Graduate students and the graduate curriculum

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Overview

- Why graduate students are crucial to efforts to diversify the linguistics curriculum

- Graduate students' unique position within academia

- The graduate linguistics curriculum

- Critical reflection questions & examples

Key question

What are our next steps when efforts to diversify undergraduate curricula successfully attract more underrepresented students to graduate linguistics programs?

Undergraduate focus in curriculum initiatives

- Discussions about diversifying linguistic curriculum and inclusive pedagogy focus on undergraduates, for good reason

- There are no linguistics faculty or grad students without linguistics undergrads

- We cannot change the dynamics and demographics of the field without addressing the largest population within the field

Graduate students are students, too

- Discussions about making the linguistics curriculum more inclusive of <u>all</u> students that does not include graduate students are incomplete

Graduate students are students, too

- Where/how do graduate students fit into efforts to diversify curriculum?

- What are our specific roles within linguistics departments and academia more broadly?

- How are we different from but also inseparable from undergraduates and faculty?

The role of graduate students & the graduate linguistics curriculum

Informing my discussion

- My own experiences
  - Black woman
  - Interdisciplinary researcher who was not a linguistics undergrad
  - Linguistics department at a U.S. research university
  - First person in my family to pursue a Ph.D., but not the first with a graduate degree

Informing my discussion

- Research on diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education
  - My own (dissertation research) and others'

- Insights gained through conversations with gracious and brilliant academic colleagues
  - Including my co-presenters!

Grad students are crucial to curriculum initiatives

- Still learning linguistics while we are teaching linguistics
  - Perspectives on UG and graduate curriculum as BOTH student and instructor

- Most early career graduate students are closer in age to UGs
  - More recent experiences of being a linguistics UG

More reasons why we're crucial

- More facetime with a wider variety of UGs as TAs, RA supervisors, etc.
  - Hear and see UGs successes/struggles/feedback in real time
  - Often things that UGs don't feel comfortable sharing with a professor or in course reviews

Even more reasons why we're crucial

- Future faculty are current graduate students!
    - Establish inclusive teaching practices early and start creating change now
    - *Adapt* as faculty rather than starting from scratch or overhauling what we learned

- As a group, we're younger & more diverse than faculty (especially senior faculty)
    - More politically progressive, thinking about diversity and inclusion in new and critical ways

Grad students have a unique set of roles

- Students (more advanced than undergrads)

- Researchers-in-training (considered less skilled than faculty) but experts in our topic area

- Teachers-in-training (less experience than faculty) but often little pedagogy training

- Professionals but still in need of professionalization

Grad students have a unique set of roles

- What does this mean for the graduate linguistic curriculum?
  - Curriculum is about more than classes
  - If diversifying curriculum is a strategy to make linguistics as a field more inclusive for/of all students, then that includes addressing all aspects of the graduate curriculum

The graduate linguistics curriculum

- Content courses (theoretical/topic courses)
  - e.g., sociolinguistics, phonology, morphology, topics seminars
  - Read research and write a paper

- Research methods courses
  - e.g., ethnography, experimental phonetics, computational methods
  - Read research and DO the methods (and write a paper)

Also the graduate linguistics curriculum

- Professionalization ("hidden curriculum")
  - Developing a research program
  - Presenting research & networking
  - Publishing
  - Pedagogical development
  - Mentoring/supervising activities
  - Outreach and community activities, service
  - Applying for fellowships, grants, awards
  - Preparing for the job market

None of the curriculum should be "hidden"

- Hidden curriculum particularly disadvantages:
  - First generation students (as UG or grad)
  - Underrepresented students of color
  - Low-income students
  - International students less familiar with U.S. institutional practices

- Recruiting & admitting students form more diverse backgrounds must be accompanied by structural changes (i.e., changes in the curriculum) to ensure equitable classroom, research, and professionalization experiences

Critical reflections on inclusive graduate curriculum

This is meant primarily as an exercise in critical reflexivity rather than to give specific answers. What are the answers for your department or program?

Graduate coursework

- Which students' major research interests are represented in available courses and whose aren't?

  - Can all students get the key/foundational theoretical knowledge they need through your department?

- Which graduate courses are required and which courses are optional?

  - Which courses can be waived and why?

Graduate coursework

- How are courses structured? What prior knowledge is assumed?

- What are the language requirements and what are their justifications?

Graduate coursework (w/examples)

- Which students' major research interests are represented in available courses and whose aren't?
  - Taking courses in other depts to supplement dept offering = extra work and time, can affect time to degree
  - My case: 7 extra courses (for credit), no graduate Lang & Race course

- Which graduate courses are required and which courses are optional?
  - e.g., theoretical/structural courses are required for all students, socio courses are optional (or maybe 1 is required)

Graduate coursework (w/examples)

- How are courses structured? What prior knowledge is assumed?
  - How will students from non-linguistics backgrounds fare in any MA level course?
  - Do students who were not linguistics majors in UG students have option to take UG courses to get up to speed ?
  - My case: took Advanced Phonology w/o having taken UG phonetics or phonology course, had to study independently & ask peers for lots of help

Graduate coursework (w/examples)

- Language requirements
  - What are the requirements for students who already know multiple languages (e.g., international students)?
  - What options are available to students if they need to take language courses to meet this requirement? Are they penalized for the impact on time to degree?
    - Which students are most likely to need to take language courses?
  - My case: 5 quarters of UG lang courses (4x a week)

Teaching

- How are faculty modeling inclusive teaching and research practices in both undergraduate and graduate courses?

