How did (American) women linguists become women in linguistics?

Margaret Thomas
Boston College
Outline of presentation

• Gender & linguistics as a science before 1924
• Experiences of women members in early LSA
• Mid-century shifts in status of women linguists
• Late 20th cen. feminist self-consciousness in LSA
• Consequences for LSA of drive for gender equality
Gender & linguistics before 1924:

Bloomfield’s identification of linguistics as a *science*
Phillips (1990): From late 1600s to 1880s, the sciences were considered appropriate pursuits for women.
Classics & philology were men’s fields.
Gender & the identification of linguistics as a science

From the 1860s...

Barriers to the inclusion of women in higher education eroded

Many women abandoned pursuit of science

‘As women set out on the road to equality, they resigned the scientific identity that had been theirs since the 17th century’

(Phillips 1990: 235)
With science no longer identified with women, study of language was conceptualized as a science.
Experiences of women members in the early days of the LSA
Women were present from the beginning of the LSA.
...and for an interval in the 1930s, women were explicitly invited to join the Society

Membership in the Society is not restricted to professed scholars in linguistics. All persons, whether men or women, who are in sympathy with the objects of the Society, are invited to give it their assistance in furthering its work. Application for membership should be made to the Secretary, Professor Roland G. Kent, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

From the masthead of *Language*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1934) through Vol. 15, No. 1 (1939)
Experiences of women members in early LSA

Nevertheless, women’s presence in the LSA was subject to ‘the routine ignoring of all female scholars’ (Joos 1986: 9)

• Absence of women in official roles within LSA

In 10 of the first 20 years of the history of the LSA, no woman held any official position in the organization

21 men were elected President of the Society before the first woman held that rank;

17 years passed before the second woman was elected;

21 additional years elapsed before a third woman served as President
1946: **FIRST** woman President of the LSA

E. Adelaide Hahn (1893–1967)
1963: Second woman President of the LSA
Mary R. Haas (1910–1996)
1985: Third woman President of the LSA
Victoria A. Fromkin (1923–2000)
Experiences of women members in early LSA

- Absence of women in official roles within LSA

- Low rate of publication of articles in *Language* by women authors
Experiences of women members in early LSA

The first 100 issues of *Language* (1925–1949) include 28 instances where a woman (co-)authored a ‘regular’ article (vs. 458 instances of male (co-)authors)

Among those 28, 17 (60%) represent the work of only 3 extraordinary women scholars

E. Adelaide Hahn  
Edith F. Claflin  
Mary R. Haas
Experiences of women members in early LSA

- Absence of women in official roles within LSA
- Low rate of publication of articles in *Language* by women

- There was 1 book review by a female reviewer in the first 91 issues of *Language*

  1926 Sarah T. Barrows reviewed Helen M. Peppard’s *The Correction of Speech Defects* in Vol. 2, No. 4

  1947 Next review by a woman reviewer published in Vol. 23, No. 3
Experiences of women members in early LSA

- Absence of women in official roles within LSA

- Low rate of publication of articles in *Language* by women

- 1 book review by a woman in first 91 issues of *Language*

- General treatment of women as marked in LSA


  Scant reference to women’s professional milestones under ‘Notes & Personalia’ in *Language*

  Symbolic evidence: address forms in LSA publications highlighted women’s personal rather than professional status
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1926</th>
<th>1924</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women listed as ‘Title + Initials + Surname’&lt;br&gt;Men listed as ‘Initials + Surname’</td>
<td>Women listed as ‘Surname, Personal Name’&lt;br&gt;or as ‘Surname, Title’&lt;br&gt;(Most) men listed as ‘Surname, Initials’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1926</strong></td>
<td><strong>1924</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. M. Allen, L. Allen.</td>
<td>Jacob, C. F.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss H. Dean, R. J. DeFerrari, N. W. Dewitt, H. C. Doyle, D. L. Drew.</td>
<td>Kaufman, P.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miss H. S. Eaton, O. F. Emerson.</td>
<td>Keith, O. L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miss L. Haessler, Miss E. A. Hahn, R. E. S. Hoffner, J. W. Hewitt, R. C. Horn, H. M. Hubbell.</strong></td>
<td>Kent, R. G.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. R. Nykli.</td>
<td>LeDue, Alma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miss H. H. Tanzer.</td>
<td>Malone, Kemp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(79)</td>
<td>Maxfield, H. K.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For the Local Committee (W. T. Semple, Chairman; C. W. Blegen, Miss Hilda Buttenwieser, R. K. Haek, Miss Elizabeth Kellogg, A. K. Laing, C. M. Lotspeich), Professor Lotspeich presented briefly the arrangements which had been made for the meeting: that the University of Cincinnati would entertain the delegates at luncheon on Wednesday; that Mr. and Mrs. Charles Phelps Taft would receive the delegates at their home on Wednesday and Friday afternoon, to view their art collections and partake of hospitality, and also invited the delegates to a concert on the piano, by Mme. Marguerite Liszniewska, on Friday evening, at the Hotel Gibson, after the joint banquet of the societies; and other matters pertaining to the joint sessions and the banquets of the societies.</td>
<td>Messer, W. S.</td>
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<td>Michelson, Truman</td>
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<td>Osele, Dr.</td>
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Mid-20th century shifts in the status of women linguists
Mid-century stagnation or retreat for women scientists in general

