REIL

Resources on Equity and Inclusivity in Linguistics

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Table of Contents

Mission Statement

This guidebook is a living document created with the goal of making it easier for conference organizers in Linguistics to host an equitable, inclusive event. We hope that you find the guidelines and advice here to be practical and actionable and to inspire further improvements to current best practices. We encourage you to keep in mind that what counts as an inclusive practice can vary according to context or participant, so an effort to be inclusive in one respect (e.g. make the conference virtual to accommodate participants with travel restrictions) might be less inclusive in another respect (e.g. care-givers might be able to get funding for a replacement care-giver if they travel, but not if they stay at home).

Similarly, consider the current audience your event serves and the target audience for those events. Explore which guidelines below could help make your target audience more closely match the audience you are reaching, and how you can make that audience maximally inclusive and equitable for participants. Further, norms on many of these issues change over time, so we encourage you to reflect on the appropriate norms and context for your community (and to provide us with feedback as we continue to update this guidebook).

Conferences organized in consultation and in accordance with this guidebook are encouraged to include our logo on their website, and we invite organizers to contact us so we can include their conference on our website too. We would, broadly speaking, expect such conferences to:

- consider inviting less-commonly-invited speakers (see the “Inviting Speakers” section);
- use our Code of Conduct or similar, with positive suggestions for inclusive behavior, a mechanism for reporting bad behavior, and descriptions of enforcement;
- actively manage their Q&A sessions with an eye towards inclusivity; and
- include some discussion on the conference website about efforts for diversity and inclusion, including linking to this guidebook or the REIL website.

Because the idea of diversity is — and should be — constantly diversifying, we will be updating this guidebook regularly based on feedback from the broader community. If you have feedback for us on what is here or should be here, please help us by filling out the form on our website.

Everyone has biases, including the authors of this document. We encourage colleagues to take the Harvard Implicit Association Tests, or read Blindspot by Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald. More resources on implicit bias are on the Royal Society's Diversity in Science page. We also encourage you to check out the very comprehensive website Inclusion Nudges for advice on how to foster inclusive professional interactions generally.

Transparency

Knowledge is power! We can't improve inclusivity in the field if we're not tracking inclusivity in the field. That means that conference organizers should be tracking demographics, in at least two areas: 1) abstract submission; and 2) conference participation.

1. Keeping track of the demographics of abstract submission and acceptance is perhaps the most useful mechanism for ensuring that your review process, and thereby your conference roster, is equitable, i.e. not biased for or against a certain gender, race, or level of seniority. **Organizers must therefore elicit this information from authors in the abstract submission phase**, e.g. on EasyChair together with abstract submission, or via a separate anonymous form sent to all submission authors. Ask:
    a. gender: Which of the following best describe(s) you (you may select more than one option)?: *man, woman, non-binary, cisgender, transgender, other (fill in the blank), I'd prefer not to answer.*
    b. race/ethnicity (some explaining here!): If your conference is only concerned about minority status, you could just ask "Do you identify as an ethnic minority?" If you feel like you need to track more distinctions, ask yourself which and why, and write the question accordingly. As with gender, make sure to allow people to not answer the question, identify with more than one option, and offer a space for them to write in another option. Note that someone could identify as a person of color but not a minority, depending on the society they are evaluating themself against.
    c. position: as before, the more options the more inclusive, so: student; post-doc; temporary/contract academic position, long-term/(semi)permanent academic position; industry professional; independent scholar
2. You should elicit this same information for participants on your registration form (although it might be sufficient to just ask about pronouns there, instead of asking about pronouns and gender). This will allow you to identify what groups you need to work harder to include; it will also allow you and your session chairs to better ensure and track the diversity of participation in Q&A sessions.

In conjunction with this guidebook, we have started tracking and publicizing information about demographics in a Conference Tracker on the COGEL website. When your conference has ended, please help us by uploading your demographic information (about submissions, reviewers, Q&A sessions, and more) there so you can help us track representation in the field. This spreadsheet from Claire Moore-Cantwell provides a good template for tracking such information during question sessions. More information on this coming soon!

Access & Accessibility

This section highlights several resources that conferences can provide which help to make them be more equitable and inclusive. Much of the advice here is written with in-person conferences in mind, but we encourage organizers to also consider virtual or hybrid formats, which may allow for greater and more equitable participation, early in the planning of events. Additionally, the final section of this document ("General conference-organizing resources") provides much more detailed and general advice on conference organization in general, including an organizational timeline.

You should consider making all accessibility information available to participants before or at the time of registration. This removes an additional burden of participants (especially junior scholars) having to specifically ask about accessibility information.

Audio accessibility

For in-person presentations: Determine as soon as possible whether your participants will require sign language interpretation for participation in your conference. Sign language interpretation is expensive: A team of two interpreters will cost from $100 to $200 per hour, so one day of interpretation for a single-session conference can be expected to cost at least $1,500. In the United States, conferences are obligated to provide such interpretation, if needed, through the Americans with Disabilities Act; check for similar requirements in other countries. Since this cost is much higher than the operating budgets of many small conferences, specify a deadline for notification of sign language interpretation needs (although you may be requested to provide one even after that deadline), and consider approaching the host university for additional funds to cover it, if required. Note that, according to the ADA, it is not legal for conferences to ask participants to pay for their own accommodations.

If an attendee requests sign language interpretation, ask them if they have a preferred service provider, as not all providers are equal. You could ask about specific interpreters or other factors that may impact interpreting (e.g., the race or gender of the interpreter). For interpreters, seating is also important. They may need to be at the front of the room with the conference presenter or sitting directly across from the person needing interpretation.

