

Rethinking data collection: Integrating research and linguistics outreach

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Linguistics outreach--that is, educating people about linguistics outside the traditional university classroom environment--has not typically been a priority among linguists. However, it is essential for continued survival of the field. While there have been a number of recent efforts to bring linguistics into secondary school classrooms and public settings, many linguists still neglect to consider outreach at all. In this talk, the importance of linguistics outreach is emphasized, and ways in which it can be combined with more institutionally rewarded activities are discussed.

Human subjects research offers ready opportunities for linguistics outreach, as it involves interacting with people, often people who are already somewhat curious about language. A specific model of integrating linguistics outreach with human subjects research from Ohio State University's Language Sciences Research Lab is presented. Studies performed in this setting benefit from fast and efficient data collection, and outreach efforts in this setting successfully educate the public about linguistics. Crucially, though, linguistics outreach has many possible forms. Current and future linguists should take outreach seriously; participation in even small outreach efforts benefits the field.