



Dilara Avci, center, sharing a meal with colleagues at the conference.

Carter Travel Award – Post Travel Summary

It was a wonderful week at AAAL 2025 with thoughtful sessions, presentations, and new connections! I feel refreshed, inspired, and intellectually and emotionally enriched! I had the honor of co-presenting our project on multimodal analysis of 3 Minute Thesis Presentations with a specific focus on metaphors and gestures as engagement strategies with my advisor and mentor, Dr. Christine Tardy. We received insightful comments, feedback, and questions from the audience after our presentation. We consider incorporating our responses to their feedback into the manuscript that we prepare for the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*.

It was a pleasure to engage with many scholars, colleagues, and friends all around the world and reconnect with them and also to meet with so many brilliant minds and create new connections. I had the opportunity to interact with well-known scholars in my field such as Dr. Christoph Hafner whose work is leading digital literacies scholarship. I especially enjoyed sessions on digital literacies, digital multimodal composing via generative artificial intelligence, and learner and teacher identities in writing instruction. I am excited to apply these new insights to my work including my teaching and research practices. These presentations made me aware of the recent trends in my field that follow more in-depth and qualitative work rather than quantitative research design.

The workshop I attended on creativity in applied linguistics and innovative methods of data collection in ethnographic studies was especially thought-provoking. It provided me with both theoretical foundations of such work and also practical ideas and implications that I can utilize in conducting research. Also, being part of the Conference Connections program during the

conference, I was assigned a faculty-mentor from another institution and had the opportunity to ask my questions about preparation at earlier stages for the job market and constructing a professional researcher identity. I would like to sincerely thank the Carter Travel Award providers and organizers for supporting me in attending and presenting conferences by providing financial support and helping me in my professionalization journey.

Sincerely,
Dilara Avci