

Career Pathways for Linguists!

Adapted from:

A matter of survival:

*Supporting diversity, difference & dialects
in career pathways for linguists*

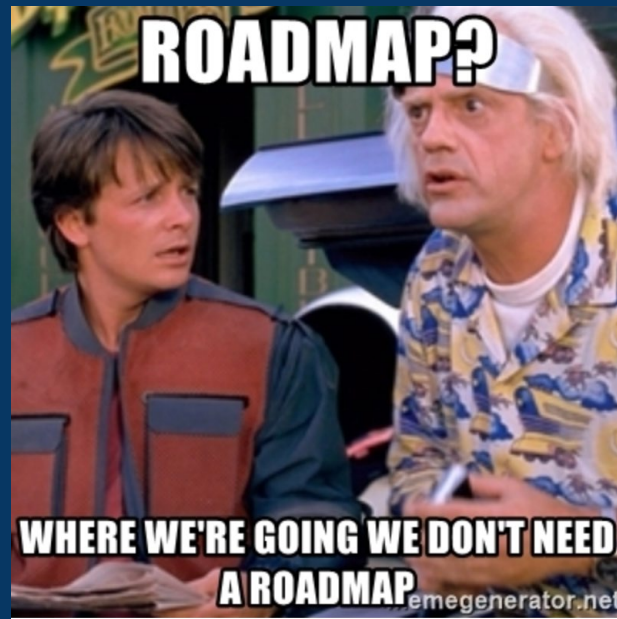
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Presented at Sociolinguistic Symposium 2023 (UIUC)*

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Roadmap

- Some data about **academic employment** for linguistics PhDs
- **Inclusion & exclusion** in our field
 - **Who we leave out of linguistics** when we don't talk how to pay the bills (ie: career pathways & geographic choice)
- How we can apply our own sociolinguistic lens to **diversity, difference and dialect** vis-a-vis career pathways
 - Our **sociolinguistic training is an asset** for both students seeking employment and faculty mentors guiding them



Last slide first: Here's what I'll leave you with

Ways to learn about **diverse careers beyond academia** for linguists and how to position yourself for success:

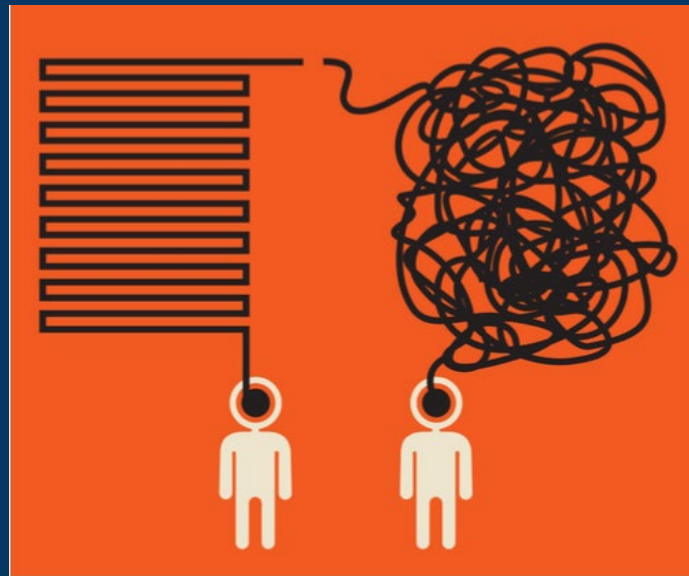
- Field-specific resources
- General career discernment resources
- Leverage your training:
 - Use your own **research skills** in career discernment
 - Use **discourse analysis skills** to analyze job ads
 - Treat people in different employment spaces as you would a **research participant**
 - Take a **participant observer** stance



Employment for linguists: Let's talk terms

Default & Other, marked and unmarked

- Careers for linguists “**beyond academia**” =
 - **Business, government, nonprofit, tech & media orgs**
 - Careers “beyond” both full-time faculty (“tenure-track” AND “non-tenure track”) and also the most contingent / precarious academic positions (post-docs, Visiting Assistant Professorships [VAPs], lecturers, adjuncts)
- Career / professional / industry linguist
- “Alt-ac” = “Alternative to academia” #altac
- See also: #PhDchatter #TheProfessorIsOut #nonac #AcademicChatter



Let's talk the academic
employment pathway for
linguists

Tenure-line academic employment in linguistics

Let's focus on a new PhD grad seeking an Asst Prof. tenure-track faculty job in Linguistics in a domestic US institution in 2022

1. Where did you train?
2. How many people earned a PhD in linguistics this year (and in the previous 3-5 years)?
3. How many tenure-line linguistics jobs are out there?
4. Who raised you—and did they have a PhD?
5. What's your current and projected debt load?
6. What do linguistics faculty get paid?

