

The AP Linguistics Initiative

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Timeline:

- May 2016: Executive Committee of LSA approves formation of ad hoc AP Linguistics Committee (APLC).
APLC charge: explore drafting of a formal proposal to the College Board (CB) for creation of an AP Linguistics course & exam.
- January 2017: APLC votes to proceed with task of drafting an AP Ling proposal.

Here I describe:

- the motivations & potential benefits of linguistics for U.S. HSs & HSs students
- the attractions HS Linguistics for the field of Linguistics
- the formal requirements on an AP Linguistics proposal
- the steps being taken to meet those requirements

1.0 Why Linguistics in High School?

1.1 Attractions for HSs and HS Students

1.1.1 Offers an effective medium for STEM education

- Human language is accessible in depth, without complex apparatus or calculus level mathematics.
 - basic data are produced & comprehended freely by any competent speaker.
 - core theories don't go beyond basic concepts of algebra (graphs), physics (acoustics) & logic.
- This enables rapid movement between data collection & central intellectual processes of science:
 - hypothesis generation
 - pursuit of evidence for/against a given hypothesis
 - reflection on why a given hypothesis might be expected to succeed or fail
 - development of abstract models of speaker knowledge
- "Proof of concept": success as a science subject in K-12 (Honda 1994, 1999; Honda and O'Neil 1993); success as a science subject in teacher education (Honda and O'Neil 2008; Honda, O'Neil and Pippin 2010); success as a science subject at college/univ level (Larson 1996, 2010)

1.1.2 Offers tools to navigate a multilingual, multicultural world

- Attitudes towards other groups/oneself often correlate (strongly) with attitudes towards the languages & dialects spoken. Human language becomes a potent domain for exploring socio-cultural dimensions of diversity & identity: regional, ethnic, racial, economic, etc.

- Knowledge of dialect & language variation and associated societally-determined attitudes are important for students in many different fields, following many different career trajectories (Baugh 2000; Baugh and Alim 2006; Smitherman 2000; Charity Hudley and Mallinson 2010, 2013; Reaser and Wolfram 2007; Rickford and Finegan 2004; Devereaux 2014; Devereaux and Palmer 2018; among others.
- "Proof of concept": success of various programs
 - SKILLS (Santa Barbara) "prepares and motivates California's public school students for higher education by giving them hands-on experience in studying language and culture" (<http://www.skills.ucsb.edu/>).
 - curricular units focus on language in peer groups, families, local communities & the world
 - successfully implemented in one-semester elective social studies classes, after school programs & college prep classes in SB area HSs.
 - *Voices of North Carolina* curriculum (Reaser and Wolfram 2007) offers units on language diversity via a North Carolina state-adopted social studies curriculum (<https://languageandlife.org/>).

1.1.3 Offers critical tools & knowledge for foreign language study

- Linguistic knowledge is useful in advance of the study of particular languages
 - the sounds of languages
 - how meaning & structure are related in words
 - how grammars of languages work & vary
 - differences in world writing systems
 - culture-relativity of language and how cultural differences are encoded linguistically
- Relevant for English language arts, world languages, classical languages, English for those for whom English is not a first language. (Adger et al. 2002/2018; Ginsberg, Honda, and O'Neil 2011).
- "Proof of concept": the success of the OSU *Summer Linguistics Institute for Youth Scholars* (SLIYS) Program, which "promotes foreign language study...in all aspects by cultivating a deeper appreciation of language similarities and differences," (<https://linguistics.osu.edu/sliys>).

1.1.4 Offers a pathway into a variety of career choices.

- Traditional Linguistics career paths
 - editing
 - publishing/journalism
 - marketing
 - language documentation & revitalization
 - forensic linguistics
 - polyglot jobs (translator, interpreter, diplomat, or humanitarian aid worker. (Denham and Lobeck 2018).

- Newly Emerged Linguistics career paths
 - computational linguistics (data-mining, search, translation, autonomous agents, recognition & synthesis)
 - clinical linguistics (SLP is ranked *U.S. News and World Report 100 Best Jobs of 2014* in the top 10 “best jobs; projected job growth rate for audiology 34% - SLP 19%)

1.1.5 Offers many opportunities for HS - University collaboration

- University internship & summer residence programs for 2ndary school teachers and students interested in research, working in campus laboratories & other research facilities.
- Potential collaborative opportunities within linguistics are numerous in many areas:
 - language, literature & culture
 - psycholinguistics
 - sociolinguistics
 - experimental linguistics
 - field methods
 - endangered languages
 - phonetics
 - corpus linguistics
 - clinical studies
 - computational linguistics
- "Proof of concept" is reflected in the success of UAZ's public outreach effort (McKee et al. 2015).