Poster sessions, where participants are crowded together in acoustically less-than-ideal spaces, can create challenges in understanding presenters amid the ambient noise of the session. When choosing the venue for poster sessions, it is helpful to keep an eye to carpeting, ceiling height, and the possibility to spread out active posters.

If any of the presentations involve pre-recorded videos, presenters should be encouraged to caption their own materials, if possible. It is relatively easy to do this on one's own using free software, or you can pay a service to caption for you using services like this one. (While reasonably priced, these services likely won't have employees who understand subtle technical terms, so this might be a better option for broad-audience presentations than niche-audience presentations.)

For live-streamed and video-recorded presentations, live captioning can improve access for deaf and hard of hearing participants, especially in virtual conferences. Companies that provide live captioning services (e.g. here) can typically integrate with a variety of formats including Zoom, Facebook, Youtube, etc. The resulting transcripts can also be made available if the presentation is recorded. It is also possible to present with captions using built-in tools for PowerPoint or Google Docs, though these are automated and not human-transcribed.

If you are choosing between allocating budget toward better captioning services, and providing ASL interpretation, you should consider the differences in access and equity of the two types of services - for many participants ASL will be preferred. Dr. Natasha Abner says, “One way of thinking about it is that ASL-English interpreting says, "I recognize your language, and I am making this information available in your language." Captioning says, "I recognize your language, and I am making this information available in... a different version of my language.””

Finally, for participants who are hard of hearing, microphones make a big difference. Regardless of the size of the room, provide a microphone, and request that all speakers use it. The use of a microphone can increase accessibility for other groups as well, including individuals who do not share a native language background with the speaker.

Breast-pumping stations

Breast-pumping is hard. Breast-pumping is private. And for some parents, breast-pumping is a medical necessity. So it’s imperative that conferences be prepared to offer breast-pumping stations for participants who need to breast pump. While you may not ultimately need to use any, they should play a role in your conference site or room choice, just in case a participant reports the need on the conference registration form.

In order to be effective and helpful, a breast-pumping station needs to:

- be close to the conference site, ideally in the same building; pumping takes at least 10 minutes, and sometimes breaks between sessions aren’t much longer than that;
- be private, and lockable from the inside;
- something private and clean, i.e. not a bathroom; and
- have an electrical outlet for an electrical pump.

Ideally, the station would also have a (mini-)fridge inside of it for a participant to store the milk. Such a set-up might not be as hard to find as it sounds, but you might need to ask around in departments housed in the conference site building for faculty who have a (mini-)fridge in their office and who are willing to share access to it, at least in principle. If it proves to be impossible to provide a (mini-)fridge in the breast-pumping station, make one available elsewhere on site for the participant (also ideally close by).

We suggest having a plan for what to do if more than one participant needs to breast-pump at the same time.

Please note that there is no need to use gendered pronouns to refer to a breast-feeding parent; they could be of a variety of genders.

Call for Papers

Organizers should, at the CfP stage, be thinking proactively about demographics collection as well (see Transparency). Provide a mechanism for authors to report their gender, position in the field, and race, and any other information you choose to collect on submission and acceptance rates. COGEL supports the Conference Tracker initiative, which allows for such data collection. See also the Conference Tracker FAQs on how to set up your own anonymous form, if you prefer to collect such information independently.

Regarding the format and length of abstracts: recognize that there are additional “costs” associated with submitting work to a conference based on the study of a less familiar language. For one, strict word count or page limits on submissions may inadvertently hinder work on less familiar languages or encourage poor glossing practices. Consider allowing additional space for glossed sentences in abstract submissions.

Childcare organization

Some participants will be carers of children who cannot, for various legitimate reasons, be left behind. It is not a conference organizer’s responsibility to pay for or arrange childcare for participants’ children, but it is important for an equitable and inclusive conference to do the advance work of researching possible childcare options for guests traveling from out of town, just as they do for lodging, transportation, and restaurant options.

Importantly, **different children (and parents) have different childcare needs.** A participant breast-feeding a baby might need to keep the baby close to them, and therefore might require an on-site babysitter and a place to spend time with their baby. Another participant might merely require a babysitter for a child in their hotel room, another might be interested in off-site childcare options or at least suggestions on local child-friendly places to visit (e.g. childrens’ museums).

To be genuinely prepared to help facilitate the participation of these linguists, organizers should be willing and able to do this local research. Such research can either be done well ahead of time, in a broad, non-specific way that covers all or most of the possible bases, or on a case-by-case basis once you hear from participants’ about their needs. The former option could be a department-wide resource that can be used for various events and purposes, and updated from time to time. If you choose the latter option, make sure to request participants’ childcare needs *early on* (perhaps two months?) in the registration process, as you would interpretation needs. Perhaps say something like the conference is willing to help accommodate childcare requests, but can only do so with a month's notice or more.

Some things to look into:

- Which local car or taxi services can provide their own car seats? Which can provide their own rear-facing infant car seats? What are car seat laws at your conference location?
- Which local baby-sitting or nanny services can provide one- or two-day services?
- Is there a room at the conference site where a baby-sitter could stay with an infant? (if not, what is another option for a parent who needs to nurse regularly in between talks?)
- Which (if any) local daycares or preschools allow one- or two-day students to use their facilities? (this might be a rare or impossible option.)
- Where do local parents with children of a particular age like to take their children (parks, beaches, playgrounds, museums)?

And while there's no obligation for a conference to organize or pay for childcare, it's worthwhile mentioning that a conference that can provide childcare would be much more inclusive than one that can't. Since childcare needs are so diverse and idiosyncratic, conference-provided childcare makes the most sense for either conferences at well-funded institutions with on-site daycares and learning centers, or extremely large conferences with more resources and infrastructure.

