

Mohammad Ali Raonaq

Manual of Spoken Dari in Afghanistan

Translator: Wahid Omar

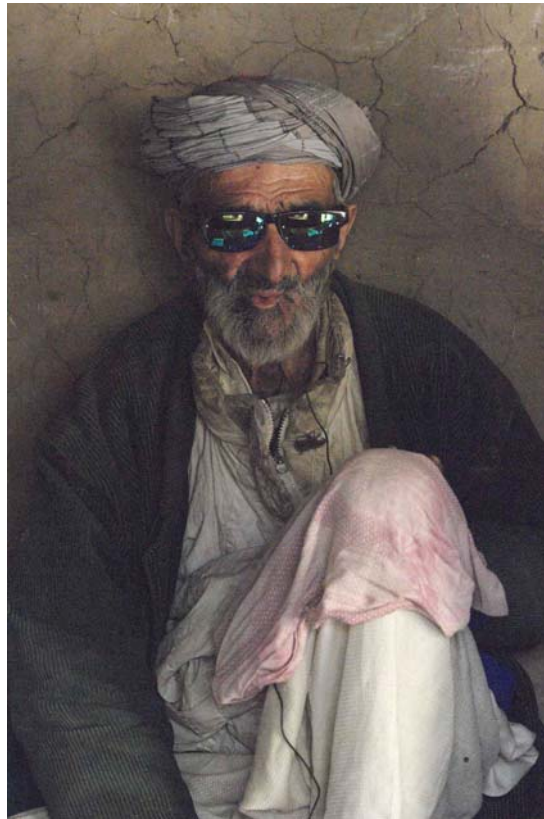


Photo: Gloriann Liu

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FOREWARD

Wahid Omar is a PhD candidate at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Department of French and Italian. He's also a native of Afghanistan, currently working as a program manager with USAID for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Previously, under the aegis of the United Nations, he spent a year helping to organize curricula and teaching methods in the French Department of the University of Kabul, Afghanistan. He said the following about the manual: "I have found that there is a tremendous need for self-guided methods to learn Dari, the country's official language. A year ago, I began translating into English a manual, *Manual du Persan Parlé en Afghanistan*, for the benefit of the more than three thousand American and foreign workers and military residing in Afghanistan, who still do not have access to a comprehensive, easy-to-understand text. The manual (*Manuel du Persan Parlé en Afghanistan*) was originally self-published in French, in 2003, by my father-in-law, Mohammed Ali Raonaq. It was hugely successful among the French community working in Afghanistan".

Frequent miscommunication between international forces, non-governmental organizations and Afghan locals due to mistranslation and/or the simple lack of knowledge about Afghan language and cultures has sometimes resulted in unnecessary, absurd and even tragic mistakes, occasionally costing lives. The *Manual of Spoken Dari in Afghanistan* is unique because it addresses both language and cultural issues in a country where mores and modes of behavior can be profoundly confusing to foreigners.

The translation of *Manuel du Persan Parlé en Afghanistan* has been reviewed by University of Colorado Boulder's professor Cindy Merlin, an expert in French to English translation. This manual is the first of its kind and will be valuable not only inside Afghanistan for English-speakers already residing there and struggling with the language. It can also be marketed to the United States government and NGOs for use in language-and-culture training before posting. The manual will also interest language programs in American universities and the general public as well. Currently, there are no manuals of spoken Dari in the US market that can match this manual because the latter was originally written by a linguist, translated by an experienced writer, and reviewed by a professional translator.

The cover photograph was taken by Gloriann Liu, an award-winning photographer who has captured the dignity and warm-hearted spirit of the Afghan people over many trips for her photographic series on the daily life of ordinary people in Afghanistan.

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