Research Organization: Spotlight on CAL, University of Warwick

Editor’s note: In this piece, Dr. Richard Smith shares information about the Centre for Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick, UK, founded in 1983 as the Centre for English Language Teacher Education. Since then, its focus has broadened to include teaching, training, and research in the fields of intercultural communication and discourse analysis. However, many of the Centre’s activities still revolve around ELT/TESOL, including a suite of well-established MA in ELT programmes, tailor-made short courses for visiting groups of teachers and students, and English for academic purposes provision for students across the university.

ELT research is carried out by members of the English Language Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Research Group – ELLTA, for short. General clusters of interest have included English for academic purposes, innovative methodologies (for both teaching and research), and teacher education and development. Increasingly, we have also become involved as a group in the broad area of English in international development, together with the university’s Centre for Education Studies. Below are some key recent achievements and accessible resources in each of these four main areas.

English for Academic Purposes

Based partly on two past large-scale research projects, involving construction of the British Academic Spoken English Corpus and the British Academic Written English Corpus, we have developed a number of academic English resources for use by teachers and learners. We also have a long tradition of expertise in language testing for academic purposes. One current project (funded by ETS TOEFL) seeks to investigate the predictive validity of TOEFL iBT® scores and their use in informing university policy. To showcase our work in the field of language assessment (including innovative work in the area of assessing intercultural competence), we will be hosting the 11th European Association for Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA) conference from 29 May to 1 June 2014.

Teacher Education and Development

Next year, we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of our open-access, peer-reviewed journal English Language Teacher Education and Development (ELTED). The journal is targeted at – and open to contributions from – all those involved in English language teacher education and development worldwide. In recent years, ELLTA members have been involved in action research and teacher-learner autonomy, developed within our own MA programmes, into innovative professional development activities with teachers in Cameroon, Chile, and Nepal.

Innovative Methodologies

ELLTA staff members have played leading roles in the learner autonomy movement, and equally in researching the fields of language learner motivation and English for young learners. We have also made contributions to the field of history of ELT and applied linguistics. One current research project ("Towards a History of Modern Foreign Language Teaching and Learning") aims to generate interest in historical research into language teaching. Another project ("Documenting British Council involvement with ELT (1934-2014)") will contribute to the evaluation, from historical perspectives, of ELT projects in general. We are also at present developing new tools and approaches for the qualitative evaluation of teacher training interventions.

English in International Development

This area is an emerging priority for CAL, but we have for several years served as the academic hub for a research network on issues in teaching English in large classes and other difficult circumstances, with a focus on developing country contexts. Research students from countries ranging from Cameroon to Syria and Thailand have been active in this area, and several have contributed to freely available research-based teacher training materials. Recently we have developed important linkages with other organizations, in particular with universities in India. Our efforts have led to cooperating with these universities on a Survey of Indian ELT Research (English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad). We are also working on a project engaging teachers and children as co-researchers in large primary classes (with Delhi University). For details of these projects and all others past and present, please see our website.

Important research is undertaken in the above areas by our current research students as well as by staff. Indeed, we very much welcome applications from suitably qualified people who wish to undertake postgraduate research (PhD, MPhil, MA by Research). In the coming years, the ELLTA Research Group within CAL at the University of Warwick aims to consolidate and strengthen its position as a nationally and internationally recognized research unit. CAL will continue to work toward its goal of impacting in innovative ways English language teaching policy, practice, training, and assessment/evaluation, while extending our remit to include other languages.

MALL Presentation Now Available

MALL Presentation Now Available

Help TIRF Via AmazonSmile

Last year, Amazon started a program in which their customers’ everyday purchases can help benefit nonprofit organizations. The program is called AmazonSmile.

Through this program, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization the customer designates. We are hoping that you will list TIRF as your beneficiary charity!

You can learn more about AmazonSmile, including how to select TIRF as your charity, by clicking here.
Conference on Heritage/Community Languages Held at UCLA

Editor’s note: In this piece, TIRF Trustee Donna Chris-
tian shares information about a conference she recently
took part in at UCLA. TIRF Trustees travel at no expense to
the Foundation.