1. Where did you train? [\(link\)](#)

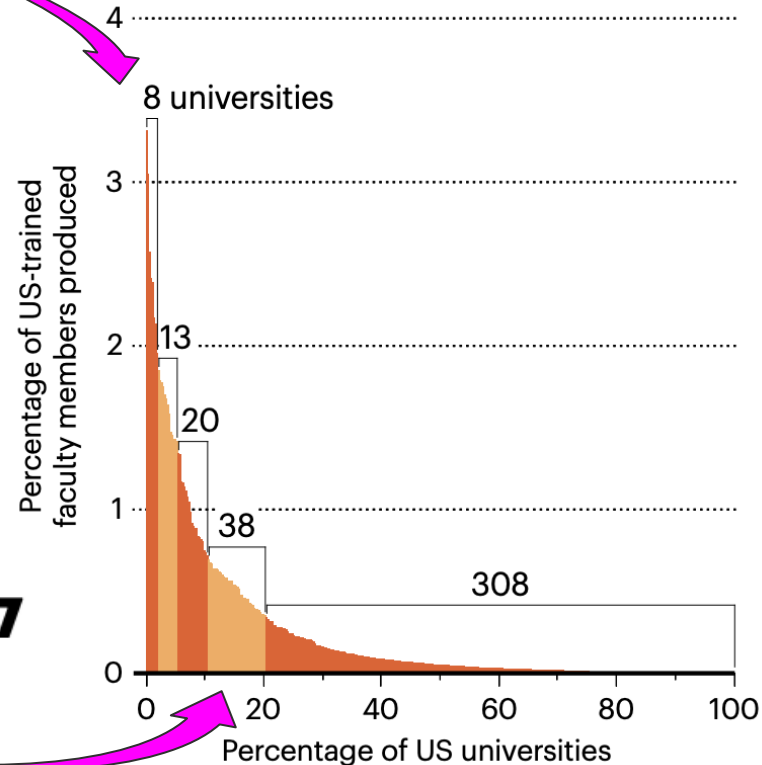
- 1 in 8 tenure-line faculty in the entire country trained at just **5 elite institutions**

(Harvard, Stanford, UC Berkeley, Univ of Michigan, Univ of Wisconsin Madison)

- 20% of universities produce 80% of TL faculty
- No HBCUs or HSIs*** are in that top 20%

HIRING BIAS

Just 20% of US universities produced 80% of the US-trained faculty members hired at the country's institutions between 2011 and 2020, according to a study. Here, more than 200,000 faculty members are divided into five equal groups and colour-coded to emphasize the disparity.



Nature | Vol 609 | 29 September 2022 | **887**

*Historically Black Colleges & Universities & Hispanic-Serving Institutions

2. How many Linguistics PhDs graduated with you?

<u>Year</u>	Linguistics	Applied Linguistics	Total
2018	249	70	319
2019	245	100	345
2020	232	95	327
<u>2021</u>	203	74	277

*Excludes cognitive ling, psych/neuro ling, and Language/Area Studies + LING

3. How many TL linguistics jobs are out there?

- 2021-22 cycle, through Dec 2022
 - Maybe ... 50 (fifty)
 - Excludes failed searches, tenure-line/track ppl leaving/retiring mid-year → positions coming up NOW
 - Sources: LinguistList + Twitter searches & social networks
 - US institutions only
 - Excludes: Cog Sci, Psycho/NeuroLING, LANG+LING, Area Studies + LING
- 2020-2021 cycle
 - About...50 were advertised in fall 2020 for fall 2021 start
 - Same restrictions on counting as above

2021: ~ 7% of ALL new PhD grads secured tenure-line jobs that year

~ 3% of PhD holders in **LINGUISTICS**

will secure a tenure-line faculty job in
that first year cycle post-grad


Who's the alt now?

