Being a Linguist on Social Media

How to Internet
Social media, with a focus on Linguist Twitter

- Can be intimidating: our goal here is to demystify it

- Highlight some **benefits** and **potential pitfalls**
  - Graduate students/postdocs
  - Faculty
  - Institutions
  - Linguistics community beyond academia

- Provide some general advice & basic takeaways
  - We used a Google form to elicit comments that are used throughout this presentation (28 responses)

- Q&A
  - Allow you to direct what we will dig deeper into with your questions
Intro: Social Media

- **Facebook**
  - Like a conversation at a house party: your friends have been invited and can weigh in, people who haven’t been invited are excluded from the conversation
  - Facebook groups & Facebook events (somewhat more public, halfway to Twitter)

- **Twitter**
  - Like a conversation that you’re having in a public park. Anyone can participate (see e.g., Maria Heath’s work on Twitter as a spoken medium!)

- **Instagram, TikTok, etc.**
  - More creative/personal (though possible to use for a professional/institutional persona)
  - Personas not in conflict with your academic life

- **Email**
  - Formal
  - Personal vs. work email
For your research

- Tweeted papers get cited more* (Eysenbach, 2011; Ortega 2014)
  - And journals with their own Twitter presence have their papers cited more
  - Science Twitter norm: “tweet storm” a paper when it comes out, including main arguments, and any important figures, to give a teaser of the paper
For your research

- Tweeted papers get cited more* (Eysenbach, 2011; Ortega 2014)
- Crowdsourcing papers, projects, grants, etc.

@UMich folks! Looking for electrical/fabrication engineers interested in applying for a grant funding cross-disciplinary research focusing on racial inequality. Our project: manufacturing EEG caps for all hair types, specifically for but not limited to, afrocentric hair.

4:30 PM · Aug 25, 2020 · Twitter Web App
For your research

- Tweeted papers get cited more* (Eysenbach, 2011; Ortega 2014)
- Crowdsource papers, projects, grants, etc.

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Sociolinguists: you know how there are dialects of American English where people say [ɹəʔən] and [kɪʔən] instead of [ɹəʔn] and [kɪʔn] (e.g. 'rotten', 'kitten')? Does anyone know if there is a paper where this has been observed? I need something to cite!

11:20 AM · Jan 16, 2019 · Twitter Web Client

17 Retweets 2 Quote Tweets 28 Likes
For your research

- Tweeted papers get cited more* (Eysenbach, 2011; Ortega 2014)
- Crowdsource papers, projects, grants, etc.
- Research ideas!
  - “Asking for a place to start with a line of research or a methodological skill and getting one or two retweets that lead to dozens of awesome responses”
  - “My live tweeting a department talk led to a colleague (not on twitter) having a research collaboration with someone who saw my tweets.”
For your research

- Tweeted papers get cited more* (Eysenbach, 2011; Ortega 2014)
- Crowdsourced papers, projects, grants, etc.
- Research ideas!
- Data collection
  - “Gathering acceptability judgments or finding out about regionalism from pools”
For your research

- Tweeted papers get cited more* (Eysenbach, 2011; Ortega 2014)
- Crowdsourse papers, projects, grants, etc.
- Research ideas!
- Data collection
- Potential pitfalls:
  - Same as talking out loud - **but** more permanent and more public
  - People misrepresenting your research
    - But the public nature lets you follow up to correct misunderstandings!
For your teaching

- Syllabus creation
  - “Connecting more widely with the academic community outside linguistics. Particularly on issues of pedagogy and justice.”
  - “I crowd sourced a lot of my teaching, especially about decolonising my modules”
For your teaching

- Syllabus creation
- Guest lecture(s)
  - “I've connected with people for setting up guest lectures in my class”
For your teaching

- Syllabus creation
- Guest lecture(s)
- Best practices
  - Ideas for online teaching
For your teaching

