Newsletter, March 16, 2016
American Association of Teachers of Arabic

الرابطة الأمريكية لأساتذة العربية

The American Association of Teachers would like to share with you some of its activities that took place thus far in 2016.

❋ Nomination Committee

The formation of this committee was completed in January. Its members, in alphabetical order, comprised of Steven Blackburn, Brahim Chakrani, Emma Trentman, and David William Wilmsen. The purpose of this committee is to nominate six individuals who have been AATA members for the last three consecutive years after which three on this list will be selected by AATA's general membership to replace the outgoing three members.

❋ The Nominees

In alphabetical order , these are their names and biographies.

1. ***Gergana Atanassova*** *is a Lecturer of Arabic at The Ohio State University. She holds a Ph. D. in Arabic from Georgetown University and an MA in Arabic Studies from Sofia University in Bulgaria. She has taught Arabic at Georgetown University, Michigan State University, Columbus State Community College, and the University of Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria). Her research focuses on the cognitive and affective aspects of Arabic learning in traditional classroom settings, specifically teacher-learner interaction, oral corrective feedback, reading instruction and reading anxiety, and heritage learner experiences. She has presented research and organized panels at numerous national and international conferences, including MESA, ACTFL, and NCOLCTL. She is committed to researching, applying, and improving proficiency-oriented teaching techniques and approaches in the Arabic classroom, especially the adaptation of successful techniques from the teaching of English as a Second Language and other commonly and less commonly taught languages.*

2. **Mahmoud Azaz** *holds a Ph.D. with Distinction in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching from the University of Arizona, where he started as Assistant Professor of Arabic Language and Linguistics in the School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies. He has taught Arabic at the University of Arizona and California State University in Chico, and linguistics at Ain Shams University in Cairo. He has been an active member in the Arabic Flagship team at the University of Arizona, where he acted as Assistant to the Arizona Arabic Flagship Program Director. Mahmoud has been dedicated to developing Arabic instructional materials and organizing extracurricular activities. For example, he worked as Arabic Language Tagger at the Berkeley Language Center in the Foreign Language Film Clip Project, where he clipped and tagged Arabic movies in MSA and in Egyptian and Levantine dialects for instructional purposes. His research interests include linguistic approaches to Arabic second language acquisition, Arabic pedagogy, and Arabic sociolinguistics. Recently accepted articles by Mahmoud include "Cross linguistic effects in L2 acquisition: The case of Arabic determiner phrases" (Al-'Arabiyya, 2016) and "Integrating the genre-based approach into teaching writing in Arabic as a foreign language" (Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages, 2016). He is currently authoring and co-authoring three articles that specifically address the acquisition of the construct state in Arabic and its equivalent constructions in English and Spanish. In 2013, Mahmoud was awarded the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award from University of Arizona and the Top Proposal Award from the Second Language Research Forum (SLRF) held in Brigham Young University. He is* a certified Oral *Proficiency Interview (OPI) tester of Arabic by the American Council on The Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and a professional bidirectional translator (Arabic-English). His underlying career goal is to contribute to maintaining Arabic data-driven research and bridging the gap between Arabic SLA theory and Arabic pedagogy/practice.*

3. **Brahim Chakrani** *is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics and Languages at Michigan State University. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and holds a Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education certification. He teaches advanced Arabic, Arab culture and literature. He has published research on sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics and heritage language acquisition and learning in many leading journals in the field including Applied Linguistic (Oxford University Press), Language and Cognition (Cambridge University Press), International Journal of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education (Routledge Press), among others on language attitudes and ideologies. Dr. Chakrani is a member of The Midwest Heritage Language Network, a*

collaborative language research group from five major Midwestern universities, who seeks to enhance opportunities for heritage language research, instruction, and community engagement in the region and nationwide. In this regard, he has also published articles regarding the sociolinguistics nature of the Arabic speech community in the US. As a core faculty member of the African Studies Center and the Muslim Studies Program, as well as an affiliated faculty member of the Asian Studies Center and of the Global Studies program, he aims to expend language learning research beyond the traditional confines of the academic space to include the diasporic communities. He currently serves as the Arabic language Coordinator at Michigan State University and is currently working on book projects regarding the sociolinguistic nature of Morocco and the Arabic speech community in the US. As a former FLAS recipient at Illinois, he also plans to conduct future research on the Arabic language contact situation in East Africa.