4. Who raised you? Did they have a PhD?

- <1% of the US population had a Dr. raise them
- 16% of social science PhDs did
- >25% of tenure-line faculty did [\(link\)](#)

Article | [Open Access](#) | [Published: 29 August 2022](#)

Socioeconomic roots of academic faculty

[Allison C. Morgan](#) , [Nicholas LaBerge](#), [Daniel B. Larremore](#), [Mirta Galesic](#), [Jennie E. Brand](#) & [Aaron Clauset](#) 

[Nature Human Behaviour](#) (2022) | [Cite this article](#)

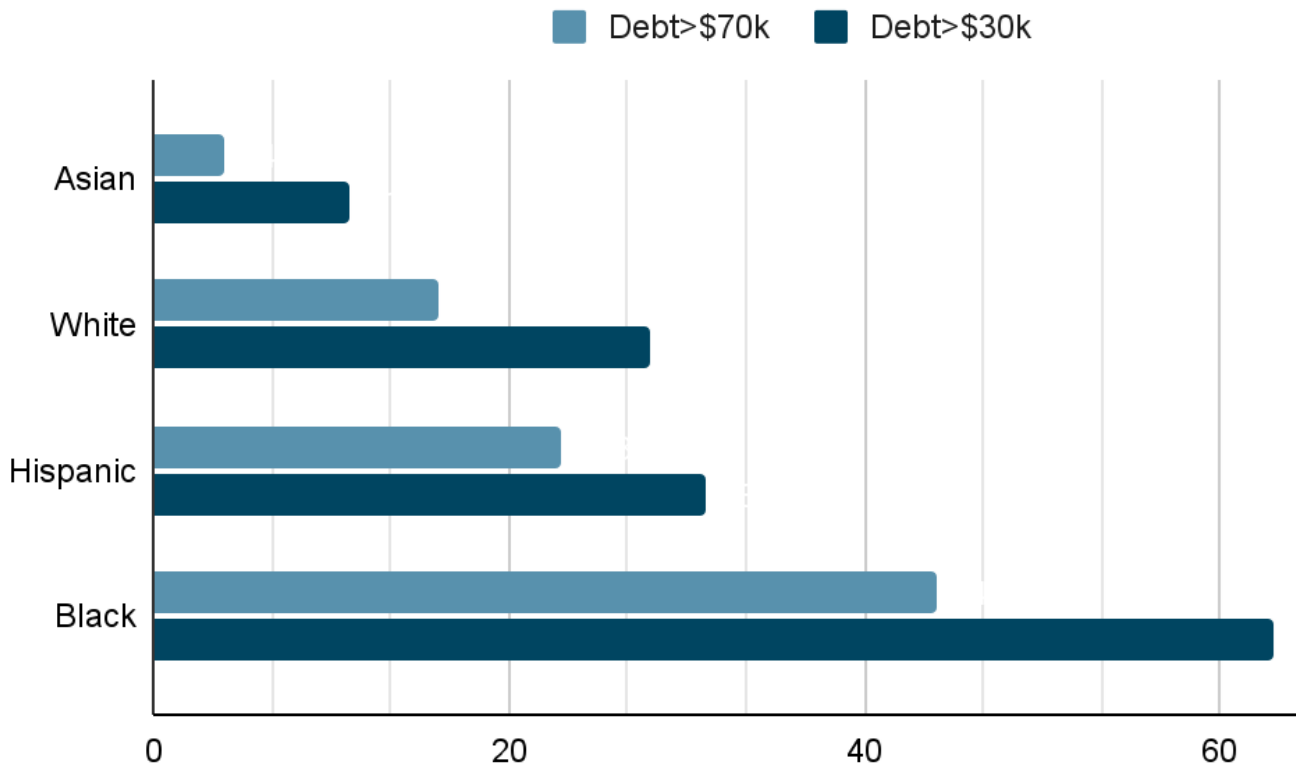
31k Accesses | **3** Citations | **641** Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

5. What's your debt load?

And how does that correlate how are you are racialized?

