From the Director
Dr. Antonia Folarin Schleicher

This year has been a fruitful one, and as always, it is with great pleasure and a sense of fulfillment that I present to you the twenty-first volume of our annual newsletter, Ulimi. I express my gratitude for all the support given to the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) as we work to push African language pedagogy to new heights. For every of our progress and accomplishments this year, we are very fortunate to have such dedicated assistance from scholars all over the United States, and we are very grateful for this. We also greatly appreciate the supports from our home base, the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, Indiana University Bloomington.

This newsletter covers our activities and accomplishments for 2018-2019 academic year. During this period, several new projects have come into fruition at the NALRC. It is always the goal of the center to work with and for the benefit of scholars and to satisfy the growing need for language pedagogy materials. Our list of African language textbooks has grown with the publication of a new title Let's Speak Tigrinya. Another title, Let's Read Bamanankan, is also in production stage will be available in due course. The revised editions of our African language brochures are in the process of being updated. As always, we thank our reviewers who generously donated their time and knowledge to the center for the benefit of African language pedagogy. We hope as the new decade approaches, public interest in African language will continue to grow.

Professional development continues to be one of the major objectives of the NALRC. In 2018-2019, the center continued to better the professional lives of African language instructors. The center organized three workshops including the Summer Institute, the Training of Trainers and STARTALK Professional Development Workshop for LCTL Instructors. I co-facilitated the three workshops with Dr. Brenda Wawire from the Kansas University, Lawrence, with Xuehong He and Jingyi Zhao as instructors in training. Through annual feedback, we are happy to hear how these workshops transformed the professional lives of the African and other less commonly taught language instructors who attended and thus, positively impact the field of African, less commonly taught and foreign language pedagogy in the United States.

NALRC partnered with the African Language Teachers Association (ALTA) and the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) to organize the 2019 NCOLCTL/ALTA Conference. The center was able to support some graduates to attend this important conference. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the NALRC staff and volunteers, and the National, Local and Field Advisory Boards for the time they have invested in making this center a successful one. Your continued support is greatly appreciated, and we are looking forward to working with all of you in the coming year.

Avo, Asante, E se, Jerejef, Maita, Medaasi, Nagode, Shukran, Webale, Zikomo, Thank you.
NALRC Forever Developing

The National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) was established in September 1999 with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to improve the accessibility of African languages in the United States by strengthening the field as a profession and by developing resources for the teaching, learning and researching of African languages. The center’s mission is to serve the entire community of African language educators and learners in the United States by sponsoring a wide range of educational and professional activities designed to improve the accessibility and quality of African language instruction in the United States. It encourages a variety of pedagogical approaches to accommodate learner diversity and advocates the integration of language and culture learning, and the acquisition of fluency in these areas. The NALRC facilitates dialogue among teachers, learners and administrators from a wide variety of cultural and institutional perspectives and promotes the profession of African language teaching.

During this year of funding, the NALRC has continued its activities and services in the following areas:
1. National African Language Program Coordination
3. Research in African Language Pedagogy
4. Professional Development for African Language Educators, Coordinators, and Directors

I. National African Language Program Coordination

I. African Language Program Inventory List
The NALRC updates the African Language Program Inventory on a regular basis so that information about programs in African languages can be available to the many universities and colleges that are planning to start African language programs. This list also helps individual language learners with interests in African languages to identify local institutions offering the language options that interest them. This year, the list was re-evaluated in full to account for the rapidly changing scope of African language programs and will be published on the center’s website in due course. However, as programs grow and change, NALRC welcomes your feedback.

II. African Language Pedagogy Evaluators’ List
The NALRC continues to compile a list of scholars who are willing to serve as consultants for new or existing African language programs. These experienced African language pedagogists support the center’s mission by evaluating existing African language programs and also helping to start new ones. These evaluators and the program developers themselves are provided with access to a book titled *African Language Program Development and Administration: A History and Guidelines for Future Programs*. This NALRC published text is a product of the life-long teaching and coordinating experience of African language pedagogist Prof. Eyamba Bokamba.

III. African Language Coordinators’ Training Programs
The NALRC trains African language coordinators through a variety of workshops. These workshops aim to improve coordinators’ effectiveness in working with a wide variety of African language instructors whose language they may not speak or understand. These workshops teach the coordinators to work with instructors better and to mentor them more successfully. Many of the coordinators have had the opportunity to attend similar workshops conducted by the NALRC at the African Language Teachers Association (ALTA) conferences.

IV. African Language Resource List
The NALRC maintains a list of African language instructors, native speakers and scholars who are interested in working as translators, interpreters and testers for government and non-government agencies. This list is updated regularly as the center receives information about new resources. These resources include former NALRC Summer Institute participants, members of ALTA and individuals who registered at various conferences at which the NALRC had booths.
V. African Language Materials and Workshop List
In order to satisfy the center’s mission to provide the entire community of African language educators with teaching resources, the NALRC assesses the need for materials across the field of African language pedagogy annually. Part of this process includes gathering information about existing materials and workshops for African language instructors. These materials range from textbooks to audio and video tapes, web-based materials and role-play cards. The catalog of existing materials and requests for new materials is critical to the material development and publication process at the NALRC.

