

**The University of Arizona Critical Languages Series for Kazakh and Turkish**  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

For the past ten years the University of Arizona Critical Languages Program (UACLP) has been publishing multimedia courseware for less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), including Kazakh and Turkish. Our website at <http://clp.arizona.edu/cls> contains detailed descriptions of our materials which are available through the University of Arizona Press. This article discusses pedagogical and technological principles underlying the Kazakh and Turkish Critical Languages Series (CLS), implications for classroom use, and future prospects for application in web-based learning. CLS emphasizes textual, aural and visual elements that are integrated to accommodate different learner styles in classroom and self-directed settings.

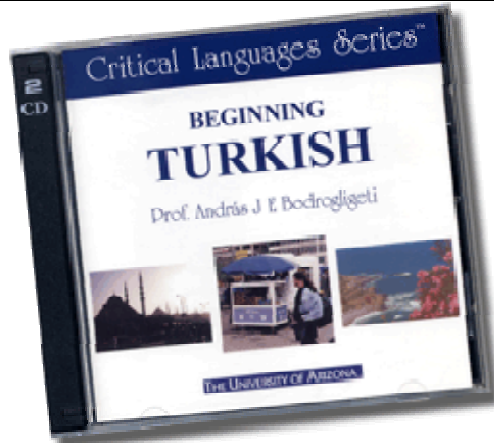
Kazakh and Turkish CLS courseware offers authentic texts on various topics that are engaging and motivating. For example, content-based material in *Intermediate Kazakh* highlights important areas in the modern life and culture of Kazakhstan. *Intermediate Turkish* offers authentic material that is based on the courseware author's personal experiences. CLS courseware is designed for use in three settings: the traditional classroom (as either a primary or ancillary text), a modified self-instructional setting, and in completely self-instructional, non-credit contexts. The modified self-instructional setting is a model offered by the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs (NASILP) in which audio-lingual practice is provided by tutorial sessions during which a native speaker, engaged locally, helps students master recorded materials studied daily on a student's own time.<sup>2</sup> Institutional assessment of student progress is conducted by language examiners from other higher educational institutions who examine students according to NASILP guidelines. UACLP uses this approach to instruct over 300 students enrolled in 15 LCTLs at our facility.

NASILP is comprised of over 122 member institutions. For more than 30 years, NASILP has been promoting the interchange of ideas and expertise for the development and support of self-instructional academic curricula for LCTLs.

## **KAZAKH AND TURKISH COURSEWARE**

UACLP, a long-standing member and headquarters of NASILP, produced and published *Beginning Kazakh*, *Intermediate Kazakh*, *Advanced Kazakh*, *Beginning Turkish*, and *Intermediate Turkish*, as part of its Critical Languages Series. Another courseware project for advanced-level Turkish is currently underway. These multimedia language courses were developed with our free for non-commercial use authoring system, *MaxAuthor*.<sup>3</sup> NASILP is committed to fostering the study of LCTLs with the aid of self-instructional principles developed for an academic setting. *MaxAuthor* fits well with NASILP guidelines that emphasize aural material and gives extra pedagogical dimension by including textual and visual material.

## CRITICAL LANGUAGES SERIES PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS AND REVIEW EXCERPTS



***Beginning Turkish* CD-ROM (2000) by Andras Bodrogligeti**  
Reviewed in CALICO Journal by Vehbi Türel:

“*Beginning Turkish* is interactive multimedia language software for beginner Turkish learners of 12 years of age and older who want to develop and practice their Turkish language skills by viewing video/ listening to audio sequences and completing a variety of relevant tasks. The sequences are spoken mainly by two natives (i.e. a male and a female speaker) at the 'speed and intonation of normal conversational speech', as advertised...While the topics, such as *greetings*, at the beginning are simple, gradually they become more complex as in the *Turkish culture* and *weather* sections.”