PhDs with graduate education debt by race

NSF survey of PhDs graduating with a degree in the social sciences in 2021



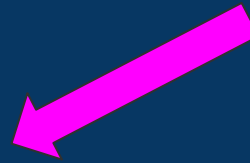
6. *What's the salary?*

Median annual salary for research PhDs with “**definite**” post-grad plans

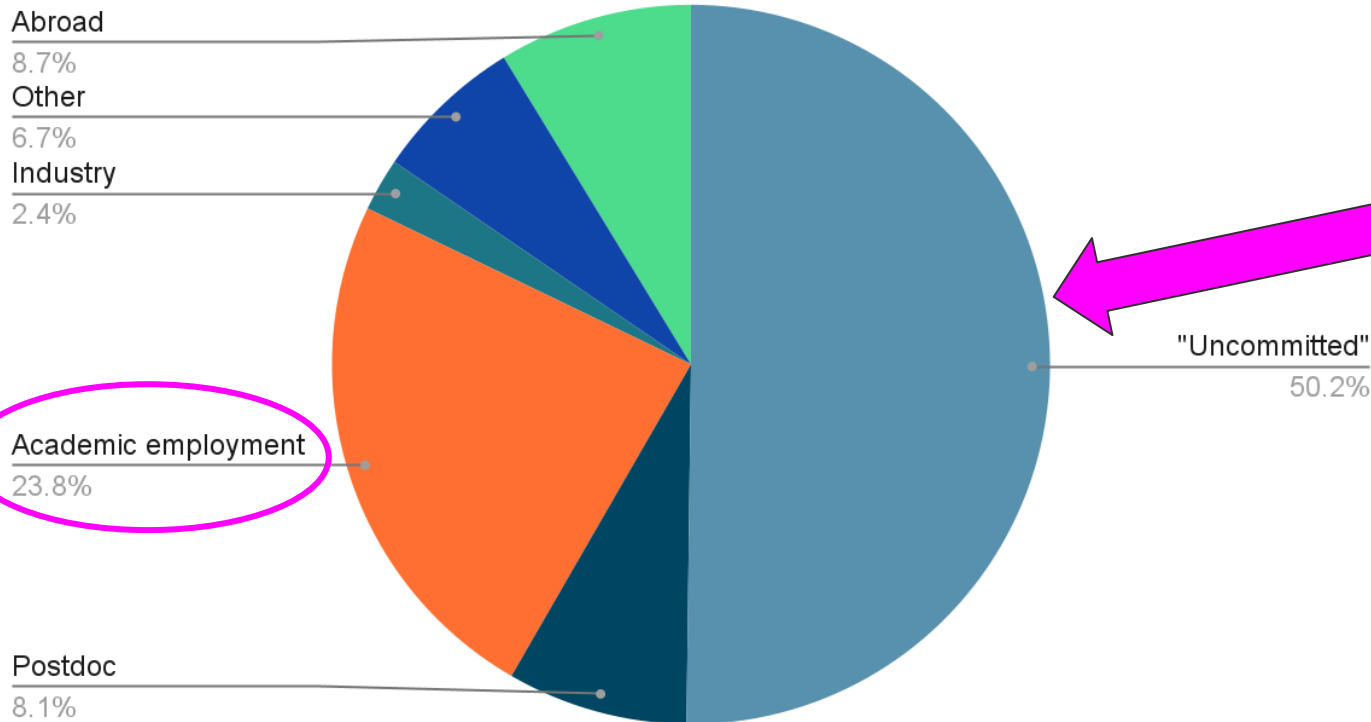
Table 6-6. Median basic annual salary for research doctorate recipients with definite postgraduation plans in the United States, by broad field of doctorate, type of postgraduation plans, and sex: 2021

	Total w
	Total
	65,000
	65,700
	60,000
Biological and biomedical sciences	55,000
Computer and information sciences	125,000
Engineering	87,000
Geosciences, atmospheric, and ocean sciences	60,000
Health sciences	70,000
Mathematics and statistics	75,000
Multidisciplinary/ interdisciplinary sciences	81,500
Physical sciences	66,516
Psychology	53,138
Social sciences	70,000
Non-science and engineering	65,000
Business	120,000
Education	69,042
Humanities	53,000
Visual and performing arts	50,000

Linguistics
is listed in the
Humanities
in **THIS** part of
the survey



PhDs* with "definite" commitments post-grad (252 out of 505)



Reader,
HALF of PhDs reported NO 'definite' plans post-grad...