2. African Language Material Development and Dissemination
NALRC has placed a high priority on developing and disseminating the African language materials because, in the field of African language teaching, the need for teaching materials is great. Through the tremendous efforts of diverse scholars and African language teachers, NALRC has contributed to the development and dissemination of language teaching materials on African languages ranging from more commonly taught African languages such as Swahili to less-commonly taught African languages like Somali. Since its inception, NALRC has published 20 Let’s Speak Series textbooks, four Let’s Read Series textbooks, two Let’s Communicate Series textbook, eight Learners’ Reference Grammar textbooks, one bilingual dictionary, 29 journals, four companion audio CD-ROMs, and six language flash card multimedia CD-ROMs covering more than 15 languages in total. The NALRC has also completed 90 language brochures.

2018/2019 New Materials

Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages

NALRC Vol 24 (Fall 2018)

NALRC Vol 25 (Spring 2019)

Recently Published:
Let’s Speak Tigrinya

Let’s Speak Tigrinya (2018)
Issayas Tesfamariam
ISBN: 978-1597030304

Coming Soon
Let’s Read Bamanankan

Materials in Progress
The NALRC has been working on new materials with different scholars and African language instructors. The following materials, which are in different stages of production, will soon be available:

- All revised African language brochures
- Let’s Speak Tigrinya audio CD
- Yoruba Learners’ Reference Grammar
- Let’s Read Igbo
- Let’s Speak Sudanese Arabic
- Let’s Speak Acholi
3. Research in African Language Pedagogy

The NALRC enjoys collaborating with scholars who do research on African language pedagogy and other less-commonly taught languages. This includes supporting graduate students attending the NCOLCTL/ALTA conferences and sponsoring pre-conference workshops for them. Additionally, the NALRC has published journals for the African Language Teachers Association (ALTA) and the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) from the research conducted by various instructors of less commonly taught languages including African languages.

4. Professional Development for African Language Educators, Co-ordinators and Directors

The NALRC supports African language educators in the United States by sponsoring a wide variety of educational and professional activities designed to improve the accessibility and quality of African language instruction in the United States. The following activities were conducted by the center during the 2018-2019 cycle:

i. 2019 NALRC Summer Institute
ii. 2019 Training of Trainers
iii. 2019 LCTL StarTalk Professional Development Program

The center also supported the following programs:

i. 2019 National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) Conference
ii. 2019 African Language Teachers Association (ALTA) Conference

The primary goal of the workshop was to provide the participants with real teaching experience that enacts the philosophy of communicative, standards-based, student-centered foreign-language teaching. In line with this goal, the instructors focused on five major topics:

- Backward Curriculum Design
- Proficiency-Based Approach to FL Instruction
- Standards-based Instruction
- Strategies for Providing Comprehensible Input
- Use of Target Language

In the first week of the workshop, the participants were exposed to these five concepts. First, the concept of Backwards Curriculum Design taught the participants that a good curriculum must be designed in a specific order that runs contrary to a common understanding. Learning objectives must be laid out first, followed by methods of evaluation for those objectives. It is after all this that the instructor can begin to assemble a corpus of texts and materials that fits the needs laid out by the previous two items. This led into discussion of the second theme, the proficiency-based approach to foreign language instruction. The learning objectives of a language class should not be grammar-based but should rather be based on general, context-sensitive proficiency levels. Therefore, instead of "students will know X number of words" instructors should use "students will achieve 'novice high' proficiency in listening and reading and 'novice mid' proficiency in speaking and writing". These proficiency levels are laid out in the World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (WRS), an internationally recognized set of standards that lay out in clear, concise language what a language learner will be able to do when they reach a certain level of proficiency in the language. This transitioned into the third objective, using standards-based instruction. During the second step of their backwards curriculum design when they decide how to assess their students it is these WRS descriptions of ability that instructors should look at. You will know when your students have reached a certain level of proficiency when they can do certain things, laid out in the WRS.

Woven throughout this discussion of the role played by the WRS are the final two themes: comprehensible input strategies and a maximal use of the target language. The participants were told that the target language should be used at least 90% of the time in any foreign language classroom.
Many participants found this requirement daunting, but the lessons’ comprehensible input was a great help. By incorporating pictures, film, roleplay, animations, props, and culturally authentic scenarios, the participants learned that it was entirely possible to use the target language 100% of the time and still be perfectly understandable to novice learners.

When it came time for the participants to begin their own microteaching sessions in week two, the sheer amount of what was taught in the previous week was apparent. At first, many struggled to apply and accurately assess the core themes in their teaching sessions. However, after five days where each participant led a new microteaching session every day and had their performance assessed by their peers, the improvements were obvious in everyone. By the end of the workshop every participant was able to use the WRS to design a curriculum, use comprehensible input to convey their intended information and skills to their 'students', and then accurately assess whether or not the students had grasped the concepts—all without ever using anything but the target language.