1.1.6 Growing Interest and Attention

- #’s of colleges/universities offering linguistics courses and #’s of linguistics students continue to rise. Figure-1 (LSA 2017) shows growth of BA Ling degrees since the mid-90s.

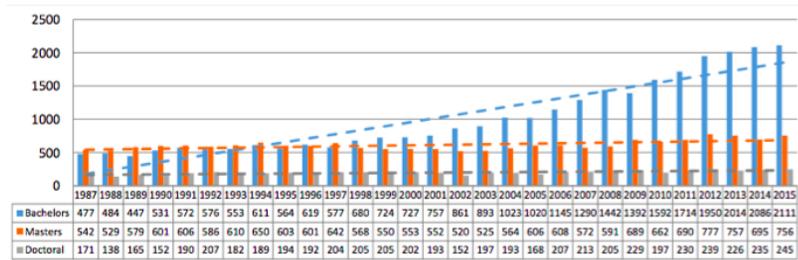


Figure 1 - Trends in the Growth of Linguistics Degrees

- U.S. Linguistics departments anecdotally report increasing numbers of undergraduate declaring an interest in Linguistics upon matriculation, despite virtual absence of the subject in the K-12 curriculum.
- These trends suggest a growing awareness of Linguistics as a discipline at many levels. Student interest might be well-served by offering the subject matter formally in K-12, feeding a growing appetite.

1.2 Attractions for Colleges & Universities

1.2.1 Increased Visibility to Students

- Linguistics is not a subject students typically know about upon matriculation in college. It is usually a "discovery major".
- HS linguistics would significantly assist students who would be naturally drawn to our subject matter and wish to explore it.

1.2.3 Increased Visibility to the Public

- Although comparable in size to Astronomy as a professional field, Linguistics is vastly less familiar to teachers, administrators, parents, and the public at large.
- HS linguistics would greatly enhance field visibility.

1.2.4 Improved Outreach & Collaboration

- Many STEM fields support summer programs, workshops, internships for K-12 students.
- HS linguistics would expand opportunities for outreach & collaboration between university linguistics departments & programs and schools.

1.3 The AP Linguistics Idea

- All well & good, BUT...the HS curriculum is already crowded. The table has limited seating and "elbows are sharp". What's the benefit of Linguistics vs. some other new elective? Why should administrators invest resources? Why should teachers invest time?
- AP curricula are attractive to districts focused on college readiness. Students:
 - Build skills and confidence.
 - Get into college.
 - Succeed in college.
 - Save time and money in college.
- AP classes are prestigious assignments for teachers
- The existence of an AP course & exam would offer strong inducement to HSs for implementing Linguistics in their curriculum.

2.0 How Do You Create an AP?

2.1 The Procedure

College Board (CB) stipulates the following:

- A professional body informs CB of intent to develop a proposal for a new AP course
- The professional body drafts a proposal meeting stated CB requirements
- CB reviews the proposal & decides whether to proceed with development
- If development is approved, funding must be found (\$5-7 million!)

2.2 AP Proposal Requirements

Proof of a national college-level course to which AP would correspond

- “A description of the standard, commonly offered college course upon which the proposed AP course will be modeled...”
- “Ten or more sample syllabi representing a range of higher education institutions; these syllabi should demonstrate that there is a degree of consistency across colleges & universities in what is taught and learned in this course and how the proposed AP course aligns with college-level expectations.”
- “A description of sequent courses into which students earning AP credit would receive placement, typically the next course in the sequence following the standard, introductory college course.”
- “A...description of the type of professional development that would be needed for high school AP teachers to address the gaps or additional knowledge skills.”

Proof of College Credit

- “a minimum of **100 colleges and universities should attest to their desire for an exam** that would allow high school students to place out of that course in college.”

Proof of Demand

- "Indicate (by inclusion of letters) how many HSs in the United States offer an advanced or honors course in this discipline, and how many will agree to offer this proposed AP course in the first year that it is available...The list should include representation across the country and be sufficient to lead to a sustainable offering. Note: Most proposals include **letters of attestation from 250 or more schools**, with a total number of students for all attesting schools to be no fewer than 6000."

