

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 Activities at the 2014 AILA World Congress



TIRF Trustee Nick Saville (left), with Nick Zhiwei Bi, 2013 DDG TIRF Recipient

Editor's note: This piece includes conference summaries from four TIRF Trustees who attended the AILA World Congress earlier this month. We would like to recognize Mr. Michael Carrier, Dr. Jodi Crandall, Dr. Joe Lo Bianco, and Dr. Nick Saville for their contributions to this article.

The **AILA** (Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée, or in English, International Association of Applied Linguistics) World Congress is one of the largest gatherings of language teaching specialists and applied linguists. It is held every three years. This year was the **50th AILA anniversary conference**, which was held in Brisbane, Australia, and brought together more than 1,600 participants from 80 countries. Given the setting, the conference drew a large number of participants from Asian and Pacific countries, from not only China and Japan, but also Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and of course, Australia and New Zealand. In all, 1,510 participants made presentations at the conference, including 1,018 papers, 32 workshops, 56 symposia, and 222 posters. One very promising aspect of this year's Congress was the large number of graduate students and new graduates on the program.

A number of sessions of special interest to those who teach or prepare teachers of English included symposia focused on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), the significance of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), and interdisciplinary approaches to language teaching and learning. Plenary addresses were given by Lourdes Ortega, who pointed to the role of experience in explaining the success (or lack thereof) of adult second language learners, and Li Wei, who discussed the implications of Chinglish (a mix of Chinese and English), as it is spoken by young Chinese, for rethinking World Englishes, language teaching and learning, and language planning and policy.

In addition, at this year's AILA World Congress, there was an active Research Network for those interested in language testing and assessment. The conference was well attended by a cross-section of language testers from around the world, including some of the most recognizable names in the field and a good number of early-career researchers.

The Research Network's invited symposium was convened by Dr. Sara Weigle (Georgia State University). Entitled "Technology in Language Testing: Automated Scoring and Beyond," the session included two papers each from Educational Testing Service and Cambridge English Language Assessment and one from Pearson Education. The discussant was Dr. April Ginther (Purdue University). The papers presented during this symposium were as follows:

- "Automated Scoring for Performance-based Language Tests: Promises, Perils and Validity Issues," by Xiaoming Xi, Educational Testing Service.
- "Construct Representation and the Structure of an Automated Scoring Engine: Issues and Uses," by Paul Dean, Educational Testing Service.
- "Can You 'Game the System' by Responding Off-topic in the Speaking Section of the PTE Academic?" by Alistair Van Moere, Pearson Knowledge Technologies.
- "The Role of Technology in Learning Oriented Assessment (LOA)," by Nick Saville, Neil Jones, and Miranda Hamilton, Cambridge English Language Assessment.
- "Automatic Writing Assessment and Feedback: An Approach to Improve Construct and Consequential Aspects of Validity," by Ardeshir Gerempayeh, Gad Lim, and Helen Yannakoudakis, Cambridge English Language Assessment.

TIRF was well represented at this year's AILA World Congress. Dr. Nick Saville presented in the symposium mentioned above and Dr. Jodi Crandall participated in one on "Language and Education in Multilingual Settings." Mr. Michael Carrier led a symposium, which was entitled "Adopting Mobile Learning Technology for English: Benefits and Challenges," on the issues in mobile and digital learning. And Dr. Joe Lo Bianco gave three presentations. Two were as a panelist, first in the English as a Lingua Franca colloquium organized by Professor Barbara Seidlhofer of the University of Vienna, and second in a Symposium on the Australian Curriculum. The new nationally coordinated curriculum for Australia, which is being organized by Dr. Michael Walsh from The University of Sydney, is being implemented over the next two years. Dr. Lo Bianco also delivered a paper on peace building as a new paradigm in language planning, in which he reported on a UN-funded project he is directing in Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand.

Several TIRF supporters participated in a symposium about MALL (mobile-assisted language learning). This session featured an excellent panel of reputable academics discussing MALL-related issues — Dr. Phil Hubbard from Stanford, Dr. Christina Gitsaki from Higher Colleges in Abu Dhabi, Dr. Jodi Crandall from University of Maryland - Baltimore County, and Dr. Aga Palalas from Athabasca University in Canada. Both Mr. Carrier and Dr. Crandall made reference to the **TIRF MALL papers** and gave the audience links to **TIRF's online resources**.