- Syllabus creation
- Guest lecture(s)
- Best practices
  - Ideas for online teaching
  - Making example sentences more inclusive (gender, race)

New paper w/@thai101, @sarbabin & Chris Geissler: Gender bias and stereotypes in linguistic example sentences. If you're a linguist who uses example sentences for any purpose -- be it teaching, research, or otherwise -- you should read this. ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/005367

1:09 PM · Aug 17, 2020 · Twitter Web App
56 Retweets 7 Quote Tweets 129 Likes

Nicole Holliday @mixedlinguist · Aug 18
Replying to @HadasKotek @thai101 and @sarbabin
One of my favorite sentences to demonstrate contrastive focus is “Terrance Hugged Jamaal”...taking down toxic masculinity and white supremacy in one fell swoop 😂
For your teaching

- Syllabus creation
- Guest lecture(s)
- Best practices
  - Ideas for online teaching
  - Making example sentences more inclusive (gender, race)
  - Compensating labor (especially from graduate students and ECRs)
For your teaching

- Syllabus creation
- Guest lecture(s)
- Best practices
  - Ideas for online teaching
  - Making example sentences more inclusive (gender, race)
  - Compensating labor (especially from graduate students and ECRs)
  - “I really enjoy sharing the work I do with my students (research related and pedagogical ideas).”
For your teaching

- Syllabus creation
- Guest lecture(s)
- Best practices
- Timely and interesting content
  - New thinking on topics you are interested in
For your teaching

- Syllabus creation
- Guest lecture(s)
- Best practices
- Timely and interesting content
  - New thinking on topics you are interested in
  - Twitter lists & hashtags
For your teaching

- Syllabus creation
- Guest lecture(s)
- Best practices
- Timely and interesting content
- Potential pitfalls:
  - Your students might find you on Twitter (a potential benefit as well).
  - Remember anyone can read your tweets, including your boss(es)
For networking

- Meet new linguists who do work like yours!
  - “I've really enjoyed interacting with so many different linguists. We're all kind of silly on there, but we also support each other and are happy to help out when asked.”
For networking

● Meet new linguists who do work like yours!
● Avoid subfield siloing!
  ○ “Networking is great - I've communicated with individuals and discovered work that I would not have easily discovered.”
For networking

- Meet new linguists who do work like yours!
- Avoid subfield siloing!
- Placement opportunities
  - prof development, including alt-ac
  - internships
  - post-docs, jobs
  - Invited talks
For networking

- Meet new linguists who do work like yours!
- Avoid subfield siloing!
- Placement opportunities
- Conferences!
  - Following talks
  - “I know you from Twitter”
For networking

● Meet new linguists who do work like yours!
● Avoid subfield siloing!
● Placement opportunities
● Conferences!
● Understanding context of the field
  ○ “The most precious aspect of #lingtwitter is related to linguistics as a profession: knowing the discussions that happen in the backstage of academia (for example, the recent SP issue and different views on it)”
For networking

- Meet new linguists who do work like yours!
- Avoid subfield siloing!
- Placement opportunities
- Conferences!
- Understanding context of the field
- Potential pitfalls:
For networking

- Meet new linguists who do work like yours!
- Avoid subfield siloing!
- Placement opportunities
- Conferences!
- Understanding context of the field
- Potential pitfalls:
  - “You will lose faith in a lot of your academic superheroes after reading their terrible opinions.”
For accessibility

- Makes conferences possible for many more people, including:
  - Deaf linguists
    
    "As a Deaf linguist who finds live conferences mainly inaccessible, Twitter has been an amazing virtual conference coffee break for me. I've connected with so many linguists and other academics in related fields. Even while at actual conferences (the live-tweeting trend is a lifesaver for me!)."
For accessibility

- Makes conferences more accessible for many more people, including:
  - Deaf linguists
  - Neurodivergent folks
For accessibility

- Makes conferences more accessible for many more people, including:
  - Deaf linguists
  - Neurodivergent folks
  - International conferences ($$, visa, environment, time)