And the "academic employment" does not differentiate contingent vs tenure-line

***Foreign languages, literatures & linguistics**

Let's talk career pathways
beyond academia

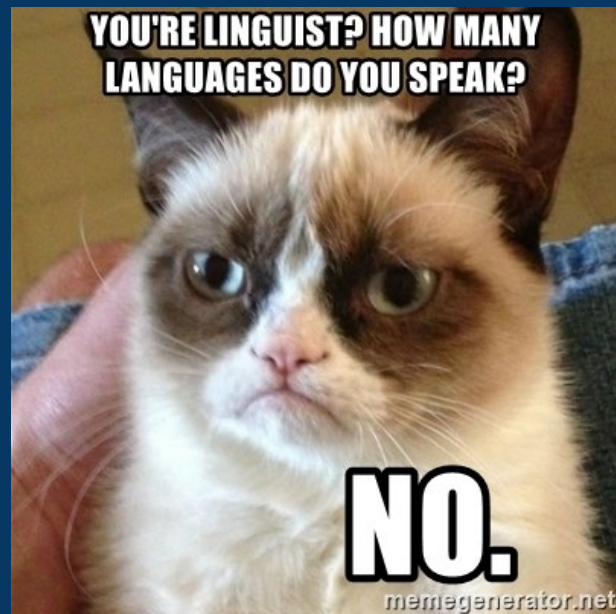
First-ever survey of “Career Linguists” 2019

- **Research questions:**

- What do people **do** with their linguistics degrees outside academia?
- What **positions** do they get?
- What **sectors** do they work in?
- What are some examples of **career pathways**?

- **Application:**

- Assist students, faculty advisors & higher-ed administrators by providing data-based guidance on careers outside of academia