The institute concluded with an award ceremony on May 24th. Hosted by Dr. Schleicher and Dr. Iman Alramadan, also of Indiana University, Bloomington. The ceremony featured several authentic cultural performances—including dances, songs, and poetry—from the participants. The following people received certificates for their participation in the Summer Institute:

Mahmoud Ali: Kansas University – Arabic
Oluwapelumi Folajimi: University of Hawaii – Yoruba
Sharon Nelson: Navajo Technical University – Dine
Rachel Maina: Lawrence University-Canton – Swahili
Belay Alem: University of Florida-Gainesville – Amharic
Ibrahim Odugbemi: Indiana University, Bloomington – Yoruba
Hilda Pembe: University of Florida-Gainesville – Swahili
Mouhamadou Hoyec: University of Florida-Gainesville – Wolof
Muzi Sibiya: University of Florida-Gainesville – Zulu

2019 Training of Trainers

The Training of Trainers is usually held together with the Summer Institute. This workshop is for foreign language instructors who had previously attended the Summer Institute. It is meant to evaluate how these instructors can effectively put into practice what they learned from the Summer Institute when they attended it.

This year’s workshop brought in participants from four universities, and together they represented Chinese and Swahili languages. The following people received certificates for their participation in the 2019 Training of Trainers:

Jingyi Zhao: Michigan State University – Chinese
Xuehong He: Michigan State University – Chinese
Susan Kavaya: Indiana University, Bloomington – Swahili
Neema Loy: University of Mississippi – Swahili
Jacob Mwita: University of Wisconsin-Madison – Swahili
Teaching Demo Sessions

Participants working together
Cultural performances by participants during the Certificate of Completion Ceremony

Participants reflecting on the 2019 Summer Institute during the Certificate of Completion Ceremony
Reflections from Participants on the 2019 NALRC Summer Workshop

Mahmoud Ali, M.A.
University of Kansas

The NARLC Summer Institute workshop came at a perfect timing in my journey as a teacher of Arabic as a foreign language in the US. I came to the US back in 2015 to pursue an MA in linguistics and by the time I was graduating 2 year later, I decided to pursue a career in teaching Arabic in the US. Now as a second-year student in a PhD program focusing on foreign language education, I feel I am prepared more than ever to take the knowledge and skill set I have gained and apply them in the language classroom. Besides academic training at the graduate level, having a consistent record of professional development workshops such as this institute is necessary, I believe.

Though this was not my first time attending a professional training workshop, this one stood out for a variety of reasons. First of these was the structure of the workshop that allowed for hands-on experience, discussion and reflection. In the first week, we gained knowledge of best practices of foreign language teaching based on research-informed and nationally recognized standards and approaches, such as Backward Design and World-readiness Standards for Foreign Language Learning. This was further cemented with teaching demos by the workshop instructors which were beneficial in seeing those practices in action. During the second week, we did teaching demos as trainees which allowed us not only to apply what we gained in terms of content knowledge as well as strategies for effective teaching; it also provided us the opportunity to reflect on our teaching and get feedback from peers and instructors. Altogether, the workshop was transformative for all of us, putting us on the right track to go back and teach effectively something that has benefits for our students but also for other colleagues who would like to develop the skill set we have by attending this workshop.

Another great feature of this workshop was the people, both trainers and trainees. From the very beginning it felt like we are a family giving the training a friendly vibe. This made sharing knowledge and ideas possible; it was particularly noticeable in how we supported one another during teaching demos and follow-up feedback. Everyone was nice and appreciative of the time and effort put into those demos. I enjoyed being around all of you and I am pleased to get to know each of you.

In short, the NARLC Summer institute was packed with information, hands-on practices and experienced, knowledgeable instructors. It was a wonderful opportunity to rethink the way I am teaching which in turn affects the way my students learn. Anyone attending this workshop will walk away with a lot of knowledge, skills, practical tips to apply immediately to their foreign language instruction context. The institute is great for all of those who would like to get grounded in the practice of teaching foreign languages.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our lead instructor, Dr. Schleicher, for all she has done to make this a success. I am particularly impressed by how passionate, committed and knowledgeable she is when it comes to language teaching and teacher education. Many thanks to Dr. Wawire for her great and inspiring teaching demos as well as feedback and tips on our own. Last but not least, thank you Stella for your part in the instruction and facilitating follow-up discussions. Thanks again for this wonderful training and I look forward to coming back next year!

Oluwapelumi Folajimi
University of Hawaii

I am glad to be a fellow of the NALRC in Summer 2019. The workshop took us through a series of methods of teaching languages - the first week of the workshop was devoted to this. The second week was devoted to Practical Training in which we were advised to practice teaching in which we had acquired in the previous week.

