

TIRF TODAY

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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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Two DDG Recipients Complete Their Degrees

Editor's note: We are pleased to announce that two more DDG Awardees have completed their doctoral studies – **Lixia Cheng** from Purdue University and **Tasha Darbes** from New York University. MaryAnn Christison, TIRF Trustee and Chair of the Research Advisory Committee, interviewed them shortly after receiving their final DDG reports. Summaries of the two interviews follow. The final reports that summarize their research findings, as well as their references, can be accessed by [clicking here](#).



Dr. Lixia Cheng is now working for Purdue Language and Cultural Exchange. This program has been newly developed to provide English language support and foster cultural exchange at Purdue University. Dr. Cheng is the Testing and Assessment Coordinator for this program.

When asked the most important thing she learned about doing research in the process of completing her dissertation, Dr. Cheng stated that she learned how to break up a big project into manageable pieces and focus on them one at a time. She also said that this management process was important in every aspect of her dissertation research, from recruiting subjects to writing up her research findings, and it is a process she will use for the rest of her professional life.

Dr. Cheng said that she'd wish for TIRF donors to know how important her TIRF DDG was to her, both professionally and personally. The funding allowed her to collect the necessary data in China. She noted that she is "tremendously appreciative of the [donors'] financial support." In addition, she stated that receiving a TIRF DDG was personally very encouraging because it meant that a team of established scholars and professionals in the field of language assessment recognized the importance of her

TIRF Tidbits: Grantee Activities, GuideStar Gold, & Newsletter Quiz

Grantee Activities

Ifthikhar Haider, 2014 DDG recipient and Russell N. Campbell awardee, presented his dissertation research at the [2014 American Pragmatics Conference](#). The goal of the conference is to promote both theoretical and applied research in pragmatics, and to bring together scholars who are interested in different subfields of pragmatics. The conference was held at UCLA last month.

Katherine O'Donnell Christofersen, 2014 DDG recipient, has also been busy with presentations and publications related to her dissertation. She recently published a paper in [Arizona Working Papers in SLA and Teaching](#), presented at the [Second Language Research Forum](#), and will be presenting her research at the [13th Encuentro Internacional de Linguística en el Noroeste de Mexico](#), among other activities.

research. She would like donors to know that the process TIRF has in place for helping DDG awardees set and meet benchmarks in their research was important for her in completing her research in a timely fashion. (The complete interview with Dr. Lixia Cheng can be accessed on the TIRF website by [clicking here](#).)

Dr. Tasha Darbes is not only a specialist in language assessment, she also has an academic background in anthropology; consequently, it is no surprise that her doctoral dissertation research focused on examining assessment and the placement of English as a second language (ESL) students as a social process. Dr. Darbes is keenly interested in how the learners themselves experience the assessment process. She is also concerned about whether assessments that determine "college readiness" function as gatekeepers or as necessary ways of identifying learners who need support.



Dr. Darbes found out about TIRF grant opportunities from two previous TIRF DDG recipients. This information comes as good news to the TIRF Trustees and the Research Advisory Committee, since we are currently looking into ways of encouraging the community of DDG awardees to use their experiences and expertise to support other young researchers in the field, including potential TIRF DDG applicants. Dr. Darbes would like to thank TIRF donors for their support and wishes to encourage current donors to continue to support TIRF's important work. She stated that there are few opportunities for funding in English language education and the work that TIRF is doing is crucial for future innovation in our field. She hopes people will continue to give to TIRF. (The complete interview with Dr. Tasha Darbes can be accessed on the TIRF website by [clicking here](#).)

GuideStar Gold

Late last month, TIRF earned recognition as a GuideStar gold-level participant. What does this mean? It means TIRF is committed to transparency and that we take steps to ensure timely and updated information about the Foundation is consistently available to our stakeholders.

[GuideStar](#) works to provide information that advances transparency, informs users about specific charities' activities, and encourages charitable giving. TIRF has been a member of GuideStar for several years but only recently attained gold status.

One benefit to the Foundation that comes with reaching GuideStar's gold level of participation is the opportunity to enjoy free web hosting services from BlueHost. We are always concerned with cutting costs in order to maximize programmatic spending, so we will be pursuing this benefit in the weeks ahead.

October Newsletter Quiz

In last month's newsletter, we offered a trick-or-treat challenge to our readers. The quiz was hosted on TIRF's Facebook page. Although we had many replies to our quiz, no one answered all five items correctly.

We wish very much to award a prize to one of our loyal newsletter readers and Facebook fans. Therefore, we are going to provide some hints on our website to help answer the items in last month's newsletter. [Click here](#) for the hints.

We encourage you to take the quiz, even if you already did so. Please visit [our Facebook page](#) and post your answers to be eligible for the drawing of a TIRF book. As a reminder, you must answer all items correctly to qualify!

If you need help answering an item, you can write to Ryan Damerow, TIRF's Executive Assistant, at info@tirfonline.org.

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Kathleen Bailey,
Chair of TIRF

A Cornucopia of Reference List Offerings

We are pleased to announce that TIRF has developed several new reference lists on topics of interest to applied linguists and language teaching professionals. There are now [free, downloadable collections of citations](#) on emotions in language learning and teaching, multiple intelligences, gender, creativity in language learning and teaching, immigrant issues, standards in language teaching, multiple-choice test items, plagiarism, and drama in language teaching and learning. Many other reference lists on TIRF's website have also been updated.

Chair's Report — The Gift of Giving

This season of the year — harvest time in the Northern Hemisphere — is often recognized as a time for giving thanks. Indeed, Canadian thanksgiving (*Jour de l'action de grâce*) was celebrated in October. In the US, Thanksgiving will be celebrated this week.

