

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

TIRF Trustees

James Alatis
 Kathleen M. Bailey
 Richard Boyum
 Michael Carrier
 Antonietta Celani
 Donna Christian
 MaryAnn Christison
 Jodi Crandall
 Lorraine de Matos
 Yehia El-Ezabi
 Marti Estell
 John Knagg
 Mitch Legutke
 Jun Liu
 Joe Lo Bianco
 Michael Milanovic
 David Nunan
 Ana Sylvia Ramirez
 Andrew Sugerman
 G. Richard Tucker
 Kensaku Yoshida

In this issue:

Research Spotlight: Making the Most of Resources from Cambridge	1
AAAL's Call for Proposals for 2014 Conference	1
Resources Updated on TIRF's Website	2
Conference & Publication Announcements	2
Chair's Report — Supporting Our Field Through TIRF's DDG Program	2

TIRF TODAY

May 2013

Volume 4, Issue 5

Research Spotlight: Making the Most of Resources from Cambridge



Dr. Nick Saville

Editor's note: In this piece, Dr. Nick Saville, Director of Research and Validation, highlights several resources available from Cambridge English Language Assessment.

The Research and Validation department at Cambridge English Language Assessment carries out research projects related to its examinations and provides evidence of their validity. The department started from small beginnings in the late 1980s but has now grown to over 40 specialist staff members from backgrounds such as linguistics, psychometrics, second language acquisition, and computer science. Our research helps to answer questions such as (1) How can we ensure the exams are valid and reliable? (2) What impact do they have on the curriculum and on learning? (3) What does it mean to have a certain proficiency level?

This work cannot be achieved without the participation of many stakeholders and the sharing of knowledge and best practices. As an integral part of Cambridge University, we share its educational mission: "... to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence."

We have a commitment to supporting effective teaching and learning. For this reason, we have developed a range of accessible resources that encourage "assessment literacy" and appropriate uses of assessment in society.

Several research resources are available to interested parties. At the present time, 38 volumes of the *Studies in Language Testing (SiLT)* series and 51 issues of *Research Notes* have been published. Both publications provide valuable resources for language professionals around the world.

The publications range from small-scale validation projects, to high-level governmental projects. The latest *SiLT* volume traces the Cambridge English exams from a theoretical point of view. A new

book, *Measured Constructs: A History of Cambridge English Language Examinations 1913–2012*, by Weir, Vidaković, and Galaczi, chronicles the evolution of constructs in English language teaching and assessment and shows how the Cambridge exams have evolved over 100 years. This volume complements a more general illustrated history of the organization written by Michael Milanovic and Roger Hawkey – *Cambridge English Exams – The First Hundred Years*.

Researchers can freely download *Research Notes*, a quarterly publication reporting on research, test development, and validation projects.

Readers can also [download Research Update](#) – a newsletter which summarizes the latest activities of the team.

Researchers with an interest in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) can also take a look at *English Profile* – a collaborative program seeking to understand what the CEFR means for English language learners. This site includes the groundbreaking *English Vocabulary Profile*. It will soon be home to the *English Grammar Profile* as well.

We also provide resources for schools, students, and other groups. Our [official test preparation materials](#), developed in collaboration with Cambridge University Press, include courses, support materials, and practice papers which provide learners with everything they need to prepare for the exams. In addition, *Cambridge English Teacher* is an online community for English language teachers.

Another resource, *Cambridge English*, offers a wide-range of free materials and information for parents, teachers, students, schools, and policy makers. [Other free resources](#) include sample papers, word lists, online games, and information to help students know what to expect on exam days.

Through accessing [our website](#), individuals can learn more about our people and expertise. Online visitors can also find out about how to participate in research projects or to obtain funding for their own studies.

AAAL's Call for Proposals for 2014 Conference



The 2014 conference of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) will be held March 22-25 at the Marriott Downtown Waterfront in Portland, Oregon. Nationally and internationally, the AAAL conference has a reputation as a comprehensive and stimulating conference, including collo-

quia and paper sessions, topical and thought-provoking plenary presentations, excellent book exhibits, and plentiful opportunities for networking.

The link for submitting proposals will be available starting June 1, 2013. The deadline for proposal submission is August 21, 2013. More information about proposals, plenary speakers, and invited colloquia can be found by [clicking here](#).

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

Mailing Address:

177 Webster St., # 220
Monterey, CA 93940 USA

Email Address:

info@tirfonline.org

Visit TIRF online at

www.tirfonline.org

For back issues of

TIRF Today, please visit

<http://www.tirfonline.org/about-us/newsletters/>



Kathleen Bailey,
Chair of TIRF

Resources Updated on TIRF's Website

We are pleased to announce that there have been several additions to the [Resources page](#) on TIRF's website. For example, a number of links have been added to the [Journals section](#). Visitors may sort by various tags, including "free online access," "parents," "program administrators," "researchers," "teachers," and "testers."