“... not only do all five activity types accommodate a range of learning style preferences, but they also reinforce what users cover in the *video dialogues*, *readings*, and *supplemental dialogues*: pronunciation, vocabulary, expressions, structures, culture, and grammar.”<sup>4</sup>

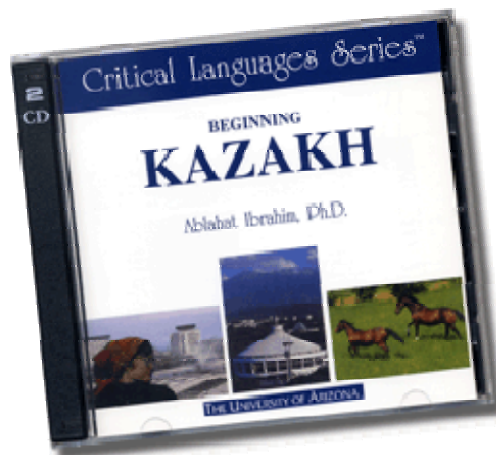


***Intermediate Turkish DVD-ROM (2005) by Jessica Tiregol***

Reviewed in CALICO Journal by Yesim Kesli:

“This *Intermediate Turkish DVD-ROM* is divided into 14 units which contain in total twenty lessons ... There are both English and Turkish audio. Each lesson has a dozen or so vocabulary words, which users can practice in a fill-in-the-blanks exercise as well as ten multiple-choice comprehension questions. The main text of each unit has an average of eight dictation sentence exercises and pronunciation practice with record and playback capabilities for learners.”

“The *Intermediate Turkish DVD-ROM* is a very effective tool for the teaching and learning of Turkish.”<sup>5</sup>



***Beginning Kazakh CD-ROM (2000) by Ablahat Ibrahim***

Reviewed in CALICO Journal by Ken Petersen:

“*Beginning Kazakh*, developed as part of the University of Arizona Critical Languages Series, is a 2-disk CD-ROM package that offers an extensive collection of beginner-level materials. Each CD contains 10 thematically-based lessons that follow a connected storyline. The story follows an American student, John, through his days as a visitor to Kazakhstan. Each lesson begins with a video dialogue (25 in all) that includes a transcript with audio support (10,000 audio recordings total) and additional reading. This is followed by five sets of activities (flashcards, multiple choice, fill in the blank, dictation and pronunciation). The activities are extensive and they reinforce the vocabulary and structures covered in the dialogues and readings.”<sup>6</sup>



***Intermediate Kazakh DVD-ROM (2005) by Akmaral Mukanova***  
**from the Author's Introduction:**

“The *Intermediate Kazakh* DVD-ROM is a course designed to help you expand your active knowledge of the Kazakh language and culture. This e-courseware discusses topics such as education, government and diplomacy, natural resources, business and agriculture, and culture. The lessons are designed in these specific areas to facilitate learning for a real-life need. However, whatever the content focus of the units may be, they present vocabulary and grammatical material for those learners who are looking for general language skills.”<sup>7</sup>



***Advanced Kazakh DVD-ROM (2005) by Akmaral Mukanova***  
**from the Author's Introduction:**

“*Advanced Kazakh* consists of two parts. Units 1-3 discuss topics such as kinship, livestock and cultural metaphors. Units 4 and 5 offer a challenging opportunity to learn from naturally occurring unscripted

interviews. *Advanced Kazakh* includes 30 lessons. Each lesson consists of a dialogue and/or text, footnotes with vocabulary, grammar and cultural notes, and several types of exercises.”<sup>8</sup>

## **ACCOMODATING VARIOUS LEARNING STYLES**

With NASILP’s emphasis on aural material and *MaxAuthor’s* added textual dimension, CLS accommodates different learning styles in an innovative and integrative way. For courseware demonstrations, please see our website. *Intermediate Turkish* is “suitable for field-dependent learners, especially those most comfortable with deductive teaching approaches, i.e. reinforcement of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. However, the multimedia resources of the program make it very appealing for audio-visual learners.”<sup>9</sup> Not only do textual materials, and aural and visual elements “provide for these different learning affinities, it integrates them together: text corresponds to audio and video. Text and audio are directly combined in exercises like *Pronunciation*, *Listening Dictation*, and *Audio Flashcards*.”<sup>10</sup> In his CALICO review, Peterson finds Pronunciation exercise to be the most effective:

A sentence appears and the students can listen to it repeatedly-- either as a complete sentence or word-by-word. Once comfortable with the sentence at hand, the learner clicks 'Record' and repeats after the speaker. The words are first modeled one at a time with pauses for student input, and then repeated in the form of a complete sentence. Users are then given the opportunity to listen to their own pronunciation and compare it with that of the native speaker.<sup>11</sup>