Rossiter (1995)
Mid-20th century shifts in status of women linguists

- From 1932 to 1962, the number of women with PhDs teaching in all fields decreased from 32% to 22%

Pollard (1977: 188)
Mid-20th century shifts in status of women linguists

Numbers of new PhDs awarded to men vs. women, 1940–1960, in engineering, psychology, & anthropology

(Rossiter 1995: 34)
Mid-20th century shifts in status of women linguists
Mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century shifts in status of women linguists

• Stagnation or retreat for women scientists in general

• A partial \textit{exception} in linguistics?

Activities of \textit{women} members of the \textit{Summer Institute of Linguistics} (now: ‘SIL International’)
‘Wycliffe Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1963’

Photo: http://www.whoa.org/64/hills/19bhlr.jpg
Photo: C. Capa, Wycliffe Bible Translators (1963: 33)
‘[SIL affiliate] Mariana Slocum (right) learns the Tzeltal language from a member of the community’ (1941)
Photo: http://www.sil.org/about/history

From 1944 to 1970, **36** SIL-affiliated authors published in *Language*

Of those **36**:

**Women** (co-)authored **12** (33%)
**Men** (co-)authored **24** (67%)
Selected SIL-affiliated women scholars’ contributions to *Language*, 1940-1970

1949 ‘Huasteco intonations and phonemes’
Raymond Larsen & Eunice V. Pike

1956 ‘Simulfixation in aspect markers in Mezquital Otomi’
Ethel E. Wallis

1958 ‘Mazatec dialect history’
Sarah C. Gudschinsky

1965 ‘Amuzgo syllable dynamics’
Amy Bauernschmidt

Photo: C. Capa, Wycliffe Bible Translators (1963: 85)
Mid-20th century shifts in status of women linguists

Works by Mary Richie Key

Male/Female Language: With a Comprehensive Bibliography
Language Change in South American Indian Languages
Comparative Tacanan phonology. With Cavineña phonology and notes on...
The grouping of South American Indian languages
Nonverbal Communication Today: Current Research (Contributions to the...
Indo-European Languages, Vol. II, Intercontinental Dictionary Series
Uralic, Semitic, Pacific and Miscellaneous Languages, Vol. III,...
Quinín Dios Quichichiuac in Eluiac Huan in Talticpac
Catherine the Great's linguistic contribution
Polynesian and American linguistic connections
Paralanguage and Kinesics: Nonverbal Communication
South American Indian Languages, Vol. I.
Intercontinental Dictionary...

Mary Richie Key was born in Julian, California on March 19, 1924. She graduated with a B.A. in education from Westmont College (1944). She also worked as an aircraft riveter during the Second World War, when she met and married Harold Key. After the war, the couple spent almost two decades in Mexico and Bolivia working among native American Indian communities for the Wycliffe Bible Translators and doing research on the local languages. Mary attended linguistics summer sessions sponsored by the Linguistic Society of America at the University of Chicago (1954), at the University of Michigan (1959), and at UCLA as a postdoctoral visitor (1966). She had earned her Ph.D. in linguistics at the University of Texas in 1963. After three years as an assistant professor of linguistics at Chapman College (1963-1966), she was among the first faculty members hired at UC Irvine, where she was appointed assistant professor in the English Department (1966). In 1970, she received a full appointment as Associate Professor in the School of Humanities’ Program in Linguistics, which she had helped develop, and which later became a full-fledged department within the School of Social Sciences (1990). Mary was promoted to full professor in 1978 and retired in 1991. She continued to be active in her research throughout her retirement. She died in Tustin on September 5, 2003. She is survived by her daughter Mary Ellen Ellis and her son Tom Key. Her eldest son, Hayden, died in 1984. Mary and Harold Key had divorced in 1964. Mary had married Audrey Patton in 1976. He died in 1996.