Costs

The less expensive your conference is to attend, the more inclusive it can be. Consider minimizing components of your event that are not strictly necessary, like catered dinners and swag, to keep the cost of participation down, or to subsidize such costs for some participants (see below). If you are not providing meals, organize a single place where everyone can purchase their own food, but make sure it's as affordable as possible. Consider organizing transportation (ride shares, van pool, etc.) between the airport and conference area or between areas of accommodation and your conference site. (If you have a choice of conference sites, prioritize those with good public transport options.) Offer more than one suggestion for accommodations, at different price points, and ideally with discounted rates for the conference. Publicize the options early so participants on a budget can plan ahead (and possibly apply for funding to attend).

Crash space is a great resource for students and any other participants who do not have a budget for research/travel expenses through an employer or institution. Crash space can be as simple as a couch or air mattress, although a guest room offers privacy which will be appreciated. Your colleagues and students may volunteer crash service as a service to the conference and the field. Nonetheless, if possible, we recommend putting aside some money in the conference budget to nominally compensate students in your department who you rely on for crash space.

We also recommend offering **graded registration fees**, with separate tiers for (in order from lowest to highest): students; post-docs, lecturers, adjuncts, and independent scholars; tenure-track researchers and industry professionals. Consider making registration free for students, or free for students who are willing to help with registration or chair a session, etc. Consider providing small scholarships (enough to cover registration) to the top 3 best student abstracts, etc. While these modest efforts may only help some, or only help some a little, they go a long way in signalling an inclusive and privilege-conscious environment.

Invitation letters and immigration help

Some attendees may require **a formal invitation letter** to present as part of their visa application or in order to receive travel reimbursement from their home departments. Organize these ahead of time, and make them easy for conference participants to procure.

The following is suggested language. Letters should be printed on university letterhead and signed by an organizer.

> To Whom It May Concern,
>
> This letter is to confirm that [Participant]'s paper, ["Title"], has been accepted for presentation at [Conference]. The conference will be held at [Location] on [Date].
>
> Sincerely,
> [Organizer]

However, consulates of some countries require invitation letters to follow a particular template, or to be signed by university officials, or to be officially sealed. If the letter does not follow these guidelines, it can cost the applicant additional time during the visa application process (in the best-case scenario). Organizers should consider reaching out to international participants to ask about the requirements that their consulates have regarding letters of invitation (if any), especially if a participant indicates that the letter is for visa purposes.

Even with such support, some scholars will simply be unable to physically travel to the conference, for visa reasons as well as a range of other reasons. For physical events, consider offering options for remote participation to scholars in such situations.

Name tags

Name tags are very important for accessibility and inclusivity. First, they are a great aid to people who have face-blindness or other neuroatypical conditions. Second, they provide a space for specifying pronouns, which makes it easy to avoid misgendering anyone, but especially certain gender minorities. But in order for name tags to be a useful and inclusive way to prevent misgendering, pronoun specification should be normalized. **At the registration desk or online registration form, ask every participant their pronoun(s), and include the**

pronouns of those who provide them on their nametag.[1] Another option is to provide stickers for participants to affix to their own name tags, each corresponding to a different pronoun type. The latter is a good option if you haven't elicited pronouns ahead of time, or if it's a priority to allow people to determine pronouns if they're not close enough to read the nametags (i.e. during Q&A sessions).

Finally, lanyards are more appropriate than pins for most clothing options, and there are easy eco-friendly alternatives (like adhesive paper name tags!) to the plastic cases that you could consider.

For online conferences, the display names on meeting apps like Zoom and GoToMeeting function in the place of name tags. Participants should be encouraged to list their full names and pronouns here.

Physical access

Every participant should have equal physical access to the conference. This means holding the conference in an accessible building, in rooms with accessible restrooms nearby, as well as holding all conference-related social events — even optional ones — in accessible spaces too.

It's important to keep in mind that physical accessibility isn't reducible to wheelchair accessibility. There are a wide variety of disabilities that might require accommodation that you can't foresee. Don't worry! You don't have to magically anticipate everything. But, in order to be inclusive, you should provide a space on your registration form for participants to specify any disability-related accommodations they might need. (Reserved aisle seats? Room at the back to stand? Large-print handouts? etc.) Specify a deadline for such requests, so you have adequate time before the event to identify solutions.

And while it doesn't qualify as a physical access issue, if conference organizers are choosing between multiple conference sites, a further factor to include would be whether a site offers gender neutral restrooms. It's not a necessity — or at least not something conference organizers typically have much control over — but it's a helpful option for many participants.

The Pop-Up Mentoring Program (PUMP)

The LSA's Committee on the Status of Women in Linguistics has, for a few years now, been offering pop-up mentoring events at conferences that volunteer to participate. The program matches mentees with a respective mentor for a one-off advice-giving session at the conference. Anyone can volunteer to serve as a mentee or mentor. The program has been immensely successful at supporting junior linguists and those from underrepresented

[1] It's important to normalize pronoun specification so that the people who are more likely to be misgendered don't feel out of place. But it's also important not to pressure people into specifying their pronouns, as this information might be private for some. See Kirby Conrod's excellent explanations of how and when to elicit pronouns here.

backgrounds; providing mentoring to linguists across institutions; and helping to neutralize the power imbalance involved in conference networking.

Consider offering a PUMP event at your conference. As detailed [on the PUMP information page for conference organizers](), organizers only need to: get in touch with a PUMP representative; set a deadline for applying to participate in PUMP; set a time for the PUMP event, ideally during a conference lunchtime that would normally be unstructured, and put it on the schedule; organize a place for the PUMP event (at least for everyone to initially meet up and find their mentoring partner); and advertise the event to registered participants.

