspectives on the history of cultural and literary history.

Several translations and articles have already been published. A monographic publication is planned for 2012. At the same time, the edition of a volume with about 10 research papers is planned in collaboration with Eddy Rodriguez (University of Mumbai) on "Dalit voices beyond victimization".



The late William Smith (1942-2009), Professor of South Asian Literatures and Cultures in Uppsala 2004-2009 had a research focus on the Ramayana traditions in New Indo-Aryan Languages in Eastern India. His latest research during 2007-2009, however, was mainly concerned with Mahabharata traditions in Bengal and adjacent regions. Unfortunately, his untimely death prevented him from getting the book published himself. A posthumous publication is planned in collaboration with Mirja Juntunen.



Tilak Raj Chopra and Heinz Werner Wessler are working on a project on Sikh literature in Old Panjabi and Braj. A selection from the holy scriptures of the Sikhs in German translation with extensive commentary will be published soon ("Verlag der Weltreligionen").



Alessandra Consolaro (University of Turin, Italy) was at our institute as a visiting scholar in 2010. Since then, she has been working on a project on the younger generation of authors in contemporary Hindi short story writing. Together with Heinz Werner Wessler, she is preparing a special section of the journal *Orientalia Suecana* issue of 2011 on "Dissent, opposition and minority in contemporary literature and film from South Asia and the South Asian Diaspora", going back to a panel during the 21. European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies in Bonn (Germany) in July 2010.