A moving memorial for Mary Key was conducted on the Irvine Campus on November 7, 2003, where family members, friends, students, and colleagues paid their respects, remembered Mary in touching and sometimes humorous testimonials, and celebrated her full and productive life. As individuals who knew Mary, many of those present at this memorial were only aware of a relatively small
Late 20th century feminist self-consciousness in the LSA
1970  American Historical Association
‘Committee on the Status of Women’

- Collect data about representation of ♂ vs. ♀ faculty members in field of history, across ranks ✓ LSA
- Survey new History PhDs, regarding
  ...graduate education ✓ LSA
  ...job search
  ...evidence of sex-based discrimination
Late 20th century feminist self-consciousness in the LSA

1970: American Historical Assoc.: ‘Rose Report’

Emergence of COSWL

1971  ‘Women’s Organizing Committee’ est.; renamed ‘Women’s Caucus’
Solicits data about sexual discrimination

1972  LSA Grievance Committee est.

1973  1st survey on status of women in linguistics
Bibliography on ♀ & language initiated

1974  COSWL officially established
COSWL persuades LSA to adopt blind review of annual mtg. abstracts
COSWL leadership 1970s

Georgette loup, 1971-72

Jacquelyn Schachter, 1972-75

Ellen Prince, 1978

Lynette Hirschman, 1971-72

Georgia M. Green, 1979

Suzette Elgin, 1980

Deborah Keller-Cohen, 1976-77

Nancy Dorian, 1981
Late 20\textsuperscript{th} century feminist self-consciousness in the LSA

1980  Creation of \textit{Guidelines} on non-sexist usage proposed

1981  2\textsuperscript{nd} survey on status of ♀

1982  Symposium at Annual Mtg. ‘Distinguished 20\textsuperscript{th} cen. ♀ linguists’

1985  \textit{Victoria A. Fromkin, Pres. of LSA}

3\textsuperscript{rd} survey queries ♀ institutional status, individual experiences

1986  \textit{Barbara H. Partee, Pres. of LSA}

1987  \textit{Elizabeth C. Traugott, Pres. of LSA}

1\textsuperscript{st} COSWL panel on professional skills for graduate students

1988  COSWL panel on prof. skills for grad students & junior faculty

1989  COSWL sponsors Cornell conference on ♀ in linguistics
**COSWL leadership 1980s**

- Manjari Ohala, 1982
- Francine W. Frank, 1983-84; 1996-97
- Donna Jo Napoli, 1985
- Yamuna Krachu, 1986
- Alice C. Harris, 1987
- Dorothy Disterheft, 1988
- Eloise Jelineck, 1989
- Penelope Eckert, 1990-91
Late 20th century feminist self-consciousness in the LSA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Guidelines on non-sexist usage published</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1993 | Lila R. Gleitman, Pres. of LSA  
    COSWL panel on language & gender research |
| 1995 | Panel on careers of ♀ linguists  
    Symposium: ‘Linguistic perspectives on sexual harassment’  
    Summer Institute: 6-session mentoring workshop |
| 1996 | 3rd survey  
    Lively debate over Guidelines |
| 1997 | Janet D. Fodor, Pres. of LSA  
    ‘Lives of ♀ linguists’ audiovisual presentation  
    Summer Inst.: ‘Survival skills’ workshop; ‘WILMA’ launched |
| 1998 | Panel on non-traditional careers for ♀ linguists |
| 1999 | Joan Bresnan, Pres. of LSA |
COSWL leadership, 1990s

Sally McConnell-Ginet, 1992

Craige Roberts, 1992

Dawn Bates, 1993

Victoria L. Bergvall, 1993-94
Janet M. Bing, 1995

Monica Macaulay, 1999

David Silva, 1996-97

Susan D. Fischer, 1998
Late 20th century feminist self-consciousness in the LSA

2000  COSWL mission statement drops reference to sex discrimin./harassment

2001  Symposium: ‘Diversity in language & gender’
      COSWL panel on language & gender research

2003  Inter’l Gender & Language Assoc. branches out from COSWL

2004  Joan Bybee, Pres. of LSA
      Symposium: ‘Language & gender: State of the art’

2006  Sally McConnell-Ginet, Pres. of LSA

2007  COSWL acknowledges improved climate for ♀ in linguistics

2008  Ellen Prince, Pres. of LSA

2009  Sarah Thomason, Pres. of LSA
      Should COSWL est. liaison with CEDL? COSIAC? Ethics Comm.?

2010  Symposium: ‘Issues in language & sexuality’

2011  Sandra Chung, Pres. of LSA

2012  Keren Rice, Pres. of LSA

2013  Ellen M. Kaisse, Pres. of LSA
COSWL leadership, 2000s

Jennifer Hay, 2000

Jeri Jaeger, 2001-02

Norma Mendoza-Denton, 2001-02

Robin Queen, 2002-03

Jack Sidnell, 2003-04

Rachel Walker, 2005-06

Paula Kempchinsky, 2005-06

Kathryn Remlinger, 2008-09
COSWL leadership 2010s

Janet Fuller, 2009–10

Rebeka Campos-Astorzika, 2010-11

Elizabeth Canon, 2011-12

Carolina Gonzalez, 2012-13

Emily Nava, 2013-14

Ana Sánchez-Munoz, 2014-15
Late 20th century feminist self-consciousness in the LSA