Recording and archival

Providing access to recordings of presentations and their discussion allows participants who have other conflicting obligations or are in other time zones — and for in-person conferences, those who are unable to travel — to also benefit from your conference sessions.

Recordings can be posted publicly (e.g. on YouTube) or shared only with registered participants, in perpetuity or for a limited period of time, depending on the goals. Recordings supplemented by some form of public commenting/forum functionality, perhaps for a limited period of time after the synchronous meeting, allows discussions of work to organically extend into a more inclusive online format. Recordings which are publicly available and available for longer periods of time may provide additional benefits in allowing other scholars — including those who may not have been aware of the conference ahead of time, or have limited resources to attend meetings — to also later learn from these works.

It is also a good idea to make handouts or slides associated with each presentation available online, with or without associated recordings. Seek permission from participants to post such materials online, and provide a deadline for submission of handouts or slides so that the material can be made accessible in time for the conference.

Decide ahead of time whether you intend to record talks, discussions, and/or other conference sessions and how they will be made available. Let participants know of this intention well in advance, and seek permission from presenters to record and distribute the recordings of these sessions. Some participants may prefer not to be recorded at all, or not with video; decide how you will respect participants' wishes, for example by not releasing recordings of sessions where recording-averse participants participate, or (for online/hybrid sessions) by warning participants not to turn on their video if they do not want their image to appear in the recording.

For conferences that are already in a virtual or hybrid format where sessions are conducted via video-conferencing software, recording presentations can be very little additional effort, with significant payoff in terms of the event's inclusivity and potential long-term impact.

Registration form

As discussed throughout this section, a good way for conferences to be more inclusive is to **elicit and listen to the identities and needs of their participants.** The former allows linguists to track demographic information so we can track and quantify inclusivity in the field (more here); the latter allows you as a conference organizer to accommodate all of your potential participants. Consider specifying in your registration form that this is what you are using the requested information to do, but it's still a good idea to make any identity- and need-based questions optional.

We recommend including at least the following questions on your registration form:

- Demographic information:
    - *Name*
    - *Affiliation*
    - *What are your pronouns?* This information should be included on conference name tags. Note that the phrase 'preferred pronouns' makes it sound like a person's gender is a preference, rather than a fact of the matter, so it is to be avoided, even though some people identify with more than one pronoun.
        - Consider using COGEL's Conference Tracker as a means of collecting additional demographic information at the conference registration stage. (We additionally recommend using it at the CfP stage). See the survey here for the questions.
        - For organizers who formulate their own demographic questions, we encourage wording that is as similar as possible to the Conference Tracker for data analysis and comparison purposes, and suggest asking at a minimum about (a) professional stage, (b) gender, and (c) race/ethnicity.
- For physical/hybrid conferences:
    - *Do you require any physical accommodations at conference events?*
    - *Would you be interested in free crash space with a local linguist, if available?*
    - *Will you be needing child care or any other type of accommodation for a child or dependent? If so, what kind of care are you interested in, and what is/are the age(s) of the child(ren)? Will you be needing a breast-pumping or -feeding station on site?*
    - *Do you need any documents from the conference to aid you in funding or international travel?* If you're planning on providing invitation letters as a default, you can specify "other than an invitation letter, which we will already be providing".
- For virtual/hybrid conferences:
    - *Do you require any accommodations to participate in the virtual conference?*
    - *What time zone do you expect to be in during the conference?*
    - If relevant: *Do we have your permission to {audio/video} record your presentation and share the recording {publicly/with other participants}?*

Remote access for in-person conferences

This section applies to in-person, rather than virtual, conferences.

Sometimes a speaker can't travel to the conference for health or other reasons. Conference organizers should discuss and decide ahead of time how they will or will not accommodate such participants, and specify these policies on the conference website for potential speakers to consider. For instance, is willingness/ability to travel to the conference a precondition for having their work accepted to the conference program? Are you willing to allow a speaker who cannot travel to give their presentation remotely, or will you identify presentation "alternates"? (Will your policy differentiate in this respect between someone who announces they can't attend e.g. three months before the event vs. three days before the event?) If a speaker has to cancel their attendance at the last minute, will they still be invited to contribute to the proceedings? (Will the alternate(s)?)

It's important for organizers to address these questions, but it's also important to be transparent about these policies up front, as people who are e.g. anticipating being pregnant at some point in the future or who frequently encounter difficulty receiving visa/travel approval might choose to apply or not apply to a conference based on the conference's flexibility in these respects.

Visual accessibility

OCR-ed/machine-readable materials make it easier for those with visual impairments to peruse presentation materials. Note that this is only possible to provide if slides and handouts are provided in advance; see above. Providing OCR-ed/machine-readable materials to attendees with a visual impairment ahead of time is especially critical for language examples, trees, semantic formulas, OT tableaux and such. Providing titles, abstracts, and presentation materials to any interpreters/captioners ahead of time helps them to become familiar with the material and technical terminology they may need to use.

If an attendee with a visual impairment requests additional help with accessibility, or if materials cannot be shared in advance or the presenters cannot produce their material in a sufficiently accessible format (e.g., plain text is accessible but trees are not), the organizers are encouraged to find an assistant who will transcribe the visual parts of presentations in real time (for example, by typing bracketed tree structures in google docs). The attendee will typically help the organizers identify a logistics set-up that works well for them. Ideally, the assistant will be knowledgeable of the relevant linguistics subject and can highlight the parts of slides that are critical for understanding the presentation (a visual scan of a complex tree structure takes seconds but its transcription and decoding can take several minutes), and will connect with the person who needs accommodations before the conference starts to agree on the logistics. It is also helpful to instruct presenters to verbally describe their trees, and read out examples and formulas. Other participants will benefit from this practice as well.