3.0 Meeting CB's Requirements

3.1 Documenting Existence of a National college-level Course

- Jan 2017: APLC concludes that "LIN 101 Intro Ling" = AP Ling counterpart.
- Spr 2018: LiHEC surveyed US Lx depts & programs on Intro Ling courses. The survey collected syllabi, info on content, textbook choice, frequency-duration, etc.
- **AP Ling has a national college-level course counterpart, whose content, curricular position and teacher training requirements can be documented.** ✓

3.2 Proof of College Credit

- College credit for AP differs by school and by subject.
 - Some schools award no AP credit in any subject (Yale).
 - Some award AP credit for specific courses.
 - Some award AP credit only as major or gen-ed credit.
- For most US programs, the advantages of awarding AP credit (more majors, students proceeding more quickly into the major) outweigh the disadvantages (reduced intro enrollments).
- **AP Ling can plausibly meet the College Credit Requirement.** ✓

3.3 Proof of Demand

- Only a handful of US HS's currently offer something like the envisioned AP Ling
- No HS will declare willingness to offer an AP subject with which it has no prior experience and for which it has no trained staffing!
- **AP Ling cannot currently meet the Demand Requirement.** x

4.0 Where to Now? The HS Linguistics Initiative

4.1 Current APLC Strategy

- "AP Linguistics builds on non-AP Linguistics, which itself first needs to be a thing!"
- Seed AP Ling "precursor" courses in US HSs.
- Ensure these courses are successful.
- Enlist their schools in the proposal campaign.

4.2 Create Demand

- Advertise linguistics in conferences of HS modern language, classical language, science and math teachers. Use our teacher group as spokespeople. ✓
- Organize workshops stressing/exploring connections to language, science and math teaching. ✓

- Do in-school presentations to HS administrations. ✓
- Prepare written materials explaining the benefits of HS Linguistics. ✓

4.3 Support Demand

- Extend opportunities for participation by HS teachers in the activities of our professional organization (LSA)
 - new membership category ✓
 - dedicated sessions on HS Linguistics ✓
- Seek support from US Lx departments & programs in helping local HSs to create and sustain the courses, esp. in the initial period, e.g., help in
 - curriculum design
 - lesson planning
 - in-class activities
 - on-campus lab visits and lab internships
 - guest lectures
- Create opportunities for teacher training in Linguistics
 - summer workshops
 - summer courses (including LSA Summer Institute)
 - on-line courses
- Create a bank of syllabuses and materials for on-going efforts

4.4 Example: Ward Melville HS (East Setauket, NY) – Stony Brook Linguistics

- Initial Connection: APLC member Christina Tortora, a WMHS alum
- 25.Sept '17: Tortora, RKL and Lori Repetti meet with Ward Melville admin & heads of depts, pitch HS Linguistics and offer SBU dept support
- 10.Oct '17: Tortora drafts course proposal for a new WMHS course *The Science of Language*, to be launched in Sept 2018.
- 2.Nov' 17: OSU Press (T Sanfilippo) agrees to provide *Language Files 12th Ed.* for SoL teachers and students free of charge as an experiment.
- 27.June '18: Tortora and Larson meet with WMHS teachers Cynthia Porter and Lisa Crispino to organize drafting of *SoL* curriculum.
- July-Aug '18: Tortora, Larson and Aronoff meet at intervals with Porter & Crispino on *SoL* details and plans.
- Sept '18: Course launch!

4.5 Long Island/NYC HS Linguistics Initiative

- Expand outreach in the SBU area using committee connections (kids in school)
 - Earl Vandermeulen HS, Port Jefferson (RKL, LR)
 - Smithtown HS, Smithtown (MA)
- Seeks partnerships in the LI/Five Burroughs area between linguistics programs & local High Schools. Some local schools:

- Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Brooklyn College
- College of Staten Island
- Fordham University
- Hofstra
- Hunter, CUNY
- Kingsborough Community College, CUNY
- LaGuardia Community College, CUNY
- Lehman College, CUNY
- LIU, Brooklyn
- LIU, CW Post
- NYU
- York College, CUNY
- Queens College, CUNY

5.0 Closing Thoughts

- This will be a multi-year process!
- "Take steps whose value is independent of the goal!"

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