UACL P conducted an anonymous survey among UA students enrolled in the beginning Turkish course in the 2000-2001 academic year<sup>12</sup>. Notable findings resulting from the questionnaire indicate that Pronunciation and Audio Flashcards helped them improve their speaking and comprehension skills. Video was also noted to be useful to meet linguistic objectives. In his review of *Beginning Turkish*, Türel states that “While accommodating a range of learning style preferences encourages and motivates learners, reinforcement activities can result in language learning and acquisition, because repetition (practice) is one of the cognitive strategies most frequently used by learners (O'Malley et al. (1989:431-2), a strategy which helps comprehension (Parkin et al 1988:77-86) and comprehension results in acquisition (Carroll 1977:500, Krashen 1982:21).”<sup>13</sup> While a wide range of elements and activities encourages learners with various learning styles, appropriate content can motivate them.

## **INTEGRATING CONTENT**

Accessibility and usability of our materials at an appropriate level of proficiency is reviewed at UACL P in a rigorous multi-year, pre-publication review and refinement process by qualified internal and external experts. Courseware is classroom tested at UACL P and other institutions. *Intermediate Kazakh* is designed with content-based material in the areas of education, government, diplomacy, natural resources, business, agriculture, and culture that significantly enhance general language skills.<sup>14</sup> The importance of these areas to the life and culture of newly independent Kazakhstan and the

revival of Kazakh in these areas make these topics timely and a “relative novelty to the widest variety of students.”<sup>15</sup>

*Intermediate Turkish*, on the other hand, allows a student who has just completed the beginning level “to communicate relative to his/her immediate surroundings and daily/routine activities” and to be “exposed to environments slightly beyond the quotidian but still concentrate on the concrete rather than the conceptual or abstract” reserving “presentation of abstract issues or concepts... for the advanced students.”<sup>16</sup>

## **AUTHENTICITY OF MATERIALS**

One of the major characteristic features of Kazakh and Turkish CLS is the extensive, but not exclusive, use of authentic materials. It is also essential that authentic material correspond to an appropriate level of linguistic proficiency. “In such a case, the important issue is not so much what those texts *are*, but what the teacher *does* with them.”<sup>17</sup> During our production of *Intermediate Kazakh*, we interviewed high school teachers and agriculture specialists from Kazakhstan who were on an exchange program in Tucson, Arizona. Initially, this authentic video recording was planned to be in *Intermediate Kazakh*, as it covered relevant topics such as education and agriculture in Kazakhstan. However, the unscripted content and spontaneous nature of the interviews yielded a truly authentic, yet very difficult material for intermediate level. The recorded interviews were then promoted to *Advanced Kazakh*. After exposure to the topics of education and agriculture in *Intermediate Kazakh*, the learner can build on his or her knowledge of the subject matter in *Advanced Kazakh*. Thus, the pedagogical principle emphasizing the importance of the learner’s previous experience and existing knowledge of the subject matter is applied in these CLS. This is again consistent with NASILP guidelines that emphasize authenticity of context and native speaker recordings of all materials presented in the text for a given course.

Authentic material is most motivating when the content itself is set in a natural context. Personal experiences are the best illustrations of linguistic subtleties and nuances in natural cultural context. *Intermediate Turkish* encompasses general topics and themes that are based on the author’s personal experiences in Turkey. Jessica Tiregol, the author of *Intermediate Turkish*, takes full advantage of her expertise in Turkish and American cultures, and uses two characters – a native Turk and his foreigner friend – in a way that “The contrasting perspectives of the two main characters will keep the lessons engaging as various facts about culture or regional particularities will be peppered throughout the dialogues.”<sup>18</sup> This received well-deserved attention in the CALICO review: “Turkish social and cultural aspects are authentically represented in the content throughout realistic dialogues, with real-life characters, especially in the video segments. In videos urban and modern aspects of Turkish society are represented.”<sup>19</sup>