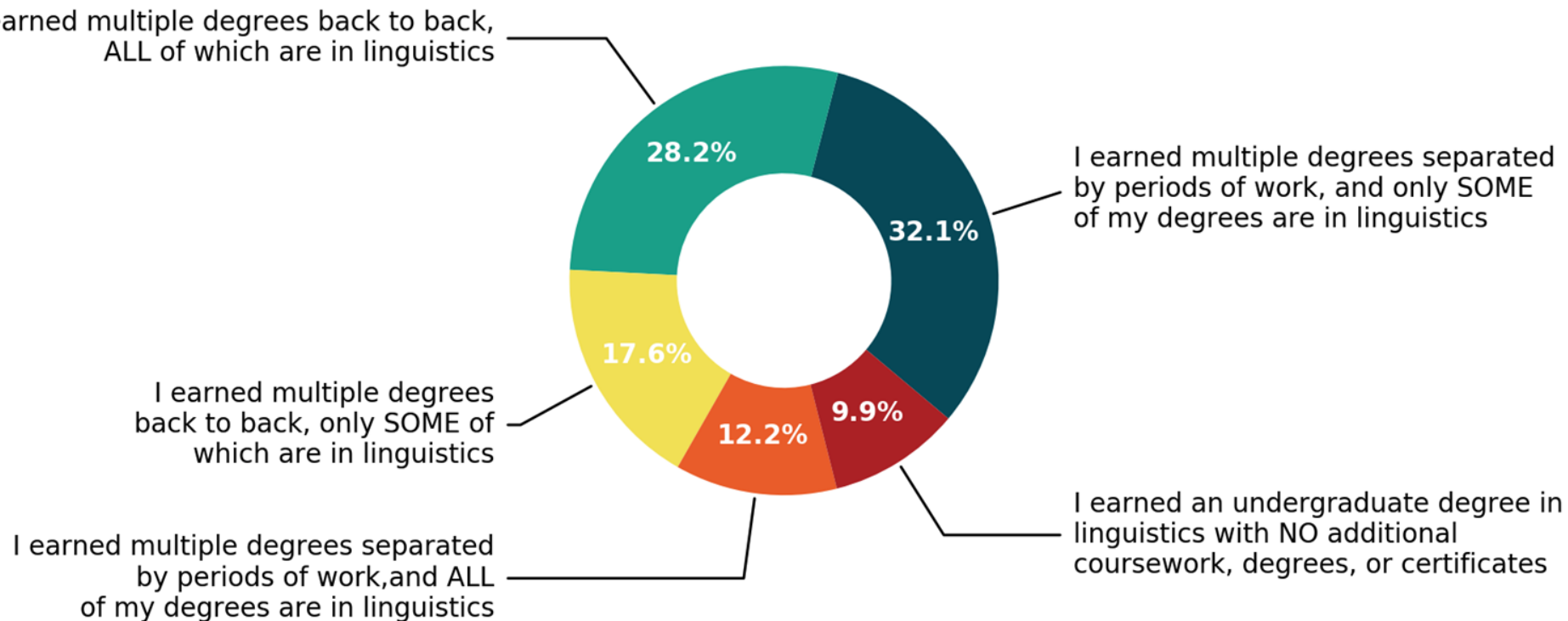
Career Linguist Survey results

- 139 unique reponses
- Graduation dates ranged 1964-2022
- 115 respondents interested in **follow-up interviews**
- Degree breakout: linguistics degrees:
 - 25 Bachelor's, 41 Master's, 73 Doctorates
- Degree breakout: non-linguistics degrees
 - 40 Bachelor's, 56 Master's, 34 Doctorates, 3 Associates, 6 Certificates





Educational summary - overall





First job titles for LING grads (all degrees)

Academic Course Scheduler	Editor	Program Coordinator
Accessibility Specialist	Electronic Publications Associate	Program Manager
Administrative Assistant	English teacher	Project Associate
Analyst	ESL instructor	Project Coordinator
Annotator	Fundraising grant writer	Project Manager
Artificial Intelligence Engineer	Government Contractor/Analyst	Research and Product Development Associate
Audio Coordinator	Independent contractor	Social Media Analyst
Behavior Interventionist	Interpreter	Social Listening
Bilingual After-School Curriculum	K-12 teacher	Software Engineer
Developer	Linguist	Speech Data Researcher
Billing Specialist	Linguist/Junior Programmer	Speech Language Pathologist
Bookkeeper	Linguistic Project Manager	Student loan counselor
Career counselor	Linguistic Researcher	Teacher
Computational Linguist	Localization Manager	Teaching Assistant
Content Creator	Machine translation specialist	Technical Staff
Content Specialist	NLP Engineer	Test Developer
Consultant	Non-profit research	Translation Project Coordinator
Cross-cultural Communications Specialist	Partner Development Representative	Tutor
Data Specialist	Product Analyst	UX Researcher
Design Researcher	Production Assistant	Web Technologist
English for Academic Purposes Instructor		

Skills breakdown: If you are a linguist, you likely can:

- Design and execute research projects (“end-to-end research design”)
- Recruit participants for sociolinguistic interviews & other research projects
- Develop rapport with both individuals and groups for purposes of data collection
- Interview participants & collect data
- Comply with data privacy and IRB policies
- Lead a playback analysis or think-aloud protocol to elicit emic perspectives
- Act as participant observer and use ethnographic methods of qualitative inquiry
- Extract patterns from unstructured data using qualitative, quantitative or computational methods of analysis such as discourse analysis, various survey instruments (Qualtrics), R or Python
- Deliver results in written and oral form through papers & presentations to diverse audiences

Sample job ad

Senior Manager
User Research (UXR)
Comcast



Description:

The User Research team employs a variety of techniques including concept and useability testing in our in-house labs, field research in customer's homes, remote testing, surveys, industry research reviews and more to gather data and develop insights critical to improving our customers' experience with our products. We work closely with experience design, product, business and engineering teams to identify opportunities for research.

- Look for **keywords**
- Think of ways your **skills and accomplishments** might be described using those keywords
- Use the keywords and concepts that are used by the organization/sector in your resume, LinkedIn, cover letter, job interview
- You're learning the **'dialect'/variety** that will show **comembership** with people in that area



Sample job ad

Senior Manager, User Research (UXR), Comcast

Description:

The User Research team employs a variety of techniques including concept and useability testing in our in-house labs, **field research in customer's homes**, **remote testing**, **surveys**, **industry research reviews** and more to **gather data** and **develop insights** critical to improving our **customers' experience** with our products. **We work closely with experience design, product, business and engineering teams** to identify opportunities for research.