More advice on accessibility at in-person events can be found here.

Inviting speakers

A guide on inclusive panels and/or invited speakers

Who are you inviting?

Invited speakers and speakers on a panel represent the view of the organizers, and indirectly of the community, on *what* work exhibits scientific excellence. But it also mirrors *whose* work is valued within the community. As such, the selection of invited speakers and panelists is subject to a number of unconscious biases. Specifically, performance bias disproportionally attributes professional accomplishments, intelligence and overall capability to men and other dominant groups. In turn, men and other dominant groups are much more likely to be invited to speak at conferences and colloquia, which in turn perpetuates the lack of equity in the field.

Another source of bias comes from who is perceived as worthy of representing the field. The selection of speakers should not be restricted to scholars from prestigious universities or departments, or even with academic appointments and PhDs, especially since marginalized scholars are underrepresented in academia. Furthermore, scholars of language can be found outside of Linguistics narrowly defined, for example, in Education, Philosophy, Psychology, Anthropology, Media Studies, and Speech, Language, and Hearing Studies, etc.

Since unconscious biases are persistent and unconscious, we encourage organizers to **be proactive in finding appropriate underrepresented scholars to invite to better represent the field.** If your budget permits, consider inviting speakers from less represented parts of the world, including speakers from Asia, Africa, South America and Australia, in addition to those from Europe and North America. Here are some resources organizers can use when brainstorming for potential speakers:

- Women in General Linguistics (by Kriszta Eszter Szendroi; self-add)
- Scholars to Read/Know in the Field of Language (by Megan Figueroa; curated)
- Indigenous Linguists and Community Scholars (by Adrienne Tsikewa; curated)
- Linguists who are #BlackInTheIvory (by Alon Lischinsky; self-add)
- Reviewers in Theoretical Linguistics (by Roberta D'Alessandro; self-add)
- Request a Woman in STEMM -- search by discipline, native language, and country of origin (self-add)
- SPARK: Scholars of Color Database (self-add)

For recruiting diverse sets of invited speakers, it is important not to invite anyone from overrepresented groups until after others have accepted your invitation. This is because those who are underrepresented tend to have many demands on their time and so it may take multiple invitations to find people who are able to fill the role.

What are the talks on?

When considering invited speakers, there is a temptation to stick to canonical — and thus well-represented — lines of research. It's true that the plenary or invited talks are often seen as a reflection of the taste and sensibilities of the organizers. But going outside of the canon — which, quite obviously, reflects the biased status quo in any given field — isn't as risky as it might seem, and the potential payoffs are quite substantial.

Underrepresented and undervalued languages
Traditionally privileged varieties of English and other languages with a high socio-political status are disproportionately common targets of study in linguistics, but there's no scientific reason it should be, and in fact, as we all know, there are good scientific reasons for spending an equal amount of time on all human languages. Inviting speakers whose research tends to focus on or highlight underrepresented languages, language modalities, and languages without a privileged socio-political status is a good way of signaling this priority, and of introducing such research to linguists who might otherwise be unaware of it.

Furthermore, since minority researchers are more likely to conduct research on minority groups, including researchers of understudied languages likely also contributes to the goal above of including underrepresented scholars. For help finding such researchers, consider resources such as Request a Woman in STEMM, which allows you to filter linguists by their native language, or the Phonological Patterning of Under-represented and Under-documented Languages (compiled by Maya Barzilai).

Interdisciplinary research
There is a consensus that the social sciences, of all fields, is the least cohesive. This translates to a huge loss of opportunity to make real headway on big problems: if your research solves a potentially wide-reaching problem, but nobody outside linguistics hears about it or can appreciate it, you have significantly diminished the potential impact of your contribution. Interdisciplinary research has been positively associated with higher productivity (and low seniority!) as well as increased citations. As conference organizers, you are in the best position to create interdisciplinary opportunities for scholars: Consider inviting someone whose work is adjacent to the theme of the conference.

The peer review process

A guide to creating an equitable and inclusive peer-review process, including instructions for reviewers and what to do with hostile or offensive reviews

Selection of reviewers

A diversified review body is necessary for an equitable review process. When choosing reviewers, whenever data is available, the organizers should aim to include a representative proportion of ethnic minorities/people of color; women and other gender minorities; sexual orientation; nationalities and language backgrounds; and ableness.

Lists to consider when selecting reviewers are reproduced from the Inviting Speakers section:

- Women in General Linguistics (by Kriszta Eszter Szendroi; self-add)
- Scholars to Read/Know in the Field of Language (by Megan Figueroa; curated)
- Indigenous Linguists and Community Scholars (by Adrienne Tsikewa; curated)
- Linguists who are #BlackInTheIvory (by Alon Lischinsky; self-add)
- Non-binary Linguists (by Kirby Conrad; curated)
- Reviewers in Theoretical Linguistics (by Roberta D'Alessandro; self-add)
- Request a Woman in STEMM -- search by discipline, native language, and country of origin (self-add)
- SPARK: Scholars of Color Database (self-add)

We strongly encourage organizers of recurring meetings to share their list of reviewers including a description of steps that they took to ensure an equitable process for the next instantiation of the conference to build on. Note that your reviewer list will be viewed by subsequent organizers as an endorsement of those reviewers, so consider removing any reviewers that have failed to act professionally (in terms of meeting deadlines or collegiality, see below) from your list before passing it along.

The nature of the reviews

Ideally, the conference will provide reviewers with instructions on how to provide equitable and inclusive reviews.