## **A LEARNER NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Lack of quality resources, insufficient L2 research, and non-existent national standards for teaching Kazakh encouraged us to conduct a needs assessment survey in order to design and develop learner-centered courseware for the advanced level. We conducted the survey among advanced learners of Kazakh from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to reveal learner wants and needs in advanced-level courseware. Although the survey findings are subjective learner responses, they did reveal some

important elements that most resources were lacking. In addition to cultural metaphors, the respondents expressed the need for learning conversational grammar structures and speech patterns that significantly differ from standard Kazakh and that are overlooked in most, if not all, textbooks. There was also a need to explore authentic short stories, folk tales, and idiomatic phrases. Finally, the need for unscripted dialogs that expose learners to natural conversations was expressed.<sup>20</sup> Because all these needs were reasonable in the context of the Kazakh language, *Advanced Kazakh* was created to address those needs by focusing on suggested content and grammar topics.

## PROSPECTS FOR CLASSROOM USE

CLS courseware is designed and developed for three instructional contexts: the traditional classroom, a modified self-instructional setting, and completely self-instructional, non-credit contexts. In his CALICO software review, Peterson discusses the use of *Beginning Kazakh*:

... these lessons are intended for use by two disparate end-users: the independent learner and the classroom student. Obviously, a student with a good teacher will be able to work with the content on these CDs at a much deeper level and be able to be guided to higher levels of production. For the independent learner, *Beginning Kazakh* offers a considerable amount of exposure to native speech, reinforcement of vocabulary and pronunciation and judgmental guidance and feedback throughout the exercises.<sup>21</sup>

In her review of *Beginning Turkish*, Sandrelli perceives the lessons “roughly corresponding to two semesters of language learning classes.”<sup>22</sup> Several reviewers agreed that with the addition of classroom activities, these CLS materials can be used as a primary textbook in a formal classroom setting:

*Beginning Kazakh*: “Also, the addition of some more open-ended activities would broaden its usefulness for the classroom.”<sup>23</sup>

*Beginning Turkish*: “However, like many other self-study programmes on the market, the software can be used in the classroom if some pre-listening tasks pertinent to each lesson are prepared in advance.”<sup>24</sup>

*Intermediate Turkish*: “On the other hand, if more group work activities are added, it could certainly be used as a primary material for teaching intermediate Turkish.”<sup>25</sup>

*Beginning Turkish*, *Intermediate Turkish*, and *Beginning Kazakh* were used as a primary textbook at UACLP. *Beginning Kazakh* is being used by the Directed Independent Language Study program at Yale University, a NASILP institutional member, and the author, Ablahat Ibrahim, is serving as an Examiner for the program.

As in most language learning textbook publications, in-class activities, assignments and other tasks can be suggested in subsequent materials that support the classroom use of a particular material, such as instructor’s guide, teacher’s resource book, etc. These kinds of materials allow instructors to create lessons, and take true ownership of the learning process. To support this, UACLP has begun creating guides and manuals for instructors. For instance, it has recently made *Instructor’s Guide to Intermediate Kazakh* freely available on the website. The guide provides focused classroom activities ranging from the warm up activity at the beginning of the lesson to the home-assignment that concludes each lesson. The guide also offers ideas for presentations, discussions,

reports, role playing, dialogs, and brainstorming sessions as well as vocabulary and grammar exercises.<sup>26</sup> Similar guides are planned for our other Kazakh and Turkish materials. With these follow-up supplemental materials, Kazakh and Turkish CLS will be even more suitable for use as a primary textbook for classroom instruction. Then it is "... up to the teacher, however, to expand upon the material provided and move the students to a level of production beyond simple modeling."<sup>27</sup>

Reviews, comments from users, and emerging academic research on second language acquisition help to further enhance our courseware. One of the comments about *Beginning Kazakh* was that "Like many computer-based language resources, it limits itself to discrete tasks and activities."<sup>28</sup> Creatively utilizing features of *MaxAuthor* in an integrative way, *Intermediate Kazakh* and *Advanced Kazakh* offer Listening Comprehension in each unit. This activity combines the audio recording and multiple-choice question creation capacity of the *MaxAuthor* software. Folk tales and stories are used as authentic texts in a slightly modified form to contain unit-specific vocabulary and grammar material. Thus, the Listening Comprehension activity concludes each unit and serves as assessment material that works both in a traditional classroom and a self-directed setting.

