

Heba Arafah, PhD, TESOL Certified

+962-79-271-3284 | harafah04@gmail.com | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/hebaarafah/>
Citizenship: U.S. and Jordanian | Languages: English (Native), Arabic (Native)

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Bilingual, TESOL-certified applied linguist with over a decade of international experience in teaching, program management, humanitarian work, and AI localization and training data development. Adept at cross-cultural communication, global collaboration, and interdisciplinary problem-solving in high-stakes environments.

Achievements:

- Influenced culturally adapted Arabic NLU features for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) market through linguistic expertise and cross-functional collaboration at Amazon Alexa AI.
- Tripled student enrollment in Arabic language courses during the pandemic by launching targeted outreach and digital engagement strategies.
- Managed refugee resettlement referrals for 447 refugee individuals, advocating for urgent medical cases and optimizing outcomes through structured case management.

EDUCATION

University of London, Birkbeck College – London, United Kingdom Dec 2020

PhD in Applied Linguistics & Communication

Thesis: **Multilinguals' Language Choices and Perception in the UK in Light of the Brexit Referendum**

Jordan University of Science and Technology – Irbid, Jordan Feb 2006

Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics

Thesis: **An Experimental Socio-Phonetic Study of Language Variation in Jordanian Arabic**

Jordan University of Science and Technology – Irbid, Jordan June 2003

Bachelor of Arts in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Linguistics

WORK EXPERIENCE

PhD Lecturer | Royal Academy for Culinary Arts (RACA) | Amman, Jordan

July 2025 – Present

- Teach Applied English and Business Communication courses using interactive methods to build fluency, comprehension, cross-cultural competence, and professional communication skills.
- Leverage Learning Management Systems (LMS) and digital tools to enhance student engagement in classroom.

Resettlement Associate | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) | Amman, Jordan

Mar 2024 – Dec 2024

- Assessed and processed resettlement cases for 447 individuals through in-person and remote interviews.
- Prepared and submitted over 80 resettlement referrals to resettlement countries, applying case management best practices to optimize case outcomes in alignment with country-specific criteria.
- Coordinated cross-functional communication and follow-up with internal teams to address the physical, legal, and medical needs of persons of concern, ensuring case resolution.
- Advocated for high-priority medical resettlement cases, driving urgent interventions and managing follow-ups to ensure swift processing, protection, and care for individuals in critical situations.

Machine Learning Data Linguist II (Scrum Lead) | Amazon Alexa AI | Massachusetts, USA

Nov 2021 – Sept 2023

- Led a team of six data linguists as scrum lead, facilitating daily standups, removing blockers, and implementing process improvements.
- Localized and linguistically refined training data and product features, ensuring grammatical accuracy and natural language flow to support effective model training and Arabic NLU development.
- Advised cross-functional teams on regional language use and cultural norms, shaping feature design and enhancing product-market fit for Arabic-speaking in the GCC market.
- Refined localization workflows by providing structured feedback and linguistic quality assurance (QA), leading to sustained improvements in vendor performance and reduced rework for Arabic NLU content.

Arabic Studies Coordinator & Lecturer | Mount Holyoke College | Massachusetts, USA

July 2010 - Aug 2016; July 2018 – June 2019; July 2020 - Aug 2021

- Spearheaded an outreach campaign that increased Arabic program enrollment by 3x during remote learning, utilizing social media and direct communication to sustain interest and participation.
- Led the Arabic Studies Program, designing a dynamic curriculum and leveraging Learning Management Systems (LMS), visual storytelling, and digital tools (Wacom tablet, PowerPoint annotations) to enhance student engagement in both in-person and online formats.
- Designed and taught Arabic courses across the Five College Consortium, applying Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) strategies and interactive techniques to enhance fluency, comprehension, and real-world language use.
- Led three teaching assistants and three student assistants, fostering a collaborative learning environment that supported student development.
- Served as external examiner for Levantine Arabic for the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, evaluating students' language proficiency and providing feedback to support program improvement.

Interim Director of Five College Arabic Initiative | Five Colleges Incorporated | Massachusetts, USA

Jan 2019 – June 2019 (concurrent with faculty role, directorial assignment)

- Led the Five College Arabic Language Initiative, coordinating course offerings, faculty, and cultural programming across Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and UMass Amherst, resulting in enhanced cross-campus collaboration and student engagement.
- Implemented a cost-control strategy that eliminated budget overruns by equitably distributing funds across five campuses, encouraging interdepartmental collaboration, and securing additional funding where needed.
- Supervised and mentored a team of five lecturers, ensuring high-quality standards and appropriate articulation of objectives in course syllabi.

Director of Language Assistant Program | Mount Holyoke College | Massachusetts, USA

Sept 2013 – June 2014 (concurrent with faculty role, directorial assignment)

- Established the foundational structure of a new Language Assistant Program, conducting faculty consultations, developing training workshops, and overseeing payroll logistics to ensure smooth operations.

CERTIFICATES & AWARDS

World TESOL Academy – Online (2025)

TEFL/ TESOL Certificate

Fulbright – University of Massachusetts – Amherst, Massachusetts (2006 – 2007)

Fulbright Language Teaching Assistantship

CORE SKILLS

Curriculum Design | Instructional Delivery | Assessment & Feedback | Language Teaching | Learning Management Systems (Moodle, Canvas, Blackboard) | Intercultural Communication | Cultural Consulting | Agile Scrum | Microsoft Office | Natural Language Understanding (NLU) | Arabic-English Localization | Research | Data Collection & Analysis | SPSS