Mission Statement

CeLCAR is dedicated to promoting the teaching and learning of the languages and cultures of Central Asia through the development of language learning materials (textbooks, workbooks, and multimedia resources), teacher training, distance language courses, and intensive language summer institutes. The less commonly taught languages currently being focused on at CeLCAR are Dari, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mongolian, Pashto, Tajiki, Turkmen, Uyghur, and Uzbek.

Upcoming Events

• Turkish Alphabet App
  As part of our plan to offer interactive mobile learning apps in all of the high priority languages, CeLCAR is currently developing a Turkish Alphabet app to join our Dari, Pashto, and Uyghur apps.

• ACTFL’s 2013 Annual Convention and World Language Expo
  The CeLCAR director, along with two staff members will travel to Orlando, FL to exhibit our materials, network with other LRCs and language professionals, and learn more about new research and teaching methods in the conference presentations and workshops.

• Kazakh and Turkmen Elementary Textbooks
  Keep your eyes peeled in the coming months as we complete three new language textbooks: Elementary Kazakh, Elementary Turkmen, and Intermediate Uzbek. All three of these textbooks have been piloted in the draft forms and are quickly working their way toward completion and publication.

• Uyghur and Dari Grammar Reference Books
  In addition to our instructional materials, CeLCAR is currently developing a new series of Grammar Reference books (beginning with Uyghur and Dari) to join our already published Tajiki Grammar Reference Handbook. Focusing on the grammar and syntax of Central Asian languages, these books will be valuable resources for language learners and linguists alike.

• Advanced Dari, Pashto, and Uyghur apps.
  As part of our plan to offer interactive mobile learning apps in all of the high priority languages, CeLCAR is currently developing a Turkish Alphabet app to join our Dari, Pashto, and Uyghur apps.

Director’s Note

At present, CeLCAR’s major activity is developing language teaching and learning materials. CeLCAR has already developed textbooks for Introductory Pashto, Tajiki, Uzbek, and Uyghur. Having gone through an intensive peer review process by independent experts in the field of second language teaching, these have already been published by Georgetown University Press. We are currently in the process of developing materials for Introductory Dari, Kazakh, and Turkmen, as well as Intermediate and Advanced Dari, Pashto, Uyghur, and Uzbek, many of which are currently available in draft status from CeLCAR, and some have already been submitted to leading publishing houses and are waiting for peer review. Our multimedia materials, as well as our smart phone apps, provide learners of these languages additional authentic input in the target language.

CeLCAR at Summer Language Institute at IU

Indiana University boasts one of the world’s top summer language institutes featuring many less commonly taught languages from around the world. These are languages that most Americans have never even heard of and most are not taught at any other university in the United States.

Every summer, students from around the country come to IU to participate in the Summer Workshop in Slavic, East European and Central Asian Languages (SWSEEL). Using language materials developed at CeLCAR, students studying Central Asian languages are often able to achieve high levels of proficiency in a surprisingly short amount of time.

For example, upon the completion of the Intermediate Dari course, many students perform at a proficiency level of 2 or 2+ according to the ILR scale (Interagency Language Roundtable). Students gain these high levels of proficiency through a combination of solid language learning materials (such as CeLCAR’s textbooks and workbooks), authentic classroom activities (such as role-plays, listening to local Central Asian news online, and chatting with native speakers via Skype), workshop sponsored extracurricular activities (such as weekly coffee hour chats with native speakers), and top-notch language instructors.

Incorporating lots of authentic and communicative activities into the curriculum not only engages the students in a fun way and accesses their different learning styles, but it also gives exposure to various dialects and important cultural customs. SWSEEL’s 2013 Introductory Dari instructor Homaira Azim reports, “Many words in Dari have spoken and written forms that vary dramatically. We start teaching about these differences very early, so that the students begin to understand these basic distinctions. It helps that students begin writing in Dari script right away.” And Rahman Arman, an Intermediate Dari instructor for SWSEEL and a Dari materials developer for CeLCAR, described a mealtime role-play, where a student acting as the host encourages his dinner guests (his classmates) to eat more, emphasizing a cultural norm important in Afghanistan and many other Central Asia countries.

Furthermore, Gulnisa Nazarov, Intermediate Uyghur instructor and Uyghur materials developer, cites that in addition to CeLCAR’s published Uyghur language materials, SWSEEL students can find lots of online language learning resources on CeLCAR’s website.
An essential part of CeLCAR’s professional development is to attend language and linguistic conferences for networking with colleagues, learning about new research and innovative methods in language teaching, and presenting our work and developments in the field. This past Spring and Summer, CeLCAR faculty attended various linguistic, language education, and technology conferences. The following are some of the highlights.

In April 2013, CeLCAR Director Dr. Öner Özçelik presented at the Generative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition (GASLA) in Gainesville, FL. His talk “L2 Acquisition of Stress: The Case of Turkish” discussed his research findings on experiments testing his hypothesis on the L2 acquisition of stress/prominence in a footless language (Turkish) when the L1 is footed (English) or unfooted (French).

Also in April 2013, CeLCAR’s Technology Specialist Sukhroob Karimov attended the National Council of Less Commonly Taught and Critical Languages (ConCALL) to be held CeLCAR in the exhibitor’s hall showcasing our information and educational materials.

In May 2013, Karimov presented CeLCAR’s program to develop an Intensive Language Instruction (ILI) course for the Summer Language Institute, which was awarded a $5,000 Innovative Workshops grant from the National Endowment for the Arts & Humanities Institute. The $3,000 awarded will be used to fund the travel and accommodation costs for guest speakers at the first annual Conference on Central Asian Language and Linguistics (ConCALL) to be established by CeLCAR in the 2013-2014 school year.

Grants
Summary of CeLCAR’s most recently awarded grants.

Because CeLCAR is a non-profit, grant-funded Language Resource Center, we depend on funding from outside sources to keep our operations going and continue developing new projects. Our three primary sources of funding are the US Department of Education, Indiana University’s College of Arts and Sciences, and the National Security Education Program. In addition, we regularly apply for other sources of funding to supplement our main funding sources.

In December 2012, CeLCAR’s Director Dr. Öner Özçelik was awarded a $5,000 Innovative Workshops grant from the Mellon Innovative International Research and Teaching (MIIRT) program to develop an Intensive Workshop on Distance Teaching and Learning for Less Commonly Taught and Critical Languages.

Additionally, in April 2013, Dr. Özçelik applied for and received a conference grant from Indiana University’s College Arts & Humanities Institute. The $3,000 awarded will be used to fund the travel and accommodation costs for guest speakers at the first annual Conference on Central Asian Language and Linguistics (ConCALL) to be established by CeLCAR in the 2013-2014 school year.

Pedagogy Point: This Issue’s Q&A

Q: I always hear about using authentic text in language teaching, but I’m afraid age-appropriate authentic texts are too advanced for my beginning adult learners. What is the best way to use authentic texts in my language teaching materials?

A: CeLCAR’s materials subscribe to the communicative approach to language teaching, also known as communicative language teaching (CLT), and one of the five features of CLT is using authentic texts. Currently there exist two schools of thought for incorporating authentic texts into the curriculum. First, use authentic materials, but modify them as necessary to make them attainable for your learners. For example, you can modify the text by shortening the larger texts into smaller more manageable pieces. Or you can add pre-reading/pre-listening activities or even glossaries to help supplement the text. The second school of thought says to use unmodified authentic materials, but vary the tasks and activities to differentiate for learner levels. Here at CeLCAR, we do not advocate one school of thought over the other. Our developers use a combination of both of these methods for developing our language learning materials.