During the first week, we watched our instructors do a series of Teaching Demonstrations. We watched them applying the same teaching theories which they had taught us. Demonstrating what we had seen became less of a problem for us in the second week.

Personally, I started my Teaching Demonstrations poorly. Despite the availability of technological facilities, I was using Maker to draw human figures on the white board. However, after my Teaching Demonstration, I received comments and feedbacks which enlightened me that there was a better way I could have done it. Therefore, I learned to use the available technological facilities to aid my teaching of Yoruba language. I improved, significantly. I used my PowerPoint devices to incorporate virtually all the teaching objectives I had set for myself. I was glad to have been part of the workshop. I look forward to the possibility of attending the workshop, again, next Summer.

Grace Ng’ang’a
University of Kansas

I am glad to report that the 10-day May 2019 NARLC Summer Institute workshop was indeed a life-changing experience in my teaching career. This is because I had never figured out how I would effectively teach a foreign language to a first-time student but by the time I was done with the training, I knew how. This went a long way in equipping me with the necessary skills to teach a summer class this year.
I want to start by thanking the leadership of this workshop: Dr. Antonia Schleicher, Dr. Brenda Wawire, Xuehong He, Jingyi Zhao and Ibrahim Odubeni who tirelessly dedicated and committed themselves to the goal of the workshop from the beginning to the end to ensure that all the participants gained the skills and strategies that go with effective teaching of a foreign language to a first time student. To my co-participants, I want to thank and appreciate each of you for your resilience throughout this training and bringing in amazing teaching experiences. It was extremely stimulating and captivating to learn little bits of different foreign languages from each one of you. All these efforts combined, created a whole new world of effective teaching experiences that saw the goal of this workshop come to a realization- to help all the participants “think through how to make effective teaching principles come alive in a classroom while implementing Backward curriculum design.”

Through the several micro-teaching demos that each participant prepared based on three communication modes, namely: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational, followed by critiques by co-participants, co-instructors and instructors, I internalized teaching skills and strategies for effectiveness in teaching. The workshop also concentrated on Standard-based Instruction, use of target language; proficiency-based approach to first language instruction, strategies for providing comprehensible input and performance-based assessment which altogether led to the success of the program.

Thank you again for the opportunity and it was a pleasure being part of the program.

Mouhamadou Moustapha Hoyeck  
University of Florida

I would like talk about my experience in this program following three steps. First, I think it makes sense to share my feelings before the first day. I have to mention that this was my first time attending a workshop of this kind, so I personally underestimated the program even before starting it. And I think my reasons were logical. My logic was that people go to school and spend many years just to get a degree allowing them to know how to deliver knowledge, how to teach; therefore, before the first day, I was wondering how it would be possible for us (my two colleagues and I) to know how to teach in just two weeks. Part of me was saying just wait and see before making any judgmental ideas. The other part of me was telling me that this is impossible, or if not, it would be so intensive that I would not be able to understand the lessons that were supposed to come out of the program.

The first day came. We started by introducing ourselves after Professor Antonia Schleicher did so. I was impressed when I saw the diversity in the classroom. I saw Yoruba, Chinese, Swahili, Zulu, Amharic, Arabic, and Dine speakers in the classroom. I have to say that I forgot about all that I thought the program was about within the first 10 minutes when Professor Schleicher started introducing herself and the program. I could see her determination, rigor, and her passion all through the way she was talking. She ensured that we were comfortable, and that we knew it was possible to be great language instructors after just 2 weeks.

The first week was all about listening and taking notes. Professor Schleicher and her assistants (Dr. Brenda Wawire, Stella, and Jingyi) gave many presentations on topics such as the backward curriculum design, the standards-based instruction, the use of the target language, the strategies for providing comprehensive input, and the different modes of communication etc. These were all new terms that made me reconsider my qualifications as a language instructor. I thought I was qualified to teach Wolof because it is my native language; however, this program showed me that knowing the language is just as important as knowing how to teach it. During the first week, the Dr. Wawire, Stella, and Jingyi, under the supervision of Professor Schleicher demonstrated that it was possible to teach a language using the target language 100% of the time. They demonstrated that using all three modes of communication. That experience was mind blowing to me because just by attending their 20-minute lessons, I was able to introduce myself in Swahili, in Yoruba (with the Ibrahim’s presentations), and in Chinese. I believe if I attended classes in those three languages for six months, I would be an above-beginning level student in them.

The second week was for us, language instructors, to present what we learned during the first week. We presented different topics using the three modes of communication one at a time. By the second week of the workshop, I felt blessed to be able to attend it; however, at the same time, I felt sorry for the students I taught Wolof before attending the program. Based on how I was teaching, before the program, I can tell that those students learned a couple of Wolof words because I would not use the target language.

I will never thank Professor Schleicher and her team enough. This program changed my way of teaching, and by utilizing the techniques I learned at the workshop, I am now noticing that my students are getting better at the language.

I am encouraging all language instructors to attend this program as it is extremely rewarding.

