
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

 **Gareth Roberts** @garicgymro

Paper with @betsysneller finally out!

brill.com/view/journals/...


(If you don't have access to LDC, all my publications are available here: sites.google.com/site/drgarethr...)



Empirical foundations for an integrated study of languag...
Abstract Half a century ago, Uriel Weinreich, William Labov, and Marvin Herzog laid out a programmatic vision...
@brill.com

10:07 AM · Sep 11, 2020 · Twitter Web App

14 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 22 Likes


 **Gareth Roberts** @garicgymro · Sep 11

Replying to @garicgymro

We start by noting that Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (1968) imagined a future science of language evolution incorporating biological and cultural evolution, with sociolinguistics as an integral part.


We think of a theory of language change as part of a larger theoretical inquiry into linguistic evolution as a whole. A theory of linguistic evolution would have to show how forms of communication characteristic of other biological genera evolved (with whatever mutations) into a proto-language distinctively human, and then into languages with the structures and complexity of the speech forms we observe today. It would have to indicate how present-day languages evolved from the earliest attested (or inferred) forms for which we have evidence; and finally it would determine if the present course of linguistic evolution is following the same direction, and is governed by the same factors, as those which have operated in the past.⁶

1 2 9

 **Gareth Roberts** @garicgymro · Sep 11


We further note that this has not come to pass and that, instead, we have separate fields of language evolution and sociolinguistics, with too little communication between them...

1 6

 **Gareth Roberts** @garicgymro · Sep 11

We then propose our own programmatic vision of a future in which these two fields communicated properly...


1 5

 **Gareth Roberts** @garicgymro · Sep 11


We arrange this around Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog's (1968) five problems for the study of language change, which we compare explicitly with Tinbergen's four questions.

I'm proud of this paper.

2 5

 **Gareth Roberts** @garicgymro · Sep 11

Also, just look at how many exciting papers are in the same issue!!!

 **Jonas Götte** @jonasnoelle · Sep 11

Part II of our 2020 special issue on language evolution is now out in LDC: brill.com/view/journals/... (co-edite dbay @hartmast & @yrgsupp)

Papers by @CarlaHudsonKam & @ToxicMaple, @katie_mudd et al, @garicgymro & @betsysneller, @MagnusPharao & @ckomeara, and @drussellmichie et al

[Show this thread](#)

By: Gareth Roberts and Betsy Sneller
Pages: 168–229

For your research

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



Rachela Bella
@rachelawiselure

@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)
- Crowdsourced papers, projects, grants, etc.



Dr. Lisa Davidson
@lisa_b_davidson

...

Sociolinguists: you know how there are dialects of American English where people say [ɹɑrən] and [kɪrən] instead of [ɹɑʔn] 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)
- Crowdsourced 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)
- Crowdsourced 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

 **Kirby Conrod** @kirbyconrod

"getting people to talk in zoom class" tips thread - I'll share mine and you share yours, please!

10:00 PM · Oct 6, 2020 · Twitter for Android

25 Retweets 3 Quote Tweets 117 Likes

 **Kirby Conrod** @kirbyconrod · 15h
Replying to @kirbyconrod

tip 1: in breakout rooms, ask one person to manage the screenshare or whiteboard, and everyone else tell them what to write/draw. works GREAT for syntax trees, for example, and they feel less self-conscious (can also do this out of breakout rooms, if the group is <25ish)

 4   31 

 **Kirby Conrod** @kirbyconrod · 15h

tip 2: rather than teacher calling on everyone, e.g. for introductions or anything where everyone has to share, do it popcorn style! at the end of someone's turn, they choose who should go next. use participant markers to mark who's had a turn yet

 3   21 

 **Kirby Conrod** @kirbyconrod · 15h

tip 3: any zoom meeting longer than forty minutes needs a BREAK. tell em to go stretch and drink some water, and do it yourself as well.

 2  2  33 

 **Kirby Conrod** @kirbyconrod · 15h

tip 4: put blank slides in your ppt at strategic spots to write down answers/ideas from volunteers. the blank slide feels motivating - we want to fill it up!

 2   21 

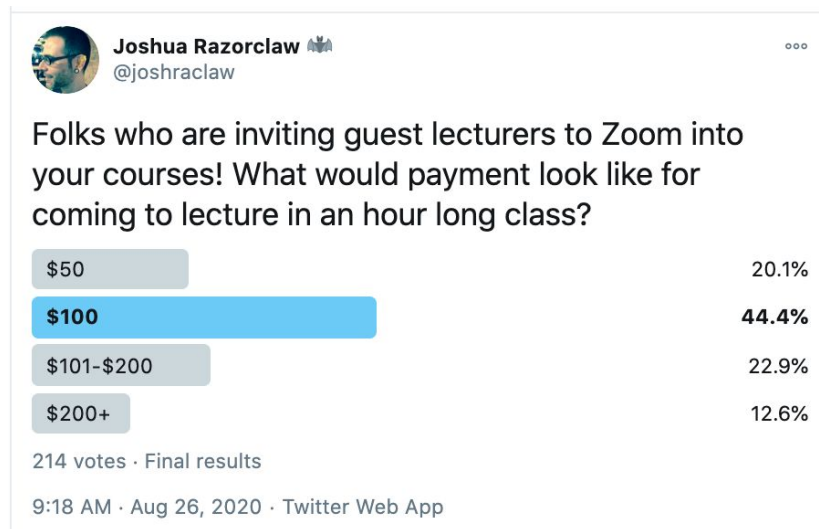
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 - Ideas for online teaching
 - Making example sentences more inclusive (gender, race)



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 - Compensating labor (especially from graduate students and ECRs)



For your teaching

- Syllabus creation
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 - 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

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- 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)”

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- 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."



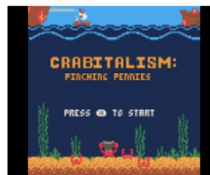
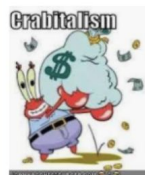
Kelly Yoshida N is AFK @typologianista · Apr 17

🦀🦀🦀 CRABTENT WARNING!!! 🦀🦀🦀

cc: @raciolinguistic @teioh @gweezlouiise @Avid_Matia @megandfigueroa @poopNpop

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

Did you mean: *capitalism*



TOP DEFINITION

Crabitalism

Just capitalism with crabs.

Crabitalism *allows* for better prices and *sales* in the ocean.

by Veggieables March 13, 2018

PHOTO: GUY

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
@mpt_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: mpt.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/colleagues
 - 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 themselves

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

Q&A