- What departmental or institutional resources do graduate students have for pedagogical training?

- What opportunities do they have to implement what they learn?

Teaching (w/examples)

- How are faculty modeling inclusive teaching and research practices in both undergraduate and graduate courses?
  - Grads are learning how to teach: set a good example!
  - In grad courses, model discussing positionally and how it shapes research and teaching
  - Especially important for faculty from dominant groups to do this

Teaching (w/examples)

- What departmental or institutional resources do graduate students have for pedagogical training? What opportunities do they have to implement what they learn?

  - How does your dept make it possible for grad students who care about inclusive pedagogy and curriculum design to become better teachers?

  - UCSB: Instructional Development, Center for Innovative Teaching, Research, and Learning, department ICI
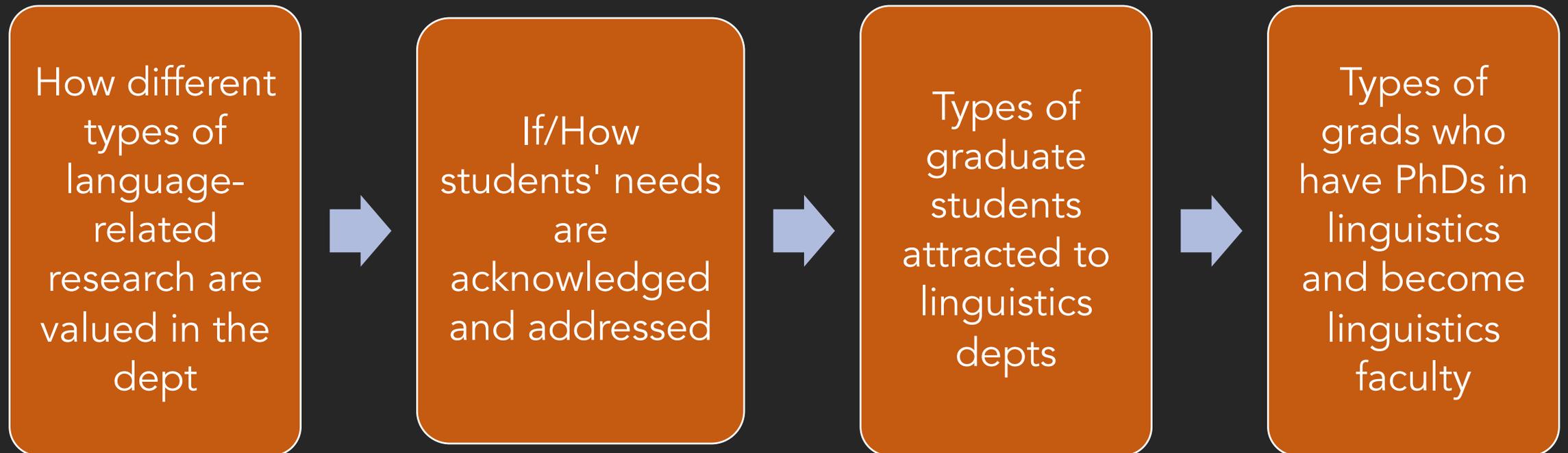
Professionalization

- How has your dept institutionalized professionalization in ways that are accessible to everyone? (i.e., how is the hidden curriculum made explicit and institutionalized in your department?)
  - UCSB: series of professionalism workshops is a degree requirement, Anne Charity Hudley's professionalism seminar courses

Professionalization

- What resources are available for students from minoritized or underrepresented backgrounds that speak to their experiences?
  - e.g., do all students receive the same generic information about the academic job market?
  - Are there discussions within the dept about how race, gender, etc. impact publishing, grants, interviews, hiring?

Curriculum sends clear messages

- "What type of research do we value most?"
- "What types of students (people) do we value most?"

| How different types of language-related research are valued in the dept | → | If/How students' needs are acknowledged and addressed | → | Types of graduate students attracted to linguistics depts | → | Types of grads who have PhDs in linguistics and become linguistics faculty |

A few final questions
(h/t Professor Anne Charity Hudley)

- If you are admitting Black students or other students from underrepresented backgrounds into your graduate programs, how are you committing to being part of their intellectual communities?

- How are you challenging dominant expectation for students to simply assimilate to existing departmental/hegemonic linguistics culture?

Thank you!

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Since our Q&A time is finite …

- Please be as specific (and concise) as possible, but be cognizant of what might be department-internal information
- Please avoid extremely specific "What should my department do?" questions
- Feel free to ask follow-ups to the questions posed during the presentations
- Please: no comments disguised as questions!
- We'd love to hear your general feedback if you don't have a question (or we don't get to your question) – you can email or tweet at any of us