I would also like to thank my supervisor at the University of Florida, Dr. Charles Bwenge who thought about the need for me to attend the workshop.
Belay Worku Alem  
University of Florida

I enjoyed participating in the 2019 Summer Institute organized by the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC), Indiana University-Bloomington. The training really gave me insights about teaching the language as a second language. Moreover, it gave me wider opportunity to get connected with young African students who are potential leaders and scholars of the continent and the globe as well. The trainers were also really very good. I can rank these people in terms of managing diversity and substance.

I have also critical concerns. We were video-recorded throughout the training and I saw the recordings were used without permission. This is illegal for it violates privacy rights. Second, the training is unnecessarily changed from learning how to teach to learning language. I am open to learning whatever language across the globe. Finally, it is not good to try to exclude people who raise some questions for good academic reasons. I should mention this in an unexplainable manner. The thing is the diversity of opinion should be appreciated.

I hope this better improves your program than my unnecessary diplomatic opinions which I could make.

2019 LCTL STARTALK  
Professional Development Workshop

The 2019 STARTALK Professional Development Workshop for LCTL Instructors was held between July 8th - 26th, 2019 at the Hamilton Lugar School for Global and International Studies (HLGIS) at Indiana University Bloomington. An intensive three-week program, this workshop allows LCTL (less commonly taught language) instructors to participate in professional development that will focus on quality instruction and curriculum design process. It helps instructors to ensure that learners have meaningful and successful learning experiences in their programs.

This year’s workshop brought in participants from six universities, and two STEM schools, one language school and one K-12 school. Together they represented Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, Swahili, and Turkish.

The instructors were Dr. Antonia Schleicher of Indiana University, Bloomington (Program Director and Lead Instructor), Dr. Brenda Wawire of Kansas University, Lawrence (Instructor) and Ms. Xuehong He and Ms. Jingyi Zhao of Michigan State University (Instructors in Training).

The following people received certificates for their participation in the 2019 LCTL STARTALK Professional Workshop:

Betul Acikgoz  
Bergen Arts and Science Charter School  
Turkish

Yunus Ates  
New Springs School—Tampa, FL  
Turkish

Saghar Bozorgi  
University of Texas—Austin  
Farsi

Lucia Chen  
Denver Language School—Denver, CO  
Chinese

Malimi Joram Kazi  
Duquesne University  
Swahili

GuoFeng Ma  
Western Michigan University  
Chinese

Dianess Maganda  
University of Georgia  
Swahili

Ayse Ozcan  
School of Math and Science, Tallahassee, FL  
Turkish

Vedat Ozcan  
School of Math and Science, Tallahassee, FL  
Turkish

Hilda Pembe  
The Open University of Tanzania  
Swahili

Vibha Shetiya  
University of Pittsburgh  
Hindi

Meet the 2019 LCTL STARTALK Professional Development Workshop instructors—L-R: Ms. Xuehong He, Dr. Antonia Schleicher, Dr. Brenda Wawire and Ms. Jingyi Zhao
Reflections from Participants on the 2019 NALRC Summer Workshop

Betul Acikgoz
Bergen Arts and Science Charter School

The workshop trained us how to implement the performance objectives, teach standards-based, use ACTFL guidelines, develop comprehensible input, authentic materials and appropriate assessments. Overall, during the workshop I watched more than 50 demo lessons, and prepared four demo lesson. I think I gained an insight of a well-planned lesson with gradual release of responsibility and with a sound performance objective and assessment based on three communicates modes.

I also would like to write about the gradual release of responsibility in STARTALK. The whole program is like a very well planned lesson. It has stages of “I do, we do, you do together and you do alone”. The ‘I do’ part was primarily the first week that Dr Schleicher and our instructors taught us on methodology, theories and strategies, which made me more competent and confident in developing my instructional materials. ‘We do’ was the part that the instructors and trainers modeled in their demos to show me how to meet the standards. For me, the clinic time was ‘You do together’ and I want to thank our instructors for spending time to advise, check and improve my work. Thanks for that generosity of time and energy Brenda, Stella and Jingyi spent with me. And the last stage of gradual release of responsibility model, ‘you do alone’, was the demos that I prepared. That the program let us do this stage is very critical. I think this makes STARTALK student-centered because we have the opportunity to practice. This program would by no means be complete if it ended earlier.

Not to forget the online program, it was a warming up activity and a good homework to indulge in discussions about the role of grammar and vocabulary, communicative modes, guidelines and standards. I would like to thank Dr Schleicher for this very scholarly released program and for her creating a warm learning environment for us. I also need to mention my friends who contributed a lot with their comments, demos and friendship.