#GIVINGTUESDAY



Tuesday, December 2nd is officially recognized as "Giving Tuesday." This is a day when, according to the [Giving Tuesday website](#), "charities, families, businesses, community centers, and students around the world will come together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give."

Gift-giving is an ancient and ubiquitous tradition. It has been practiced throughout history in many forms and for many purposes. Sometimes gifts, including human sacrifices, were given to thank or to appease the deities. Often gifts were given to acknowledge an important event — a birth or a marriage.

A typical time to give gifts in Chinese tradition is at the [Lunar New Year](#). People visit family and friends and bring gifts to give one another. When traveling to visit friends, people usually bring their local specialties (food, crafts, etc.). Gifts may be given for a baby's one-month, 100-day, and one-year birthday celebration as well.



In Jewish traditions, gifts are given for a person's bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah, the coming of age ceremony for boys and girls, respectively. There is a tradition about eight different levels of giving, called [Maimonides' "Ladder of Charity."](#) The lowest level is to give a gift unwillingly, making the recipient feel ashamed. The highest is giving something that allows the beneficiary to be self-reliant (providing a loan, giving of one's time, and so on).

According to the [Native American Encyclopedia](#), the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest of Canada "traditionally practiced some form of *potlatch*, or give-away ceremonies and customs, highlighted by the lavish distribution of goods and food to tribe members or those of other clans, villages, or tribes."

In Muslim cultures, gifts are given at weddings and on the two major Muslim holidays: *Eid al-Fitr* (after the fasting month of *Ramadhan*) and *Eid Al-Adha* (when Muslims go on a pilgrimage). The pilgrims bring gifts home from Mecca (*Zamzam* water, nuts, and colored candy). Gifts are also given when you visit someone for the first time, or when someone gets a new house or apartment, as well as for promotions and retirements.

In Korea, people exchange gifts on traditional holidays such as New Year's Day and *Chuseok*, the Korean harvest festival. Usually younger people, employees, staff members, or students will pay a visit to their elders, employers, managers, or teachers to bring their gifts during those holidays. The original purpose of these visits and gifts may have been as an expression of gratitude for the care, help, and guidance of the elders.

In Germany, gifts are given for birthdays, when people retire, when someone leaves for a long of time or for good, for graduation from secondary school or college, for reconciliation, and as signs of appreciation, love, or sympathy. Children receive gifts when a new sibling is born.

There are many occasions for [gift-giving in Japan](#). A new year's gift is normally money in a special envelope, but there is also a time of gift-giving in July and Decem-

We wish to thank the following people for donating citations and reference lists: Khalid Al-Seghayer, Netta Avineri, Martha Bigelow, Robert Broom, Kendall King, Anita Krishnan, Tim Marquette, Jason Martel, Aneta Pavlenko, Nicole Pettitt, and Patsy Vinogradov. If you would like to submit a new reference list or add citations to an existing reference list, please send your contributions to info@tirfonline.org in APA format.



ber. These gifts are called *ochuugen* and *oseibo*. Another tradition is [temiyage](#), a small gift that you bring when you visit someone's home or meet someone for the first time. [Omiyage](#) refers to small gifts one brings back home to friends and family after going on a journey.

Australia is a country of many immigrant cultures, so various communities have their own cultural and religious customs. For instance, in Catholic families, children would receive a religious gift on "rites of passage" occasions such as first communion and confirmation. For Italian families, celebrating [Epiphany](#) is associated with [La Befana](#), a kindly old lady on a broom, who brings coal to bad boys and bad girls but candy to the good children.

There are two main occasions when Senegalese give gifts. For weddings, friends and family give items they believe the couple will need in their new home. The most popular gifts are dishes and beddings. At a baptism, the child's grandmother gives a gift of money to her daughter-in-law.

In South Africa, the Zulu have a marriage process involving gift exchange practices that begin during [lobola](#) (dowry) negotiations and lead up to the actual wedding day. The exchange of gifts between the two families is more than a token of love: It is a symbol of unifying the two families, even in the spiritual realm.

The Christian tradition of gift-giving at Christmas seems to stem from the story of the three magi bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to baby Jesus in the manger. A modern version of this gift-giving is that Santa Claus comes down the chimney and puts goodies in the children's stockings, which have been hung on the fireplace mantle.

In the Netherlands, gifts are given on December 5th — the [Eve of St. Nicholas](#). This legendary character may be based on [Bishop Nicholas](#), who lived in Greece in the 4th century. Weeks before, children put their shoes by the fireplace or on a windowsill. Little gifts miraculously appear in the shoes overnight.



This season of the year is a time for TIRF also to give and receive gifts. You have already read about the new reference lists (noted above) and the wonderful Doctoral Dissertation Grants, which were described in the [September issue of TIRF Today](#). But we also want to give you a light-hearted gift, which will be sent to you by email on Giving Tuesday. We hope you enjoy it, and we hope it will motivate you to give back to TIRF.

If you would like be part of our work, please join us by making a donation to the Foundation. Gifts may be transmitted online via credit card by [clicking here](#). Checks drawn on a US-based bank account and made out to "TIRF" may be sent to the Foundation's address at: 177 Webster St., #220, Monterey, CA 93940.

Many thanks to the following people for sharing gift-giving traditions: Lillian Wong, Xueting Wang, Dilek Tokay, Tarana Patel, Thuli Phetla, David Nunan, Naoko Matsuo, Tim Marquette, Joe Lo Bianco, Mitch Legutke, Heekyeong Lee, Enas Hammad, Lynn Goldstein, Ann Glazer, Fatima Esselli, Ferenc Dalnoki-Veress, Edgard Coly, Netta Avineri, Kholoud Al-Thubaiti, and Mansoor Al-Surmi. (This Chair's report can be read in its entirety by [clicking here](#).)

Kathi Bailey