

## Foreword: Special issue of *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America* 2024

Ann Bunger, Kazuko Hiramatsu & Michal Temkin Martinez\*

This special issue of *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America (PLSA)* highlights presentations from an organized session at the 2024 annual meeting of the LSA celebrating the LSA's Centennial. The session, titled "Teaching Linguistics: A Glimpse into the Future," was sponsored by two teaching-related groups within the LSA: the Special Interest Group (SIG) on Scholarly Teaching in Linguistics (SoTL), and the Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on Scholarly Teaching and SoTL in Linguistics. The goal of the session, and consequently of this volume, was to provide a vision for what the future of linguistics pedagogy can be like by featuring evidence-based instructional approaches already in use by linguists, reflecting on these approaches and the challenges that they aim to address, and building capacity for more linguists to engage in these practices and improve our students' learning experiences.

The organized session offered perspectives from selected presentations from the 2023 Conference on Scholarly Teaching and SoTL in Linguistics (CoSTaSiL 23), a National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded weekend workshop organized by the FLC that took place during the 2023 LSA Summer Institute at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The FLC began meeting in 2019, supported by an NSF grant, to deepen our individual and collective understanding of SoTL, to understand issues in undergraduate linguistics education and how they relate to larger SoTL conversations, and to identify ways to serve as mentors and advocates for scholarly teaching and SoTL in linguistics.<sup>1</sup> During the CoSTaSiL 23 workshop, participants learned about the difference between scholarly teaching and SoTL, presented about a variety of methods used by linguists in their teaching and mentorship of students, and shared in strategic planning for elevating scholarly teaching in our field.

Pausing to reflect on the LSA's centennial allowed us to reflect on the ways that the teaching of linguistics has changed, along with our discipline, and on the way that future changes in student populations, technology, higher education, and the field as a whole will affect our teaching. One underlying assumption we made is that the survival of our field (and its thriving, if we can aim for that) depends on teaching, and teaching well. This symposium offered a glimpse into current practices and possible future trends in teaching linguistics and made a case for adaptable teaching strategies that are grounded in SoTL.

One important factor that will drive future trends is the people in our courses: who is doing the teaching and who are they teaching? We predict that both groups are likely to be increasingly diverse in terms of their backgrounds, career goals, and approaches to language and communication (Fischer 2022). This increasing diversity will, in turn, affect the teaching strategies that are most successful.

About 40% of college students in the US are the first in their family to attend college (Startz 2022), and there is a growing movement to recognize the unique situation of this group, including an increased awareness of ethnic and linguistic diversity among students (and

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\* Authors: Ann Bunger, Indiana University ([acbunger@iu.edu](mailto:acbunger@iu.edu)); Kazuko Hiramatsu, University of Michigan-Flint ([kazukoh@umich.edu](mailto:kazukoh@umich.edu)); Michal Temkin Martinez, Boise State University ([michaltmartinez@boisestate.edu](mailto:michaltmartinez@boisestate.edu)).

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eventually faculty). Collaborations between linguists and researchers in other fields have already led to rich interdisciplinary insights and cultural understandings about language. As linguistics spreads to more kinds of institutions (e.g., community colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities), expectations about how language is studied and who is assumed to have expertise about it will also need to shift accordingly.

Another factor that will impact the future of linguistics teaching is the varied career goals of our students across non-credit, undergraduate, and graduate levels. It will be critical for instructors to reflect on and be able to articulate the value and relevance of the study of linguistics for many different career goals, some of which do not yet exist, and to engage in ongoing professional development of their own. As career paths for faculty in higher education similarly diversify, linguists will need to reconsider how we evaluate both teaching and public and educational outreach for hiring, promotion and tenure.

To shed light on how these many factors will influence the future of teaching linguistics and how we can maintain a human-centered pedagogical focus, this volume features manuscripts on scholarly teaching practices: Laura McGarrity and Chak-Lam Colum Yip provide insight into how to make phonetics and phonology more accessible for students with hearing and visual impairments; Kristine Ann Hildebrandt, Lex Konnelly and Nathan Sanders, Margaret Grant, and Carly Overfelt describe pedagogical techniques that make use of technological advances to support (rather than thwart) student learning; and Miranda K. McCarvel, Ivy Hauser, Erica Dagar, and Emily Graham, and Monique Mangum, Iara Mantenido and Lauren Casillas describe activities and approaches that center student identities and promote the use of inclusive pedagogies. The volume ends with a reflection on trends in teaching linguistics and higher education by Kirby Conrod, Philip Travis Duncan, Jessie Greiser, and Jamie A. Thomas, who served as panelists during the organized session.

While many linguists already engage in good teaching practices, there have been few opportunities to publish scholarly articles in linguistics-specific venues.<sup>2</sup> We hope that this special volume will contribute not only to this body of literature but to our collective understanding of scholarly teaching practices.

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<sup>2</sup> The journal *Innovations in Linguistics Education* was published by the IULC Working Papers in Linguistics between 1979 and 1991. The Education & Pedagogy section of *Language and Linguistics Compass*, which publishes manuscripts by invitation only, was established in 2007. The annual teaching issue of *American Speech*, and the Teaching Linguistics section of *Language*, both peer-reviewed, were established in 2008 and 2012, respectively.

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## References

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