This workshop will demonstrate to teachers of critical heritage languages the crucial difference between conscious language learning, and unconscious language acquisition. As most textbooks emphasize conscious learning, particularly of grammar and vocabulary, this workshop will offer teachers tools to help them encourage and capitalize on learners’ unconscious acquisition of the language. It will demonstrate the value of well-designed oral communication tasks that can be used to help students produce unrehearsed learner language, and help teachers to analyze in a more systematic way the language learners unconsciously produce in their classrooms. The workshop will also encourage teachers of these languages to engage in reflective teaching practice, and value their own voices in the arena of second language acquisition research. Participants will gain skills in the analysis of learner language using several analytical frameworks. Teachers will take an in-depth look at the following key questions:

- Can second year learners of critical languages successfully complete a set of unrehearsed oral communication tasks?
- What features of oral learner language do they produce in response to unrehearsed oral tasks with differing demands for critical thinking?
- What are the implications of their task performance for what needs to be taught?

Prepared with funding from a USDE Title VI IRSP grant, videos and interactive learning activities will be used in a hands-on introduction to the study of the learner language produced by second-year learners of Japanese, Korean, Chinese and Persian (Farsi), supplemented by parallel published materials focused on learners of English L2. Participants will expand their repertoire of tasks and activities useful in gathering samples of learner language in the classroom, viewing samples of unrehearsed, spontaneous oral learner language produced in response to a set of communicative tasks. They will work together in small groups to analyze from different perspectives the learner language produced by students of the language they teach, exploring what these learners have and have not acquired of their second language, and what possible pedagogical responses might be.