TIRF Trustees at the 2014 AILA Congress, from left to right, Michael Carrier, Jodi Crandall, Nick Saville, and Joe Lo Bianco

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**Kathleen Bailey,
Chair of TIRF**

ETS's Jacqueline Ross TOEFL Dissertation Award



The TOEFL Program at [ETS](http://ets.org) is now accepting applications for the 2014 Jacqueline Ross TOEFL Dissertation Award. The award recognizes doctoral dissertation research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge about second- or foreign-language tests and testing and/or the use and development of such tests and testing. The award consists of US \$2,500, and round-trip economy airfare, expenses, and hotel accommodations for three nights at the Language Testing Research Colloquium (LTRC), where the award is presented.

There are several criteria applicants must meet in order to be eligible for the award. First, the candidate's institution must have accepted the dissertation within three years before the date of the award

application. Second, the research must have been completed as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree, or its equivalent, at a university within or outside the United States. Lastly, although the dissertation under consideration must be in English, the research may be related to second- or foreign-language testing of any language.

There are several key dates to note. The deadline for receipt of summary and abstract, letter from advisor, and official proof of dissertation acceptance is September 16th. The call for submission of dissertations of finalists is October 21st. The deadline for receipt of dissertations is November 8th. Finally, the selection of the award recipient is January 31st.

For information on how to apply, please [click here](#). If you have any questions, please send your inquiries to TOEFL_awards@ets.org.

Cambridge English Funded Research Programme

Every year, Cambridge English Language Assessment makes funding available for various research projects to be conducted during the following calendar year. Educational institutions and suitably qualified researchers are invited to apply for funding to undertake research in relation to the Cambridge English's range of examinations and teaching qualifications.

Funded projects are typically supported up to a maximum of UK£15,000, and will be carried out between December 2014 and October

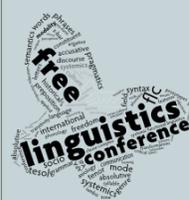
2015. Specific areas of interest include test validation, contexts of test use, test impact, and learning oriented assessment.

The call for proposals is now open. [Click here](#) to read the call. [Click here](#) to consult Cambridge's FAQs. The deadline for proposals is October 1, 2014. For further information, please [click here](#).



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Free Linguistics Conference 2014



The 8th Annual International Free Linguistics Conference will be held at the School of Foreign Languages, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, on September 26-27, 2014. There will also be post-conference workshops led by the Focus Speakers, listed below, on September 28-29, 2014.

The Free Linguistics Conference (FLC) aims to provide a widely accessible forum for linguists in all areas of research to come together and share their diverse perspectives and research. As an inclusive forum, presentations at the FLC always range across various subjects in linguistics, breaking down existing borders between schools and sub-fields.

FLC also seeks to provide an accessible conference by avoiding the staggering fees that often

prevent students and scholars from attending various linguistic forums, so there are absolutely no fees to register, attend, or present at the FLC (although travel and lodging fees will likely be incurred).

The 2014 confirmed "Focus Speakers" include David Graddol, The English Company (UK) Ltd.; Juliane House, University of Hamburg, Germany; Ken Hyland, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; James R. Martin, University of Sydney, Australia; Yang Xinzhang, Xiamen University, China; and Wang Zhenhua, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China.

Although the proposal deadline has already passed, you can still register for this conference by [clicking here](#) (look for "Register" in the upper-right corner). For more information, please e-mail Lai Liangtao at lai.liangtao@freelinguistics.org.

Chair's Report — A Desperate Plea for Help

Okay, I'm desperate. Here's the situation. The TIRF Trustees pledged a certain amount of money as a challenge grant (see [the Chair's Report in TIRF Today, July 2014](#)). For every new donor who gives US \$100 or more to TIRF, the Trustees committed to a \$200 matching pledge.

While we have had a good response to our plea for donations, there is still money on the table! By that I mean there are still funds in the challenge grant

which have not yet been triggered as donations to TIRF, because not enough new donors have met the challenge from the Board by donating \$100 or more.

Please, please can you help? This year, we had over twice as many applications for [Doctoral Dissertation Grants](#) as we have ever had before. There were proposals from countries from which we had never received applications in the past. If only a few more new donors would come

forward between now and our TIRF Board meeting in mid-September, we could increase the number of doctoral students TIRF can support. I urge you – no, I BEG you – please, if you have not yet made a monetary gift to TIRF, won't you do so in the next two weeks? Your gift would be greatly appreciated and wisely used, and the impact your funds would have will be very meaningful.

Kathi Bailey