To conclude, I got more competent and confident to prepare my own instructional materials and teaching in communicative mode. STARTALK helped me break the boundaries of using textbook and teaching grammar.
Dainess Maganda  
*University of Georgia*

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the director, Dr. Antonia Schleicher, the lead instructor, Dr. Brenda Wawire and instructors Xuehong (Stella) He and Jingyi Zhao for their invaluable time, teaching, guidance and continual support during our Startalk workshop this summer. I am blessed to have had the opportunity to be a language teacher for many years—both English and Swahili, even more, I have had the privilege of teaching intercultural studies by mainly focusing on culture of a specific group. I therefore came to the STARTALK workshop with various approaches to teaching language and I can tell you that I am so glad I did because the workshop allowed me to see a different approach to language teaching.

I especially appreciate the language pedagogy model employed by STARTALK because it allows a language teacher to teach language from a wholistic perspective. In other words, this approach allowed me as a teacher to embed culture without undermining the role of language elements such as grammar, vocabulary and syntax in language learning. I came to see how and why teaching with a clear and defined performance objective is key to enabling students learn the target language successful. I benefited greatly from the I-do; We-do, You-do-together and You do alone lesson plan steps. I must admit that these are things I usually do in my classroom even prior to coming to this workshop however, the difference is the critical intentionality of making sure that each step is aligning well and clearly with the performance objective of a lesson. I often talk and at the end of the lesson, students understood what I intended to teach them but what I realized after this workshop was that, some of the lessons’ objectives didn’t really align well with what I actually wanted to accomplish even though I reached my goal. The time to critically think about every aspect of my lesson was so valuable to me because it gave me freedom to be a student of my own teaching.

I love learning and I believe that if you stop learning, you stop living. This workshop was a much-needed time for me to refresh, re-learn, re-adjust, re-cultivate and re-awake many aspects of my teaching. All of these things were possible because of the intentional, structured and organized planning of the workshop organizers and their leadership team who were open with us and kindly gave us the bitter pills we needed to swallow because healing and growth never comes without honest and specific input from those who love to see you grow in an important area of your life, and that is what they did. Furthermore, the input I received from my fellow participants was like a well of learning treasure that was made readily available to me and all I needed to do was open my mind and my heart to receive it. I want to conclude my reflection with a poem:

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The Wonder of Learning: A Rainbow of Love

I know teaching is good but learning is better  
I know teaching is important but learning is essential  
Like a beautiful rainbow that only comes after the rain, teaching becomes better when cultivated through learning  
Like the beautiful colors of the rainbow that shine only after the rain stops, teaching shines in many areas when learning illuminates the teacher in a meaningful way  
I know teaching is life but learning is living because learning is the key to enjoying the beauty in all the colors of the rainbow  
To learn is like sitting to enjoy the colors of the rainbow of the love embedded in every language, every culture and the love that comes with allowing anybody and everybody love you in their own way. The wonder of learning is the wonder of love.

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Vibha Shetiya  
*University of Pittsburgh*

I can truly say this has been an amazing experience, and I would like to thank NALRC for giving me the opportunity to participate in this year’s STARTALK program. Coming from a department that consciously adopts the communicative method of pedagogy, I was familiar with this approach and had tried to educate myself in it through reading texts and articles, and by observing my wonderful peers. But only after hands-on experience here at STARTALK, can I say with confidence that I’m going back to the University of Pittsburgh a different teacher.

Participating in the workshop was a wonderful learning experience. Dr Schleicher and her very competent team of instructors not only helped impart scholastic information in an effective and timely manner, but also taught us how to plan and carry out our own lessons with continual input – a big part of the workshop. Yes, it was intense, but the practical part was extremely valuable, for this is what will help us most in planning our own classes. I had been exposed to Backward Curriculum Design, as well as with OPI Standards, but actually implementing these in our lessons here at STARTALK has tremendously aided in developing more effective teaching strategies.

I am truly grateful to all our instructors, especially Dr. Schleicher for providing us with a wonderful classroom environment which made learning not just valuable and interesting, but more fun. I remember thinking before I came here – “Do we really have to be in Bloomington for two weeks? One week would have been enough.” But now I realize it needed to be two weeks for the program to be as effective.
I would also like to thank my new family – my classmates for their patience throughout the past two weeks. It wouldn’t have been the same without you. I was supposed to be here last year, but I broke my foot. I’m so glad I did! It was your feedback, support and love that made me look forward to being in a long day of class every morning.

What made it doubly special is that having grown up in Zambia, coming here helped me reconnect with my roots, my fellow Africans. I recall telling my husband over the phone that I felt like I was back home in Zambia among my new Tanzanian, Kenyan and Nigerian friends.

A colleague at the University of Pittsburgh had said that this workshop would change my life forever. I now see what he meant. It definitely has – in more ways than one.

Vedat Ozcan  
School of Math and Science - Tallahassee, FL

Thank You for Teaching Us Dr. Schleicher and Our Great Instructors

Two weeks ago, we started LCTL STARTALK Professional Development Program in Indiana University which organized by Dr. Schleicher, bringing teachers together from multiple campuses in the United States to discuss the significant educational STARTALK program. I was especially impressed by the presentations of the Backward Curriculum Design. We discussed together:

1. Goals – Identifying desired results  
2. Assessment – Determining evidence of learning  
3. Implementation – Planning language experience etc.

