

Promoting research and best practices to improve the use of English in the emerging global knowledge economy of the 21st century

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TIRF to Produce Collection of Sheikh Nahayan Fellows' Research

We are pleased to announce that TIRF will produce a collection of research papers based on the doctoral dissertations of the nine [Sheikh Nahayan Fellows](#). The collection will focus on the teaching and learning of English in the Arabic-speaking world. Here we present a brief introduction to the nine Sheikh Nahayan Fellows and their research.



Enas Hammad is currently a PhD candidate at Cairo University in Egypt, as well as a teacher of English curricula and instruction at Al-Aqsa University in Palestine. She received her MA in TEFL from Al-Azhar University in Palestine. From 1999 to 2007, she served as a teacher of English at Gaza governmental schools and United Nations Relief and Work Agency schools. Her doctoral research is on Palestinian EFL teachers' use of questioning with twelve- to fifteen-year-old students.



Fatima Esseili received her MA in ESL from the University of Toledo, and her PhD in Second Language Studies from Purdue University. She is currently an assistant professor of English at the University of Balamand in Lebanon. Her doctoral research was about Lebanese language teachers' perceptions of their working conditions and challenges.



Hassan Ahmed El-Nabih is a Palestinian English educator who teaches linguistics and EFL courses at the Islamic University of Gaza. He earned his PhD in Curriculum and Instruction (with a concentration in language development) from Boston College. His dissertation research dealt with the overuse of the passive voice by Arabic-speaking learners of English.



Kholoud A. Al-Thubaiti received her PhD in Applied Linguistics with a concentration in second language acquisition from the University of Essex. She is an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics in the Department of English Language at Umm Al-Qura University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where she is also the Deputy Chair of the department. She wrote her dissertation on the long-term effects of starting English instruction in Saudi Arabia at various ages.



Laila W. Rumsey is now finalizing her PhD in Applied Linguistics from Newcastle University. She currently teaches secondary level Islamic Studies at the Brighter Horizons Academy in Dallas, Texas, the largest Islamic school in the southern United States. Her doctoral research concerns the

predictive validity of English proficiency tests with regard to academic success in the United Arab Emirates.



Mansoor Al-Surmi is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics at Northern Arizona University. He has taught English in the US and in Yemen, his native country, for more than ten years. His research interests include examining the theoretical and practical issues in corpus linguistics, second language acquisition, assessment, and computer assisted language learning. His doctoral research investigates incidental vocabulary learning through television viewing.



Melanie van den Hoven holds a Masters in TESOL from the School of International Training and is pursuing an EdD at Durham University. She is currently teaching in the English Department at Emirates College for Advanced Education in Abu Dhabi. Her dissertation explores the perspectives of female Emirati pre-service teachers on their use of English as the medium of instruction.



Muhammad M. Abdel Latif is an English language teaching lecturer at the Institute of Educational Studies at Cairo University. He completed his PhD at the University of Essex. His doctoral research is on the role of linguistic knowledge in the composing process of Arabic learners of English. He is the winner of the ACTFL-*Modern Language Journal* 2009 Emma Marie Birkmaier Award for Doctoral Dissertation Research in Foreign Language Education, and the *Canadian Modern Language Review* 2009 Best Graduate Student Paper Award.



Fiodhna Gardiner-Hyland is an education methodology lecturer at the University of Limerick. She formerly taught at Abu Dhabi Women's College. Her PhD is in Teacher Education Pedagogy from the University of Leicester. She is the co-editor of a new book entitled *Contextualizing EFL for Young Learners: International Perspectives on Policy and Practice*, which is being published by TESOL Arabia.

The new TIRF collection will be edited by Kathi Bailey and Ryan Damerow, with a commentary by TIRF Trustee, G. Richard Tucker, and a chapter on Arab EFL students' academic writing by Abdul Gabbar Al-Sharafi. TIRF extends its continuing gratitude to Sheikh Nahayan, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the UAE, for his support of these outstanding young scholars.

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Kathleen Bailey,
Chair of TIRF

Research Organization: Spotlight on CARLA

Editor's note: In the interest of sharing resources with our readers, TIRF will occasionally provide information about organizations concerned with language research.



In 1990, as a means to meet the growing national demand for competence and expertise in foreign languages, the US Department of Education established the first of fifteen Language Resource Centers (LRCs) in the US. At that time, [the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition \(CARLA\)](#) was founded at the University of Minnesota.