- **Field research?** Sounds like sociolinguistic / ethnographic field work! *Great!* BUT it will be done on a faster timeline, goal-oriented rather than open-ended, and focused on product and client rather than on what “interests” you
- **Data + insights (=analysis + recommendation):** Sounds like research but you get to **advocate for action**, too!
- **Work closely with** → Team work is **ESSENTIAL**
- **All those teams speak different languages** → You have to learn their ‘language variety’ and perspectives and speak to them clearly



Sample job ad

Responsibilities:

- Lead **primary research** studies in **customer's homes** including:
- **Discussion guide development, participant recruitment, preparation of testing materials** and prototypes from other **teams**
- **Analyze findings** and **synthesize** with past relevant research, market research, and secondary studies

- **Customer's homes**? We do this in Sociolinguistic Field Methods! And in anthropology, ethnography and discourse analysis research!
- All of this sounds like preparing an linguistics study, writing a lesson plan for TA-ing a class, creating assessments and tests...
- "Teams" is a clue we'll be working with others and should show we do that in academia, too: class projects? Research collaborations? That's all teamwork
- **We do this, too!** But we have to do it on a much faster timeline and keep to the language of the industry
- These terms are **clues** to how you can (re)write your resume bullet points as well as your LinkedIn. So use these terms!

You try it!

- Job ad: Market Liaison, Signature HealthCARE
- As our Market Liaison, you will make a difference by representing admissions efforts for two or more Signature HealthCARE facilities by conducting on-site evaluations of patient referrals and completing daily sales calls on target market and referral sources. Additionally, your role will include identifying the needs of the patients/families and directing referrals to facilities as well as, identifying the needs of the target market and represent the facilities at community partner meetings. Requirements for Consideration include:
 - Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Business Administration, Communications, or related field preferred. Equivalent related work experience may be acceptable.

Where to find the jobs?

1. PEOPLE, people, people
2. Informational interviewing
(click here for a [Best Practices Guide](#))
3. Use LinkedIn as your research database of resumes, career pathways, framing & lexicon

- [Indeed](#): All-purpose job board
- [LinkedIn](#): All-purpose, but look for jobs posted by trusted people *in your network*
- [Twitter](#): Follow linguists outside of academia (start with [@LingBeyondAcad](#))
- [Idealist.org](#): Nonprofit, 'mission-driven' organizations
- [EdSurge](#): Jobs in education & educational technology
- [American Alliance of Museums](#): museum education & management
- [USAjobs.gov](#): federal jobs (long timeline)
- A note about [LinguistList](#): This is for academic jobs in linguistics and **very, very few** jobs outside academia. *This is not your best source!*

“But I don’t know any linguists working outside of academia?”

—maybe not you, but many, many faculty and students of linguistics say this!

Good news! You do.

LinkedIn is your career research database

- Select “people” tab: type in “linguist” and your institution (play around with keywords: “ontologist + [institution]” or “conversation design + [institution]”
 - This will return linguistics alumni from your institution along with their resumes, positions, organizations and how they describe them. This is DATA!
- Read through their resumes (=career pathways) and note first jobs post-grad, transitions to subsequent positions, keywords and framing
- Connect with a polite message:
 - *“Hi, I’m a linguistics student in X department focusing on Y and saw you’ve had an interesting career since graduating from X. Would love to learn more about your work”*
- Feel them out, see how the interaction goes. See if an informational interview might be possible (refer to guidelines)

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn interface with the search bar containing 'linguist illinois'. The 'People' tab is selected. The search results list five profiles, each with a 'Connect' button. The profiles are:

- Irati Hurtado** • 2nd
Linguist | Language Data Analyst | Digital Communications Specialist
Greater Chicago Area
Current: **Linguist** at National Center for Supercomputing Applications
Ann Thyme-Gobbel, Marc Ettlinger, Ph.D., and 45 other mutual connections
- Dr. Amy Firestone** • 2nd
Vice President, Apprenticeship Carolina | Spanish Linguist | Former Fulbright Specialist...
Columbia, South Carolina Metropolitan Area
Past: Supervisor for Language Acquisition Lab at University of **Illinois** at Urbana-Champaign
Anthony Clark Arend, Jeff D'Alessio, and 1 other mutual connection
- Timothy Geiger** • 2nd
Russian Linguist/Translator/Instructor with Security Clearance
Burlington, NC
Education: University of **Illinois** Chicago
Emily Moline is a mutual connection
- Kayla Stenstrom** • 2nd
AI Conversation Designer at Vonage
Chicago, IL
Past: Graduate Research Assistant at Northeastern **Illinois** University
Melanie Fox, Taylor Mahler, PhD, and 6 other mutual connections
- Almike Vazquez Lozares, PhD** • 2nd
Language Engineer | Linguist
San Francisco Bay Area
Past: Doctoral researcher in Linguistics at University of **Illinois** at Urbana-Champaign
Marc Ettlinger, Ph.D., Jennifer Zhang, and 11 other mutual connections

