

Sondoss Elnegahy

Ph.D. Applied Linguistics and Technology

Interviewed by: **Annabelle Lolinco**



Clockwise from top left: Sondoss, graduating from the University of Delaware, with her husband Ahmad, and their young children, Adam and Ethar. Photo provided by Sondos Elnegahy.

“I am here.”

It’s a powerful statement that Sondoss Elnegahy reflects on. Every night, when the house is quiet, and her two young kids are drifting off to sleep, she tucks away the difficulties of her day and is incredibly grateful for her journey. Here, at Iowa State, Sondoss is a second-year graduate student in Applied Linguistics and Technology in the Department of English, something that was not in her plans seven years ago.

Teaching English as a foreign language in Egypt, Sondoss already knew her passion for teaching. Her nomination and subsequent experience to the “English Language Teaching Materials Development: Principles, Tools, and Technologies” online course and follow-up on-site, month-long workshop catalyzed her worldview. She could no longer see herself stopping her education sojourn with her Bachelor’s. With support from her family, Sondoss became a Fulbright Scholar, earning a Master’s of Arts in Linguistics at the University of Delaware. Then, coming full circle, she returned to Iowa State University and Ames, Iowa, in 2017 to start her doctoral journey in Applied Linguistics and Technology.

It has not been without bumps in the road. In order to gain her master's, she would be living away from her husband and taking care of their first child on her own. Thankfully, her mother stayed with Sondoss during that first year abroad. She was able to reunite with her husband and had his full support from the second year on. When she came back to Iowa State, her family growing by one lovely daughter, she was ready to make it out on her own. To her delighted surprise, the faculty remembered her and have been so open in welcoming her back to Iowa State. In fact, every time she sees Dr. Volker Hegelheimer, the English department chair, she is filled with appreciation and gratitude. Dr. Hegelheimer was one of the principal investigators that received the U.S. Department of State funding that sponsored the workshop that "turned [her] world upside-down, in the best of ways."

Currently, Sondoss is studying and interested in second language pronunciation and oral communication assessment. Professor John Levis and Associate Professor Gary Ockey, respectively, have been instrumental in helping Sondoss hone her interests.

Annabelle Lolinco is a second-year chemistry student working in Theresa Windus's group and is interested in careers at the interface of chemistry, communication, and policy.