The LRCs create resources to promote and improve language teaching and learning. Specifically, the language professionals at the various LRCs create language learning and teaching materials, offer professional development opportunities for teachers, and conduct research on foreign language learning.

One CARLA program involves language immersion education and research. The American Council on Immersion Education (ACIE) is an organizational network for individuals interested in immersion education (teachers, administrators, teacher educators, researchers, and parents). It has been sponsored by CARLA since 1997. For more than a decade, ACIE has supported immersion educators through its newsletter, *ACIE Newsletter*. The [ACIE archive collection online](#) includes more than 200 articles from the newsletter's regular features.

Another aspect of CARLA's work is related to one of TIRF's research priorities: the optimal uses of technology in language instruction. Individuals interested in online teaching may wish to join the Ning (a virtual meeting place) created for language teachers who teach online, to exchange ideas and share effective practices. To learn more about the Ning, [click here](#). For a bibliography that includes topics specific to the needs of language teachers preparing to teach online, [click here](#).

CARLA also supports those interested in second language assessment. For example, "[The Virtual Item Bank](#)" provides teachers with practical ideas and models for developing classroom assessment items. [Other useful resources](#) include teacher-created integrated performance assessment units based on the ACTFL model and interpersonal tasks to encourage student speech. Another resource that can be found on CARLA's website is an online battery of [proficiency-based second language assessment tools](#) for reading, writing, listening, and speaking (available in Spanish, German, and French).

Yet another project CARLA has developed deals with students' awareness of what they can do to become better language learners. To carry out this activity, CARLA has produced materials that further the study of styles-based and strategies-based teaching and speech act instruction. One such example is helpful for students who are studying [Spanish grammar strategies](#).

One final online resource is CARLA's [Content-Based Language Teaching with Technology \(CoBaLTT\)](#). The website shows teachers how to attend to both content and language in their planning, instruction, and assessment with the support of technology. It offers a variety of information and practical tools for language teachers interested in content-based instruction (CBI).

English at Work: Bridging Theory and Practice

A free international electronic journal called [Language At Work: Bridging Theory and Practice](#) was launched in 2006. It is intended for researchers and communication professionals, and focuses on connecting theory and practice. In a parallel to TIRF's goals, the journal aims to communicate research results to practitioners and build a "bridge between researchers and professionals in the field."

The journal is produced in Denmark. While it is not specifically oriented to language teaching and learning, many of its articles are related to the use of languages in the workplace. For example, [Theme 10](#) has three articles on English as a lingua franca. [Theme 9](#) offers eight articles on foreign language in business, industry, and society. These articles are available as free downloadable PDFs.

Report from the Chair — A Leap Day Proposal

Today is "Leap Day" — a strange name for February 29th. This extra day is added to the calendar every four years because the solar year consists of 365 and one-fourth days. That one-fourth of a day accumulates and is added at the end of February every fourth year.

Different cultures deal with the need to account for this time in various ways. A brief [internet search](#) shows that in Chinese and Hindu traditions, a leap month is added about every three years, so that there are thirteen months in a leap year. In Ethiopia, there are typically thirteen months in a calendar year. The first twelve months have thirty days, but the last month consists of five days. In a leap year, that last month has a

sixth day. In the Iranian calendar, a leap year occurs every fourth year, but periodically the leap year is the fifth year.

There is a western tradition that on Leap Day, women can propose marriage to men. According to Irish folklore, this practice started when a 5th-century nun named [Saint Bridget complained to Saint Patrick](#) that women needed to have a greater say in terms of whom they married. For this reason, women were allowed to propose to men on Leap Day. Supposedly there was a law in Scotland which forbade a man to refuse such a proposal, and if he did, he had to pay a steep fine.

Now, you may be wondering how these chronological adjustments and quaint proposal tradi-

tions relate to TIRF. It's simple: Modern fundraisers should have a day on which their requests for donations could not be turned down! And anyone who did decline to donate would pay a steep fine. If we had such a day, I would spend it asking for support from employers whose workers use English to accomplish their organizations' missions. Whether it was during the sixth day of the thirteenth month or the last day of February, I would plead with everyone who reads this newsletter to send a contribution to TIRF, to help us carry out the Foundation's important mission.

Happy Leap Day!

Kathi Bailey