AHA’s ‘Rose Report’ recommendations

- Initiate & continue surveillance of institutional policies, practices
- Assist individual women in developing teaching & scholarly careers
- Involve more women in AHA formal activities
- Develop means of rectifying grievances resulting from discrimination

COSWL, 1970—

- Periodic surveys
- Workshops; panels; WILMA
- ✓
- LSA Grievance Committee
What have been the consequences for the LSA of the drive for gender equality?
Remembering the Rose Report
Noralee Frankel, November 2010

The AHA has a long-standing concern for the status of women in a profession traditionally dominated by men. Over the years the Association has conducted studies and adopted resolutions designed to draw attention to the status of women, and to advocate for change. The “Rose Report” of 1970 is one of the more significant documents in this history.

In December 1969, the Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession (CCWHP, now referred to as the CCWH) drafted a resolution calling on the AHA Council to gather information on the status of women in the profession. Consequently, the AHA Council adopted its own resolution calling for a commission to study and collect “statistics and other information on the numbers, positions, and treatment of women in the historical profession at all levels (student admissions, grants, degrees awarded, faculty employment, salary, promotion, etc.),” to arrange sessions on women’s issues at the 1970 and subsequent annual meetings, to make recommendations on how the Council might address the concerns of women in the profession, and to document specific cases of gender discrimination.

On November 9, 1970, the eight-month old AHA Committee on the Status of Women issued a report in part based on the CCWHP resolution. This report is affectionately known as the “Rose Report” after the chair Willie Lee Rose (she did not see the irony of referring to herself as chairman in the report). The report began “The present demand for social justice for women coincides with the permanent interest of the historical profession. To increase the opportunities open to women in the field of history is to advance the quality of the profession itself.” The AHA positions in the report included opposing discrimination against women at all levels and a commitment to work to enhance opportunities for women in the historical profession. It stated that the AHA “will establish a standing Committee on Women Historians to develop the sustained attention and pressure indispensable to an advance in the status of women.” One of the recommended policies was to make public information on the status of women and to find models for departments and institutions working toward “enlarging the role of women in the profession.”

The Rose Report is a fascinating cautionary tale. In the summary of findings, the report pointed out that “the proportion of women receiving doctorates in all fields...has been lower in the 1950s and 1960s than it was in 1920, 1930, or 1940.” The decline of women faculty within coeducational liberal arts colleges was “most startling.” In 1959-60 sixteen percent of full professors in history were women. But by 1968-69 only one woman full professor in history remained at coeducational colleges, and during the following year she retired. The retirement of the earlier generation of women as well as the “tendency to hire men in the post war years” caused the shortage of female faculty.

The report did not mince words about the discrimination that women historians faced. It cited a study that stated that those who “discriminated against women in academic employment also hold general views concerning female inferiority.” Male faculty that held the most clout in a department most likely held such attitudes. The first appendix breaks down men and women faculty in history departments by key years and selected graduate, liberal arts, and women’s colleges. These statistics were updated in 1977 with little change at the full professor rank but some improvement at assistant professor. In the late 1960s and 1970s, the rise in female doctorates would eventually change the statistics of full professors.
What consequences for the LSA of drive for gender equality?

AHA’s ‘Rose Report’, revisited in 2010

• By 1990, ‘a small, nearly invisible and isolated group of women historians had grown into a robust, visible, collegiate minority’

• 38% of PhDs in history go to women

• Rate of hiring, salary at entry level commensurate with those of men

• Continuing problems:
  Ethnic & racial underrepresentation
  Salaries of women scholars beyond entry level still depressed relative to men

LSA

• 60% in linguistics (COSWL, 2008)

• ✓
What consequences for the LSA of drive for gender equality?

- More attention to **next generation of linguists**
What consequences for the LSA of drive for gender equality?

• More institutional self-awareness
What consequences for the LSA of drive for gender equality?

- More attention to the next generation of linguists
- More institutional self-awareness
- Rose report (1970):
  ‘...the problems facing women in academic life are reflections of general problems affecting both men and women... Most of our recommendations would serve to provide a more liberal, encouraging, and progressive atmosphere for all students and teachers of history.’
(Rose report, con’t.) ‘...Our profession will be strengthened to the extent that its practices are recognized as equitable...and designed to encourage and develop the best talent available within our ranks....’