4. ***Dr. Rania Habib*** *is an Associate Professor of Linguistics and Arabic and the Coordinator of the Arabic Program in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics in Syracuse University. Dr. Habib received her M.A. and Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Florida. She specializes in sociolinguistics with focus on language variation and change. She is also interested in bilingualism, child and adolescent language and second language/dialect acquisition, phonology, cross-cultural communication, pragmatics, and syntax. Her research can be described as interdisciplinary as it combines a number of subfields of linguistics, sometimes applying formal linguistic theory such as Optimality Theory and at other times applying qualitative and quantitative methods of analyses to sociolinguistic variation and change. In addition to syntactic, phonological, pragmatic and acquisition research, she has dealt mostly with dialectal variation in Syria particularly the influence of urban dialects on rural ones through speakers' migration to urban centers or through the spread of urban linguistic features to rural areas. She has been focusing on the latter by analyzing the speech of children and adolescents and comparing their speech to their parents to discover if there is a linguistic change towards the use of urban features and to see if children show statistical learning of the frequencies of their parents or acquire variation later in life due to other factors: internal, cognitive, social, and/or socio-psychological. Her research has led to publications in prestigious journals such as* **Journal of Pragmatics**, **Language Variation and Change**, *and* **Journal of Child Language**. *It also contributed to various linguistic theories, including identity construction and second language/dialect acquisition particularly the current debate about the age in which children acquire and interpret the variation present in their environment and the factors that lead to the acquisition of such variation.*

5. ***Dris Soulaimani*** *has been in the field of Arabic teaching for over a decade. He is currently Assistant Professor of Arabic at New York University Abu Dhabi. He received his Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2012. Previously, he taught Arabic at Middlebury College, Brown University and UCLA, where he received the Distinguished Award of Teaching. Dris is invested in enhancing the resources available to Arabic teachers, and was involved in the 2010 initiative to revise the ACTFL guidelines for Arabic testing. He also created listening and reading components of proficiency tests for use by ACTFL, and currently is working on a book chapter on Arabic and second language acquisition. In addition to Arabic teaching and testing, Dris's research interests have centered on the sociolinguistic situation in the Maghrib, including issues of language, script and identity. Drawing on theories of language ideologies and discourse analysis, his work emphasizes the role of language as a multimodal complex, which includes not only structure but also different semiotic fields such as embodied gestures. He has published on language ideologies, script, and language standardization.*

6. ***Emma Trentman*** *is Assistant Professor of Arabic at the University of New Mexico. She has also taught Arabic at Michigan State University, the Middlebury Arabic Summer School, the University of Texas Summer Institute, and the Concordia Language Villages. She received her PhD in Second Language Studies from Michigan State University, and her primary research focuses on language and intercultural learning during study abroad in Arabic speaking countries. This research has been published in The Modern Language Journal, Foreign Language Annals, Al-Arabiyya, and the EUROSLA monograph series. She has implemented the use of a genre-based curriculum using the ACTFL Can-Do Statements at the University of New Mexico and is also conducting research on the outcomes of this curriculum, particularly in terms of teaching Arabic diglossia. In summer 2016, she will be leading a study abroad program to Jordan as well as directing the UNM Arabic STARTALK program. She is committed to promoting the dialogue between research and practice in the field of teaching Arabic as a foreign language* and will focus on this area as an *AATA Executive Board member.*

Ballot Casting

Following your examination of the above biographies of the nominees, please

1) *Vote for **ONLY THREE** members on the slate which AATA will provide you.*
2) *Voting will commence by email at 5pm eastern on Monday, March 21. Look for your ballot notification from SurveyMonkey (check your junk mail folders). Ballots must be cast by 5pm eastern time on Tuesday, March 29, 2016.*
3) *Candidates will take their position on April 1, 2016..*

Presentation Announcements

AATA's Panels in November 2016

1) AATA invites members and other professionals in the field of Arabic teaching to submit proposals for participation in a panel on **"Arabic Foreign Language Pedagogy: Current and Innovative Techniques."** *The panel will take place in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) on Thursday, November 17, 2016 in Boston, Massachusetts. Presentations will focus on current or innovative techniques and demonstration of such techniques in developing the language skills as well as the teaching of the various language components.* Please send your proposal to aata-panel@outlook.com by April 10, 2016. Your proposal should be 250 words. Notification of acceptance will be sent by April 25.

2) *AATA has also sponsored two panels to be presented at the 2016 annual M*ESA convention. One is entitled "**Arabic Study Abroad in Comparative Contexts: Towards an Integrated Approach"** *and the second is entitled **"Variation and Change in Modern Written Arabic".** The decision of the above two panels to be on the MESA program will be posted by the end of April on MESA home page. So we ask you to check on that and ENCOURAGE all of you to attend these panels.*

3) *None of these three panels represent the views of AATA.*

Volunteers Needed

AATA is in dire need of volunteers for the following:

1) *To join a committee with the purpose of contacting universities and colleges in North America to recruit members to join AATA*
2) *To join a committee to assist in modifying AATA's Website*
3) *To receive information from the membership to include in the next Newsletter to be published in June. For example, individual awards and grants, faculty and graduate students' publications, success stories related to the teaching and learning of Arabic, students' travel and study abroad experiences, retirees in the field and of those who departed, workshops, conferences and event announcement, etc.*