The [Annotated Bibliography](#) section has also been updated. It focuses on classroom research, teacher research, and research methodology. We would like to recognize the support of Andy Cirocki, Simon Gieve, Hedy McGarrell, Tom Farrell, Gloria Park, Tim Stewart, and Handoyo Puji Widodo for their recent contributions.

Finally, some new topics have been added to

the [Reference Lists](#) section of the TIRF site and other lists have been updated. The newly posted topics are ethnography, language awareness, language socialization, case study research, language and development, and cooperative learning. We are grateful to Ruth Breeze, Nayyer Chandella, Meng Huat Chau, Julie Choi, Hywel Coleman, Jodi Crandall, Patsy Duff, Peter DeCosta, Ching-Ni Hsieh, Melanie Newman Morrow, Thor Sawin, and Peter Shaw for their contributions to this resource.

If you would like to contribute a new reference list or new references to an existing list, please send them to info@tirfonline.org. Items should be published and publically accessible, with citations in APA format.

Conference & Publication Announcements

First IATEFL BESIG Online Conference

We are pleased to announce that the first [IATEFL BESIG Online Conference](#) is set to be held on Saturday, June 15, 2013 from 7:00 GMT to 15:00 GMT (2:00AM to 8:00AM EDT). The topics of this free online conference are closely related to TIRF's current focus on the use of English in the 21st-century workforce.

The online conference will consist of a full day of online workshops, plenary talks, and practical "how-to" sessions. It is free and open to everyone with an interest in Business English. As long as you have a reliable internet connection, you will be able to take part and you will not need to pay an attendance fee.

The conference will have two plenaries, twenty workshop sessions, and eight shorter "how-to" sessions. The conference will be conducted via the Adobe Connect platform. By using this medium, individuals around the world will be able to take part in the conference, regardless of their time zones. They will have the opportunity to interact with fellow Business English teachers in a friendly, informal learning environment.

Plenaries and workshop sessions will focus on the creation, development, selection, and exploitation of materials in Business English and ESP contexts, as well as the integration of digital materials and m-learning into the field of Business English. You can now download the provisional conference program by [clicking here](#).

Publication Opportunity with *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*

The *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* intends to publish a Special Issue on the topic of assessment in EAP. The issue will appear in 2015 and

the aim is to have a collection of papers that will show how theory, principles, and practices of assessment (broadly defined) are applied in EAP contexts, to support learning and academic language development. Studies with empirical data and practical classroom projects in and for EAP are particularly welcome.

If you are interested in contributing a paper, the guidelines for authors can be found on the journal's website by [clicking here](#). If you would like to contribute a paper, please send an expression of interest, with an abstract or summary of your intended paper, to Liz Hamp-Lyons at liz.hamp-lyons@beds.ac.uk by July 30, 2013.

ECOLT

ECOLT 2013 Application Deadline Approaching

The [East Coast Organization of Language Testers](#) (ECOLT) will hold its twelfth annual conference on October 25, 2013 in Washington, DC. The Conference is being organized with the support of the Center for Applied Linguistics, Second Language Testing, Inc., Georgetown University, and the National Capital Language Resource Center.

Proposals are invited from colleagues in academia and education, government, and for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. ECOLT encourages students, researchers, and teachers to present papers or posters on projects related to language testing. The call for papers can be found by [clicking here](#).

The application deadline is set for Monday, June 3, 2013. Applicants will be notified of results in August 2013. The two-page submission should be sent as an email attachment to [Beth Mackey](mailto:msbethmackey@gmail.com) at msbethmackey@gmail.com. The filename should read: ECOLT13ABS_YOURLASTNAME.

Chair's Report — Supporting Our Field Through TIRF's DDG Program

Each year, the middle of May marks the application deadline of the Foundation's Doctoral Dissertation Grants (DDG) programs. This year we have received many wonderful applications from doctoral candidates around the world. Over the summer, TIRF's Trustees will organize our team of external reviewers to adjudicate the applications to decide which will be funded.

Our DDG program reflects the

very essence of [TIRF's mission](#). I strongly believe in the need for research into the many current issues – and particularly those embodied in TIRF's current research priorities: [language teacher education](#), [language assessment](#), [optimal uses of technology in English learning](#), [students' age and effective language instruction](#), and [bilingualism or plurilingualism in business and industry](#).

TIRF's DDG program is an excellent means of promoting research into such issues. I would like to thank those TIRF supporters who share this belief with me, as represented through their gifts to the Foundation, and to encourage our other readers to donate to this important cause.