Now we took all experience from STARTALK program for every student. We must educate all students well with an education which is relevant to these challenges. If we are to succeed in this task, we must all take responsibility to educate all children. Now we can say “Hello” in Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, Swahili and Turkish. That is great for all of us.

In the hope that Dr. Schleicher and great Instructors you did all in your power to do this work, my colleagues and I thank you for your commitment to educating all of us. We are so proud of all you. So grateful for the work we have done together. So thankful for what you have taught us about how to teach the foreign language in the United States. Thank you so much!

Lucia Chen  
Denver Language School

The demo-teaching was a wonderful experience for me. Not only I could have opportunities to put what I learned into practice but I could also get feedback from instructors and fellow teachers about my teaching. I also learned from instructors not answering questions right way, but to provide questions for learners to think and figure out the answer themselves. I love particularly the many “ah-ha” moments and the smiles when I saw very creative activities presented by other teachers.

It was also the demo-teaching that provided an opportunity for me to be a language learner and to be able to wear my students’ shoes. I learned Yoruba, Swahili, Turkish and Farsi during these two weeks. I saw with my own eyes that proficiency-based instruction really worked and understood why it worked. My own struggle of learning language also help me to see more clearly what I should pay attention to and think ahead for my students when I plan a lesson.

Two weeks in Bloomington. Two weeks of experiencing different culture each of us represented. The color and design of the clothing we wore, the smells and looks of the food we cooked, the music and the sound we heard, the laughter and conversation we shared, all of these was woven together into my heart and my memory. Thank you so much Dr. Schleicher, Dr. Wwire, He laoshi and Zhao laoshi; thank you all for your precious time and hard work, I really appreciate it. Thank you, my fellow teachers, thank you for creating this beautiful experience and memory with me.

Pictures of Group Activities from 2019 LCTL STARTALK Professional Workshop

Dr. Brenda Wwire having a conversation with some participants
The conference of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages was held at Hilton Washington Dulles Airport, April 24-26, 2015, under the theme, “The Languages of America in the 21st century.” The conference was organized by the NCOLCTL Secretariat from its offices at Indiana University.

Held in conjunction with the 19th Annual Conference of African Language Teachers Association, this year’s conference brought together language teachers and professionals from as far as China, United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania, while many LCTL professionals from the U.S. also presented on various aspects of less-commonly taught languages. Abstracts from LCTL practitioners at various universities and government departments were accepted while exhibits from publishing and professional concerns were also showcased.

The exhibitors of this year’s conference included The Language Flagship, Center for Language Excellence (CLE), ICA Language Services, IU CIBER (Center for International Business Education and Research), NALRC (National African Languages Resource Center), INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, and SCOLA.

The traditional Pre-Conference Workshop, led by Kirk Belnap (Brigham Young University) and Nicole Mills of Harvard University was held on Thursday, April 23. The subject was, “Self-Efficacy for LCTL Teachers.” Pre-Conference Workshop two was held by Esther Ham of Indiana University, Bloomington and the subject was “Building an Online Language Program 101.”

The next morning, April 24, welcome remarks were delivered by Dr. Jacques C du Plessis, NCOLCTL President and Dr. Adeolu Ademoyo, ALTA President. Then Dr. Richard Brecht of the University of Maryland delivered the keynote presentation entitled “Common Ground Across the ‘Bending the Arc of America’s Languages: The Emergence of LCTLs in America.” The keynote speaker’s presentation was followed by three Colloquium Parallel Sessions on “Multilingualism and its Legal Implications: A New Shibboleth for Asylum Seekers?” ; “Textbook writing for LCTLs in the 21st Century: A case study for a Turkish textbook,” and lastly “Why the Time is NOW for African Language Storybooks for Reading.” delivered and chaired by prominent linguistic scholars in academia.
The third plenary session was led by Dr. Scott McGinnis, a senior Academic Advisor for the Washington Office of the Defense Language Institute (DLI), Dr. Catherine C. Baumann, the director of the University of Chicago Language Center and director of the German language program, and Dr. Danko Šipka, professor of Slavic languages and head of the German, Slavic and Romanian Faculty at Arizona State University.

Dr. McGinnis’s presentation titled “Enabling Final Learning Outcomes in LCTLs: Challenges and Solutions” addressed two aspects of setting and assessing final learning outcomes within the context of the United States Government (USG) in general, and within programs administered through the Washington Office of the Defense Language Institute (DLI-W) in particular. The former provided an overview of “can-do”-based self-assessments for speaking, reading and listening proficiency developed by members of the USG language professional community under the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) in the late 1990s and early 21st century. The latter presented the results of an over decade-long analysis of the DLI-W training matrix used to predict the number of weeks it may take to reach an ILR level based on the category of language.