The not-for-profit space



Areas

- Research & research translation
- Scientific & technical writing
- Accessibility & inclusion
 - Document design & Plain Language
- Media Production & Digital Storytelling
- Advocacy
 - Social, environmental, political issues & causes

Position titles

- Strategic communication director/manager/coordinator/asst
- Technical writer
- Anti-bias coordinator/director
- Accessibility specialist
- Producer, Assistant Producer
- Development manager
- Communications manager
- Social media coordinator

“Tech*”



Areas	Position titles
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human-Language Technology• User experience research & design (UXR, UXD, UI)• Taxonomy / Ontology• Internationalization (abbreviation: i18n) & localization (l10n)• Conversational AI• Voice User Interface (VUI)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• writing optimal conversation flows for chatbots & voice assistants/agents like Siri & Alexa	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data scientist• User Experience Researcher (UXR)• UX Writer• UX Designer• Design Researcher• Taxonomist / Ontologist• Conversation Designer (CxD)• Conversation Experience Strategist• Dialogue Designer• Voice User Interface (VUI) Designer• Product Design (Lead)• Product Management

*How much do you have to ‘code’ in a ‘tech’ job? Check out a continuum of tech careers: **Human Language Technology (HLT) Industry Jobs** with Kelsey Krause, Linguist & Data Scientist, Cisco Systems

Business / “Industry”

Areas

- Consulting
- Training and development
- Human resources
- Talent (=employee) onboarding, training & professional development, retention and leadership development

Position titles

- Human resources specialist
- Diversity, equity & inclusion specialist
- Curriculum designer
- Instructional designer
- Corporate talent developer

Corporate professional development consulting

- Leadership development
- Intercultural communication
- Relationship management
- Negotiation & persuasive communication
- Presentation skills training
- Executive coaching
- Executive presence

LEVERAGING CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES



Leveraging Cultural Perspectives is a 2-day program that will help you understand and manage communication and cultural differences that often cause misunderstandings that derail sales, projects, meetings and evaluations.

Government



- US Senate
- Department of State
- Census Bureau Center for Behavioral Science Methods
- NIST: National Institute of Standards & Technology
- FSI: Foreign Service Institute
- *There are even Strategic Communications Officers with US Army Engineer Research & Development Center (ERDC-CERL) and many other agencies & units—see Sarah Clark!*
- Use [USAjobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) to find civil service positions for the above
- For FBI, CIA, NSA, go directly to agency websites. Jobs like 'data analyst' or contract positions like FBI 'language assessment specialist' are good ways to get in the door, get a clearance and expand



Resources

- [Linguistics Career Launch](#) (LCL) website & resources (all free)
- [Linguistics CareerCast](#)
 - A podcast about the jobs & lives of linguists working outside of academia with pro podcaster Laurel Sutton
- [Linguistics Career Launch YouTube](#) channel
 - Videos / webinars / training on career management, jobs & career pathways
- CONNECT with **Linguistics Beyond Academia & LCL leaders**
 - Email: linguisticsbeyondacademia@gmail.com
 - Twitter [@LingBeyondAcad](#) (dm's open)
 - FB group [@LinguisticsBeyondAcademia](#) (answer the Q's) + LinkedIn
 - [Linguistic Society of America LBA SIG webpage](#)

Books!

Trester, Anna Marie. 2022. [Employing Linguistics: Thinking and Talking about Careers for Linguists](#). Bloomsbury.

Trester, Anna Marie. 2017. [Bringing Linguistics to Work: A Story Listening, Story Finding and Storytelling Approach to Your Career](#). Lulu Publishing.

Stewart, Christopher and Ann Thyme-Gobbel. Forthcoming. [Transitioning to Careers in Tech](#) for Language Scientists (something like that). MIT Press.

Johnston, Alexandra. *Proposal under review!!* [Linguistics at Work](#): A Social Science Career Discernment and Employment Guide for Students, Faculty & Administrators (something like that). Wiley-Blackwell.