- **Remind the reviewer of their obligations.** When a reviewer accepts their review assignment they acknowledge that they will to their best ability avoid perpetuating bias in reviews. It is harmful if the reviewer bases their judgement on the known or perceived gender of the author(s), their race or sexual orientation, or differences in written English ability or variety. This is most effective if conference organizers can provide reviewers a rubric for their reviews, turning them into a guided assessment with organizers' priorities built in.

- **Request that reviewers consider inclusivity.** Reviewers should pay close attention to bias present in the work they review, especially to the use of gendered and other problematic examples. Reviewers should also pay attention to whether work by women and minorities is equitably cited and acknowledged in the reviewed work. These are legitimate considerations for the appropriateness of a presentation, and erroneously including offensive or exclusionary work could have a negative impact on the climate of the conference. If you choose to prompt reviewers to consider inclusivity in their reviews, consider notifying authors in your Call for Papers that it will be a consideration.
- **Include a place for reviewers to judge contributions to diversity.** Languages with a higher socio-political prestige are more frequently represented in general linguistics conferences and journals than languages with a lower socio-political prestige, even though research on the latter is likely to involve more work. In addition to minimizing the empirical coverage of our field, the discrepancy creates unequal conditions for scholars based on their language background and the choice of languages they study, which in turn makes it harder for scholars from less privileged language backgrounds to succeed. If you choose to prompt reviewers to consider language diversity in their reviews, consider notifying authors in your Call for Papers that it will be a consideration.
- **Make explicit an intolerance for unprofessionalism in reviews.** All professional discourse and interactions should be civil, respectful, and collegial. Anonymous reviews are no exception; there is indeed reason to believe that unprofessional reviews harm minority scholars. Notify reviewers that their behavior, too, is subject to the conference's Code of Conduct, which should explicitly prohibit unprofessional behavior and provide positive suggestions for supportive and allying behavior. Organizers should be prepared to survey reviews for biased or unprofessional language and not include any unprofessional ones. We also recommend that organizers reach out to reviewers with their objections with the goal of helping them better formulate their reviews going forward.

Equitable Q&A sessions

A guide to creating welcoming Q&A sessions, including advice on choosing chairs and instructions for chairs

Advice for choosing chairs

Equitable representation among question askers in Q&A sessions is ideal. Studies conducted outside the field of linguistics and within the field itself have shown that women are underrepresented in the question-asker category. This was found for the 223rd Meeting of the Astronomical Society, and by Hinsley et al (2017) at the International Congress for Conservation Biology and European Congress for Conservation Biology, and in over 30 other sessions. Within the field of linguistics, data collected at NELS 49 additionally shows this: while there were more female registrants (51% to 47%), 55% of questions were asked by male linguists. Data collected at NELS 47 shows an even greater disparity: 69% of questions were asked by male participants, while only 31% of questions were asked by female ones.

Equitable representation should additionally go beyond gender. The data from NELS 49 additionally revealed that those in the question-asker category were heavily skewed towards faculty members. Nearly 70% of question-askers were faculty, despite representing only 30% of registrants at the conference. This was additionally found at the 2017 Annual Meeting of Phonology, where question-askers were overwhelmingly faculty at 81%. Only 19% of questions were asked by students (6% female, 13% male).

We recommend choosing chairs a few weeks in advance of the conference. This will allow chairs to become familiar with instructions they are provided, and additionally leaves time to find a replacement if a potential chair is uncomfortable with the instructions. When a person is invited to chair a session, they should be notified that they will be expected to follow the conference's instructions and to work to achieve inclusivity and equity. Another great way to encourage inclusivity in the Q&A session itself is to select chairs from different demographics, including junior linguists.

Instructions for chairs

To attempt equitable representation in sessions, we strongly suggest that chairs pick all question-askers instead of the speakers. We further recommend the following:

1. Begin the question period with a question from a junior scholar, if possible. (Alternating between junior and senior participants is made particularly easy in a set-up that has two microphones, or two lines for microphones.)
2. No two questions in a row should be from an identical demographic (i.e., if one question-asker is a white male professor, the next question-asker should either be non-white, non-male, or a student, or some combination of the three).
3. Prioritize voices that have not yet been heard in the event or session.

4. Provide a space for speakers to state their name and pronouns, so it's easier for the speaker and subsequent question-askers to refer to them.
5. Work proactively to prevent harassment, discrimination, or unprofessional behavior.
    a. Scan the room frequently to make sure you're not missing someone who isn't aggressive or whose hand might not be as visible
    b. Immediately intervene if someone talks over someone else ("Y, please let X finish what X has to say")
    c. Set time limits on question-askers' speech as well as number of permitted follow-up questions ahead of time, and stick to them, interrupting if need be
    d. Be aware that it is the chair's responsibility to monitor and stop unprofessional questions or responses (intervene immediately, specify that you are determining the behavior to be unprofessional)

For online conferences: It's often tricky to manage Q&As when participants are instructed to leave their questions in the Chat. But if organizers choose this method, session chairs should work hard to abide by the guidelines in (1)-(5) nevertheless, rather than simply picking questions in the order in which they appear in the chat.

Code of Conduct

Below is a sample Code of Conduct that conferences are welcome to use in whole or in part. We recommend that a conference's Code of Conduct have clear signals about expected positive, inclusive behavior as well as negative or unacceptable behavior. We also recommend that the conference provide a method of anonymous reporting of unacceptable behavior; they are welcome to use [ours](), which is monitored by REIL volunteers and can be passed to conference organizers, or they can use their own.

The following is a Code of Conduct for reviewers and participants of [CONFERENCE], which is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for all its participants. It describes expected behavior and outlines ways in which the organizers will address problems that arise.