  “I registered on Twitter before TISLR conference in 2019 because I was accepted at the conference but denied a European visa, but thanks to the sign linguistics community I was able to post my poster video in advance, monitor the conference on twitter and even participate in discussions (special thanks go to Dr. Jon Henner's account : )”
For community building

- Community
  - “I learn a lot about how to be a better person from the people I follow.”
  - “Follow positive accounts and accounts of people you admire, professional and otherwise!”
  - “I also like that Linguist Twitter makes Alt-Ac linguists visible. As I approach the end of my graduate program I am hopeful that I won't necessarily fade into obscurity when the market eats me alive and I don't make it.”

@typologianista (Kelly Yoshida)

CRABTENT WARNING!!!

I wanted this to be real so I googled it and was not disappointed:

Did you mean: carpitalism

Crabitalism: 
Just carpitalism with crabs.
Crabitalism allows for better prices and sales in the ocean.

by Veggieables March 13, 2018
For community building

- The humans behind the research
  - “As much as it is very academic, I think it gives a human side to profs/students that you don’t always get in person if you only see someone twice a week for a course.”
For community building

- Seeing other people struggling with the same things
- Hearing about strategies for dealing with “issues” (interdepartmental, advancement, etc.)
- Challenge: personal vs. professional
  - Jamaal Muwwakkil “We can’t teach, read, or advise like we don’t have bodies.”
For public engagement

- Media outreach
  - “I've been contacted to be featured in an article based on one of my tweets!”

- Bridging the Town and Gown divide
  - “The platform is fantastic for engagement and education with the public at large”
For public engagement

- Engaging our expertise outside our research
  - “connecting more widely with the academic community outside linguistics. Particularly on issues of pedagogy and justice.”

- Cross-disciplinary organizing

  MIPT — Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology
  @mipt_eng

  Don’t miss an excellent opportunity to level up in math, physics, informatics, computer linguistics or cross-disciplinary fields with our Winter Olympiad School!

  Read more about the best way to stay productive on your winter holidays on our website: mipt.ru/english/news/m...

- Spreading the word about language and justice
  - “I discovered my favorite (Vocal Fries!) and other linguistics podcasts which I assign in courses”
For public engagement

- Pitfalls
  - Protecting your time!
  - Trolls can eat up your time and emotions (blocking/muting is your friend)
As an institutional account (podcast, lab, society)

- It’s a conversation - important to respond
  - Treat your audience like your friends/collleagues
  - Create community by engaging in topics relevant to your mission
  - Respond inside the same ecosystem (tweet to tweet, or Twitter DM)
  - Exception: subtweeting (sometimes better NOT to respond)

- Amplifying research that is relevant to your mission and objectives

- Crowdsource ideas/information from your audience to better serve your audience
Trolls and harassment?

- It happens. *Especially* to junior +/- POC +/- women.
- **Strategies**
  - Tag in accomplices (esp. white +/- men)
  - Mute (they can’t tell you can’t see what they’ve written)
  - Block and move on
  - Soft blocking (block and immediately unblock)
  - Remind yourself that it’s more important to talk to people who might be reading the troll’s words than to the troll themself
General guidelines & takeaways

● Different social media sites are **different universes**
  ○ À la personal email vs. work email
● It’s **public** and on the internet
  ○ Anything you write can and will be screenshotted
● Democratize the field
  ○ Invite **all** to join in the conversation, not just “professional linguists”
● Ethical responsibilities
  ○ Do not abuse people
  ○ Do not misrepresent yourself (expertise, identity, etc.)
● Who to follow
To sum up!

- Be yourself!!
  - There is a whole community waiting to meet you :)
- Twitter can be useful for a LOT of things!
  - Research
  - Teaching
  - Networking
  - Accessibility
  - Community building
  - Institutional accounts
- Follow us:
  - @betsysneller @megandfigueroa @mixedlinguist @raciolinguistic @carrie_gee