In our increasingly multilinguial societies, heritage and
community languages represent a valuable asset for indi-
viduals, their communities, and the world, and efforts are
needed to maintain, develop, and, if necessary, revitalize
them. In early March, the National Heritage Language
Resource Center at UCLA organized and hosted the Sec-
ond International Conference on Heritage/Community
Languages. Bringing together educators and researchers from
many disciplines to talk about heritage/community
language studies and education. This event offered the
opportunity to attend a rich variety of papers, panels, and
poster presentations. Among these talks were several
insightful plenary sessions. For example, Marcelo Suárez-
Orozco (UCLA) discussed the language and education
corollaries of mass migration, noting that “the world is
on the move.” Another plenarist, Elana Shohamy (Tel Aviv
University), reflected on the ways in which “Linguistic
Landscapes” (the multilingual writing and images found in
public spaces) reveal power relations, ethnic identities,
and the vitality of different languages in a society.

I am also pleased to note that a new publication was
launched at the conference, one which I had the honor of
co-editing: Handbook of Heritage, Community, and
Native American Languages in the United States: Research,
Policy, and Educational Practice (T. Wiley, J. Peyton, D.
Christian, S. Moore, & N. Liu, editors; Routledge/Center
for Applied Linguistics). A symposium, which featured 20
contributors to the volume, provided a quick overview of
its contents. For more information about the book, please
click here.

Several sessions also featured award presentations.
Richard Brecht (University of Maryland) was honored with
the Joshua Fishman Award for Contribution to the Field
of Heritage Language Education for his outstanding work on
heritage language research and policy. Another award
was created as a tribute to someone very important to
TIRF, Russ Campbell, for his pioneering work in encour-
gaging attention to heritage languages and his extraordi-
nary commitment to teaching and mentoring. Recipients of
the Russ Campbell Young Scholar Awards (with their
paper titles) were (1) Netta Avineri (Monterey Institute of
International Studies), Conflicted Stance Practices Toward
Linguistic Alternatives in the Yiddish Metalinguistic Com-
munity; (2) Genevieve Leung (University of San Fran-
cisco), Cantonese HL Development: An Examination
of Narratives from Cantonese-speaking Children and Adults;
and (3) Diego Pascual y Cabo (Texas Tech University),
Differences Are Not Deficiencies: Argument Structure
Reanalysis in Heritage Speaker Spanish.

For more information about the conference and about
the work of the National Heritage Language Resource
Center, please click here.

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

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Kathleen Bailey, Chair of TIRF

International Conference on World Englishes

The 20th International Conference of the International
Association of World Englishes (IAWE) will be held at
Amity University, Delhi, India from December 18-20, 2014.
This annual conference started in 1995. It aims to exam-
ine the focus and functions of different Englishes stem-
mimg from diverse cultural and sociolinguistic contexts.
IAWE is committed to the study of the forms and func-
tions of varieties of Englishes in diverse cultural and socio-
linguistic contexts. The organization focuses on global
issues relating to three major aspects of World Englishes:
language, literature, and pedagogy.

The last date for the submission of abstracts is May 31,
2014. Abstracts can be submitted online by clicking here.
If there is a technical error in the online submission of the
abstract, please e-mail anamika2503@gmail.com抄到
ravinderpargesh@gmail.com.

Chair’s Report — TESOL Research Agenda Task Force

TESOL needs your help! The 2014 Research Agenda Task Force
welcomes your comments about (1) the content of the draft agenda and (2)
ways in which the TESOL International Association can make use of
the agenda to advance professional
expertise in English language teaching
and learning for speakers of other
languages worldwide.

The Task Force members were
Neil Anderson, Christine Coombe,
Sue Garton, Jun Liu, Guadelupe Val-
des, Dudley Reynolds, Lillian Wong,
and me. Please visit the TESOL Inter-
national Association Research
Agenda 2014 to add your feedback.