Unprofessional behavior

All conference participants must maintain professional integrity in their relationships and interactions with one another. "Participant" in this policy refers to anyone attending the conference (in in-person, hybrid, or online iterations) or present at the conference, including staff, contractors, and vendors. All conference participants are subject to the LSA's Civility Policy which, among other things, prohibits harassment and prejudice.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Prejudicial actions or communication (language or actions) related to a person's identity or group membership, that coerce others, foment broad hostility, or otherwise undermine professional equity or the principles of free academic exchange. Relevant identities include (but are not limited to) those defined by age, ethnicity, gender, disability, professional status, religion, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following
- Harassing photography or recording
- Sustained disruption of talks or other events
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Unwelcome sexual attention
- Advocating for, encouraging, or condoning any of the above behavior

The expression or the critique of a contested academic viewpoint does not in itself constitute harassment, as long as it is done in a professional and respectful way. By contrast, aggressive discussion styles (including *ad hominem* comments) that are aimed to intimidate, marginalize, belittle, or disparage others (or their research area) are unacceptable.

Inclusive Behavior

[CONFERENCE] aims to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for all participants.

Every participant is welcome and respected. By the same token, all participants are expected to treat each other with respect and tolerance. To accomplish this, participants are asked to speak up and take action when these values are not adhered to, and recognize that power differences and hierarchies inherent to academia and broader society may inhibit many participants (including students and junior scholars) from deciding to object to or report problematic behavior (details on reporting below).

[CONFERENCE] encourages its participants to proactively engage in inclusive behavior, e.g.:

- acknowledge the opinions, skills, and contributions of others;
- discuss any sensitive material in a respectful way where the material is adequately contextualized in line with academic inquiry;
- give feedback to others in a professional and respectful manner;
- refrain from disruptive or monopolizing behavior, especially during talks and question periods;
- advocate for others when they are unable to advocate for themselves, or in instances of prejudice or discrimination; and
- provide encouragement, help, support, or mentorship to colleagues when it is welcomed.

Reporting

Harassment and other violations of this code reduce the value of our event for everyone. If someone makes you or anyone else feel unsafe or unwelcome, or if you witness unacceptable behavior, please report it to the conference organizers as soon as possible.

You can report a violation:

- in person to an organizer;
- in an email to the organizers (at [EMAIL]);
- or in an anonymous form provided by COGEL

[CONFERENCE] organizers will do their best to address your report with as much confidentiality as the enforcement process allows.

Depending on the nature of the violation, in some jurisdictions organizers may also be required by law and/or university policy to inform authorities. For example, some US universities require faculty to report all instances of sexual harassment to university officials regardless of whether the target consents to the reporting.

Enforcement

[CONFERENCE] organizers are committed to taking appropriate actions to prevent and/or stop any behavior designed to, or with the clear impact of, disrupting the event or making the environment hostile for any participants.

Participants who are reasonably and politely asked to comply with this code should do so immediately. Failure to do so could and should result in the filing of a violation report (see above).

If a participant has a report filed against them, the conference organizers will review the report and will contact the participant so they can consider their version of the incident. The organizers might also consult with the person who filed the report or other people involved in or with knowledge of the incident.

The organizers will decide, as quickly as possible, the extent to which the behavior reported constitutes a violation of the Code of Conduct. If the target consents, the organizers may choose to respond to the behavior reported. Possible responses include:

- no response (if the behavior is found to not constitute a violation);
- a warning to the participant that their behavior constitutes a minor violation, but that continued behavior would constitute a major violation; and
- expulsion from the conference and a report of the incident to the following year's organizers (if the behavior is found to constitute a major violation)

Severability

If any part of this code of conduct is in conflict with the applicable law in the jurisdiction of the conference, this shall not affect the validity of any other part.

General conference-organizing resources

This section acts as a general "conference starter kit" for organizers.

Timeline overview

Many things need to be put in place in order for a conference to run smoothly. Timeliness is important to handle any unexpected issues that may arise. Working backwards:

- Acceptance notifications should ideally be released at least 3 months ahead of the conference, to allow international participants to make necessary visa and travel arrangements.
- The program committee should allow around 2-3 weeks for the selection process, taking into account that at this point it may discover that some abstracts require additional reviews because of conflicting scores or missing reviews.
- Reviewers are usually given around 4-5 weeks to submit their reviews.
- The program committee will need some time after the submission deadline to distribute abstracts to expert reviewers. Allow at least 1 week for this process.
- This means that the abstract submission deadline for your conference should be at least 5 months prior to the planned conference date.
- Allowing at least one month between the publication of the Call for Papers and the submission deadline, your CfP needs to be published at least 6 months before the conference. The more notice you give authors to prepare an abstract or seek funding for travel, etc., the more accessible your conference will be to less privileged linguists.

This means that **at a minimum, you will need 7–8 months between starting to plan a conference and when it will be held**. Ideally, you'll give yourself a bit more time.

Detailed timeline

Once a decision to host a conference has been reached:

- Form a conference committee. Ideally this committee will be inclusive and represent individuals that vary in: subfield (if applicable), seniority, gender, race, ableness, and linguistic background.
- Pick an approximate date for the conference, which will affect the schedule below.
- Identify potential funding for your conference: how much can your department and/or university contribute? This will determine how many invited speakers you can invite (and from where) and what other services you will provide. See more on this below.

8-9 months before the conference (for large conferences at least)**:**

- Form a tentative list of invited speakers. Try to go beyond the obvious names: The ideal list will vary in seniority, theoretical points of view, and personal characteristics of the speakers, including affiliation. Consult the resources below to choose a diverse list, going beyond the first names that may come to mind. Who haven't you heard from but could be a good fit for your theme and content? For recruiting diverse sets of invited speakers, it is important not to invite anyone from overrepresented groups until after others have accepted your invitation. This is because those who are underrepresented tend to have many demands on their time and so it may take multiple invitations to find people who are able to fill the role.