Dr. Baumann’s presentation titled “Transforming Language Pedagogy across LCTLs” focused on two projects being led by the University of Chicago Language Center. These two projects which were funded respectively by the Mellon Foundation and by an internal funding were meant to transform language pedagogy across LCTLs on Chicago campus and across the Big Ten and Ivy Plus institutions.

Dr. Šipka’s presentation titled “How to Quite Non-Enabling Final Learning Objectives Cold Turkey” examined the opportunities and challenges of the Language Instruction Standardization Initiative at the Arizona State University School of International Letters and Cultures to establish and assess enabling final learning outcomes based on NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-do Statements for all its language courses (with over 8,000 students).

The fourth plenary session was led by Lisa Ritter, the President of the Board of Directors for the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Lisa Ritter’s presentation titled “Lead Powerful Learning” discussed how advocacy could be used to create powerful learning. Ritter pointed out that every language educator is a leader for languages and encouraged them to focus on their arenas of influence and how to guide language learning, support every learner and showcase gains in proficiency. She also enjoined language educators to apply high-leverage teaching strategies to boost learner’s performance and learn from successful examples in guiding learning to make global connections.

The fifth and last plenary session was led by Dr. Bill Rivers, the Executive Director of JNCL-NCLIS. Dr. Rivers’ presentation titled “LCTLs and Language Activism in Washington, 2019 Edition” discussed current legislative and societal initiatives to improve the national capacity in LCTLs. This discussion was based on Dr. Rivers’ experiences and activities as a
language lobbyist and a member of the Working Group.

This year’s conference also hosted 7 colloquia and 6 parallel sessions, including several language-specific sessions in Swahili and Yoruba.

A number of organizations that support the NCOLCTL/ALTA conference participated in the conference and set up exhibition booths outside the lecture halls. This year’s exhibitors included: Avant Assessment, Global Seal of Biliteracy, Ponddy Education, IU CIBER and the NALRC.

None of this would have been possible without the efforts of the staff and volunteers who worked behind the scenes to make everything run. We want to thank our staff: John Adei-ka and Ibrahim Odugbemi, as well as all of the volunteers who donated their time: Taiwo Ehineni, Indiana University; Esther Fatuyi, Morgan State University; Tolulope Akinwole, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Olusegun Soetan, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Kazeem Sanuth, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Adebimpe Adegbite, Syracuse University; and Yetunde Alabede, Fayetteville State University.

A special word of thanks goes to the Executive Director of NCOLCTL and ALTA, Dr. Antonia Schleicher, the Outgoing President of NCOLCTL, Dr. An Chung Cheng, the Incoming President of NCOLCTL, Dr. Luis Gonçalves, the Outgoing President of ALTA, Dr. Leonard Muaka, and the Incoming President of ALTA, Dr. Zoliswa Mali. We would also like to thank the entire membership of the Boards, the Delegate Assembly member, our JNCOLCTL Editor, Dr. Danko Spika, our JALTA Editor, Dr. Jonathan Choti, as well as all of the presenters, plenary speakers, and all our conference attendees. Our gratitude also goes out to the staff of Holiday Inn & Suites Atlanta Airport-North for their professional service and excellent catering.

The 2020 NCOLCTL/ALTA Conference will be held on April 17-19, 2020 in Chicago, IL. The theme will be “2020 Vision: LCTL’s Collective Mission in the Next Decade”. Submit your paper online at conference.paper.ncolctl.org and we look forward to seeing you soon!
Senator Howard Stephenson

Drs. Antonia Schleicher, Leonard Muaka and An Chung Cheng at a plenary session

Dr. An Chung Cheng exchanging pleasantaries with conference participants

Beautiful moments of conversations and exchange of pleasantaries among conference participants

Conference participants having a nice time

Robert Thar and Dr. Alwiya Omar
ALTA Executive Board meeting

Pleasantries and conversations

Conference participants at a panel session

Conference participants at a panel session

Conference participants having a conversation

Conference participants having a conversation

Conference participants having a conversation

Volunteers attending to conference participants
Announcements

I. Translations/Interpretations
The NALRC continues to provide quality services in the area of translation and interpretation of many African Languages as the need arises in and around the United States. The list of translators and interpreters is open to anyone who knows a less commonly taught language and wants to be an interpreter. Also, if you need translation/interpretation services, please contact us.

II. Job Opportunities Advertisements
As the NALRC website is frequently visited by students, instructors and scholars, you are encouraged to notify NALRC of any African language related job vacancy. We will advertise your job vacancy at no cost to you.

III. Upcoming Conferences - Dates & Venue
We urge our readers to mark their calendars for the following upcoming conferences in the academic year 2019-2020:

i. NCOLCTL/ALTA Annual Conference
   Date: April 17 - 19, 2020
   Venue: Chicago, IL

ii. NALRC Summer Institute
    Date: May 11 - 22, 2020
    Venue: Indiana University-Bloomington, IN

iii. Learning Plan Development Workshop
     Date: May 11 - 22, 2020
     Venue: Indiana University-Bloomington, IN

For any questions/comments, please contact:
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