## CONCLUSION

Classroom and self-directed settings will continue to be target environments for Kazakh and Turkish CLS as UACLP pursues Internet delivery of the materials. Continued technical support for *MaxAuthor* users, constant improvements to the software (version 3.0 is now in development), and utilization of learning management systems will help to further meet the needs of learners in different learning environments.

UACLP is a unique, integrated facility combining an academic publisher, software and courseware developers, linguists, language instructors, students, and the headquarters of a well-established, national LCTL standards organization. The author for the *Intermediate and Advanced Turkish* courseware participates in efforts of ACTFL and AATTL to standardize assessment and instruction for Turkish. As standards for teaching Turkic languages are being developed, we believe our Kazakh and Turkish courseware<sup>29</sup> will continue to help hundreds of students learn these languages and contribute to the dialog about teaching, course design and development standards.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Akmaral Mukan is also known as Akmaral Mukanova.

<sup>2</sup> Dunkel, Brill, and Kohl, *The Impact of Self-Instructional Technology on Language Learning: A View of NASILP*. In *New Technologies and Language Learning: Cases in the Less Commonly Taught Languages*, ed. Carol Anne Spreen. 99. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> MaxAuthor website: <<http://cali.arizona.edu/docs/wmaxa/>>

<sup>4</sup> Vehbi Türel, "Critical Languages Series: *Beginning Turkish*," *CALICO Journal* 20, no. 3 (2003): 592

<sup>5</sup> Yesim Kesli, "Critical Languages Series: *Intermediate Turkish*," *CALICO Journal* 24, no. 3 (2007): 729-736.

<sup>6</sup> Ken Peterson, "Critical Languages Series: *Beginning Kazakh*," *CALICO Journal* 20, no. 2 (2003): 362

<sup>7</sup> Akmaral Mukanova, *Author's Introduction to Intermediate Kazakh*, 2005, <<http://clp.arizona.edu/cls/kaz3/authintro.htm>> (5 September 2007)

<sup>8</sup> Akmaral Mukanova, *Author's Introduction to Advanced Kazakh*, 2005, <<http://clp.arizona.edu/cls/kaz3/authintro.htm>> (5 September 2007)

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- <sup>9</sup> Kesli, 729-736.
- <sup>10</sup> Dunkel, Brill, and Kohl, 101.
- <sup>11</sup> Peterson.
- <sup>12</sup> Dunkel, Brill, and Kohl, 102-107.
- <sup>13</sup> Türel, 592.
- <sup>14</sup> Mukanova, Author's Introduction to *Intermediate Kazakh*.
- <sup>15</sup> Brinton, Snow and Wesche, Content-Based Second Language Instruction (New York: Newbury House Publishers, 1989), 27.
- <sup>16</sup> Jessica Tiregol, Proposal for *Intermediate Turkish* Project, 7 July 2003, UACLP.
- <sup>17</sup> Stephen Stryker and Betty Lou Leaver, Use of Authentic Language and Texts. In *Content-Based Instruction in Foreign Language Education: Models and Methods*, ed. Stephen Stryker and Betty Lou Leaver (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1997), 8.
- <sup>18</sup> Jessica Tiregol, Proposal for *Advanced Turkish* Project, 10 September 2006, UACLP.
- <sup>19</sup> Kesli.
- <sup>20</sup> Mukanova, Author's Introduction to *Advanced Kazakh*.
- <sup>21</sup> Peterson.
- <sup>22</sup> Annalisa Sandrelli, Review of *Beginning Turkish*, University of Hull, December 2000, <<http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/reviews/begturk.htm>> (5 September 2007)
- <sup>23</sup> Peterson.
- <sup>24</sup> Türel.
- <sup>25</sup> Kesli.
- <sup>26</sup> Akmaral Mukanova, Instructor's Guide to *Intermediate Kazakh*, 2007, <<http://clp.arizona.edu/cls/kaz2/instguide.htm>> (5 September 2007)
- <sup>27</sup> Peterson.
- <sup>28</sup> Peterson.
- <sup>29</sup> Kazakh and Turkish CLS were funded by the National Security Education Program (NSEP) and U.S. Department of Education, International Research and Studies Program (DOE, IRS), with additional support from the University of Arizona Vice President for Research and the Dean, College of Humanities, and the National Association for Self-Instructional Language Programs (NASILP.)