- Decide on the format for your conference: Will it be virtual, in-person, or hybrid? Will it have parallel sessions? A poster session? Special thematic organized sessions? How many presentations do you expect to have?
- Finalize the conference dates, making sure to identify other major conferences and events to avoid conflicts as much as possible, and perhaps in consultation with the invited speakers. For in-person and hybrid conferences in popular locations, you should additionally ensure that there aren't other major events that will make hotel occupancy especially high. Check with hotels and inquire about group room discounts.
- For in-person and hybrid conferences, this is also the time to look into booking rooms for all planned events, including plenary talks, poster sessions, receptions, etc. Room should have A/V equipment, including microphones, for all speakers. The earlier the better for booking rooms.
- Decide on a conference fee for attendance, including discounts for students and underemployed linguists, as well as early bird and on-site prices. Consider offering a scholarship for students from underrepresented backgrounds or institutions. Inquire about payment handling within your university: credit card ahead of time and cash/check on-site. If your conference is an LSA conference, it is likely the LSA will be collecting fees on your behalf.
- Build a website. This website will host resources such as the Call for Papers, the program, your Code of Conduct, local information (if in-person), and other resources such as information about Pop-Up Mentoring, childcare, sign language interpretation, etc.
- Figure out other amenities: If you plan to cater lunch on any day, this is a good time to pick vendors and get quotes for meals. If there will be a conference dinner, identify and secure a venue and options for food and beverages. Events on campus in the US may require a licensed liquor officer and large events may require campus police presence.
- Reserve poster boards if you will be using them.

7 months before the conference:

- Finalize your list of invited speakers.
- Draft and finalize your Call for Papers. Your Call for Papers should specify:
    - The working language(s) of the conference
    - Your conference scope or theme
    - Any special sessions, workshops, or other area focuses
    - Your invited speakers
    - The format and length information for submissions
    - How and where abstracts should be submitted
    - Projected date of notification
    - A link to the Conference Tracker, for data collection on abstract submissions

- Make sure your website contains all the necessary information as well. Work with your speakers to book travel and accommodations.
- Choose your conference management software: EasyChair, EasyAbs, etc.

- Create a list of abstract reviewers: You may start compiling a list of reviewers by using the reviewer list from the previous year's conference. But we strongly encourage you to carefully inspect the list and adjust it to meet inclusiveness criteria. More importantly, you should consider adding names to make your reviewers a representative pool. Include younger linguists who recently graduated and make sure minoritized individuals are represented. See the resources and additional discussion in "The peer review process" section.
- Send out review invitations to the list, providing a timeline for when reviewers will get the abstracts and when they will be expected to submit their reviews, and how many abstracts on average/max they might expect to get. As invited reviewers accept/decline, consider whether you need to replenish your list.

6-7 months before the conference:

Publish your Call for Papers on the LinguistList and advertise on social media.

5 months before the conference:

Once abstracts are in: match abstracts with reviewers, send out all abstracts for review. For many conferences, each abstract will get at least three reviews.

4 months before the conference:

- Make acceptance decisions. This will involve reading the reviews for all abstracts above a certain threshold and soliciting additional reviews for any abstracts that are missing reviews or where the scores reveal a large discrepancy between reviewers. Organizers should ideally skim all reviews before passing them on to authors to try and ensure that they don't include any abusive or inappropriate language or content. (See more on this in "The peer review process" section.)
- Draft and send acceptance and rejection emails to all authors. Do this at the same time: word travels fast and it's unfair to hold back rejections after acceptances have been made. Ask accepted presenters to confirm that they will participate, and include some alternates in your decisions so that you can accommodate speakers who withdraw either immediately or at the last minute.

3-4 months before the conference:

- Create a program for your conference, taking into account any potential timing requests from presenters. (You may find it helpful to create a tentative schedule while making acceptance decisions, by at least organizing accepted papers by topics for potential sessions.) For hybrid conferences, confirm whether participants will attend in-person or online.

- Offer invitation letters to speakers who require confirmation for funding or visa purposes.
- Select chairs for each session. Recruit these chairs early on in the process and inform them that the Q&A sessions will be run uniformly and with an eye towards equity and inclusivity (see the Q&A Section).
- LSA COGEL's Pop-Up Mentoring Program (PUMP) provides a time for conference participants to be matched up with a mentor or mentee for a one-off mentoring session. This is an extremely popular opportunity for linguists of all stripes and career stages to connect at a personal level and gain or offer advice. We recommend including a PUMP event as part of your conference. For in-person conferences, it should be included in your conference program in its own slot (possibly during lunchtime) and not compete with other events.

1-2 months before the conference:
- Set up registration for your conference.
- Include a link to the Conference Tracker for data collection concerning conference participation.
- Consider offering graded registration fees see more in the Costs section).

1-3 weeks before the conference:
- Confirm again: rooms, food vendors, A/V equipment, poster boards
- Make name tags, procure lanyards
- Print programs and create packets for attendees (if applicable)
- Print out attendee list for registration purposes, keep track of conference fee payment
- Arrange on-site help with registration, A/V equipment, and poster set-up
- Test all technology and A/V equipment and practice using it
- For virtual and hybrid conferences, send out access links and instructions

During and after the conference:
- Keep the conference website updated with presentation materials for archival purposes

Other conference guides

- CUNY2020: Virtual conference (2020)
- SALT30 Runbook: Virtual conference (2020)
- AFLA27 note on format: Virtual conference (2020) for very globally distributed communityc
- CRA-W Best Practices: Guidelines for running an inclusive conference

Version 1, February 2021
Version 2, July 2021
Version 3, October 2021