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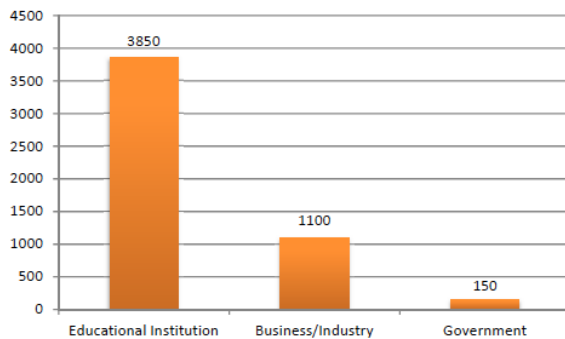victoria.e.mateu@gmail.com

Roundtable 3:
Insights on the Current Academic Job Market
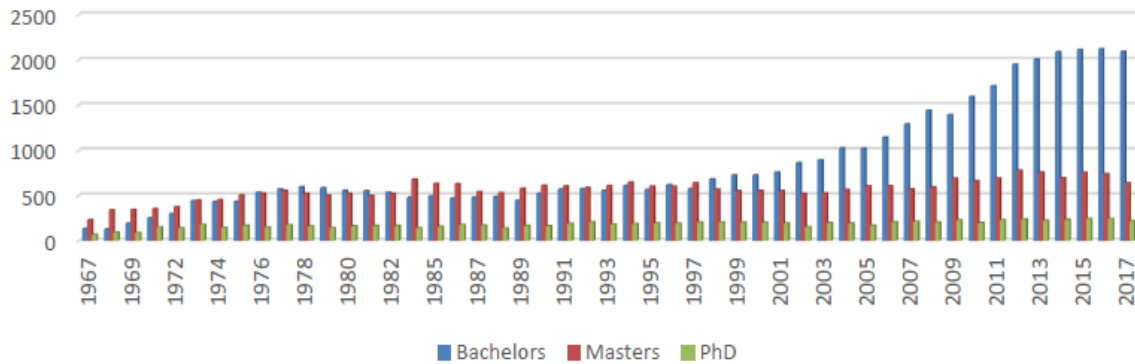
1. General Trends in Linguistics

- Most common career outcome is underlined education, but about 20% go into "industry" careers (e.g., consumer insights, market research, branding, tech, journalism, 'think tanks', interpretation), and about 3% obtain government jobs (e.g., FBI/CIA foreign language instruction/research, language/culture analysis, translation) (NSF, 2018; N = 5,100).

- Within higher education, there is an increasing trend for non-tenure-track positions (adjunct, lecturer, and post-doc) (LSA, 2019).

- There has been a <u>consistent growth in the number of Linguistics degrees</u> (LSA, 2019).

2. **Academic Jobs**

- **Timeline (tenure-track):**

  - <u>Application</u>: September – End November.
  - <u>Long list interview</u>: They contact you about a month after they close search. Long-list interview via Skype, at LSA conference (January) or person if close-by. Lasts about 1h.
  - <u>Short list interview</u>: One or two months later they invite you to campus to give a talk about your research and spend a couple of days meeting students and professors.
  - <u>Offer</u>: Between February and April.

- **Timeline (non-tenure-track):**

  - <u>Application</u>: More broad and last-minute, from January until May.
  - <u>Interview</u>: For research institutions there isn't always one. If there is one, it may be via Skype or person if close-by. Lasts about 30min. If it's a community college, or a language program you may be asked for a teaching demo (they give you a topic on the spot and 30min to develop a lecture on it). It lasts 2-3h.
  - <u>Offer</u>: June or July.

- **Application materials:**

  - <u>Cover letter</u>: Give summary, <u>sell yourself</u>, say anything not contained in other materials.
  - <u>CV</u>: Make it easy to read! Model it after someone in your subfield/their department.
  - <u>Research Statement</u> (*very* important for tenure-track jobs at research institutions): What research have you done and what are your future research plans? Organize it so you're telling a story (not a collage of unrelated projects). 2-3 pages max.
  - <u>Teaching Philosophy Statement</u>: How do you approach teaching? 2 pages max.
  - <u>Teaching evaluations</u>: Offer a summary/averages, perhaps recurrent comments in quotes.

- □ <u>Writing samples</u>: Ideally published or submitted.
- □ 3 <u>Letters of Recommendation</u>: The higher the rank the better.
- □ Optional: <u>Diversity Statement</u>

- ▪ **General tips:**
  - □ Where to look for jobs:
    - Linguist List: (https://linguistlist.org/jobs/browse-jobs.cfm
    - MLA: https://joblist.mla.org/
    - HigherEd https://www.higheredjobs.com/faculty/
  - □ Think of <u>allied fields</u> (e.g. foreign languages, psychology)
  - □ <u>Go geographically wide</u> if at all possible
  - □ Get <u>inside info</u> to see if you're still running
    http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Academic_Jobs_Wiki
  - □ <u>Polish website</u> (and social media) before applying!
  - □ <u>Contact letter writers</u> in as much advance as possible!
  - □ Help with <u>application materials</u>:
    http://theprofessorisin.com/
  - □ Do not submit the exact same materials to different jobs. You should tailor it a little bit. But once you create the materials for one job, adapting it to others should not be as time consuming.
  - □ <u>Solicit feedback</u>! Ask your advisor and other faculty to read over your CV and statements, and give you feedback. Give practice talks!
  - □ <u>"Stalk" the department</u> before your interviews!
  - □ Re: <u>Interdisciplinary work</u>: Don't put all your eggs in one basket nor spread yourself too thin. Have one major line of research. You may have other side projects, but try to have something consistent between them, e.g., Heritage language speakers (phonology, morphology).
  - □ **Do NOT lose hope**! You may not get a job even if you have a great CV because you are not exactly what they are looking for. This is common and it says NOTHING about your worth. You are a PhD student. You ARE smart. You WILL get a job.
  - □ You're not "selling your soul" for going into "the industry"! But be aware that if you get out of academia / lose academic affiliation it is going to be almost impossible to get back in.
  - □ If you have any intention of getting out of academia, make sure you strengthen whatever skills you'll need in your target job while you're still at UCLA! (e.g., stats, computer languages/programming, experience teaching foreign languages).
  - □ <u>Networking</u>: <u>Fundamental</u> for jobs outside academia (NB: LSA has events for people looking for jobs outside academia, use LinkedIn, Facebook to contact people of interest, offer a coffee in exchange for advice). Networking *is* important but not AS much in academic jobs. Your CV speaks for you. However, you should know the people in your field by having gone to conferences.

- **Know your priorities** and do whatever will make you happiest (in the long run)!

- **My journey:**
  - I finished my PhD in Linguistics at UCLA in 2016 (on "time").
  - I specialized in first language acquisition (syntax, English and Spanish). Side projects included speech perception in mono- and bilingual infants, and theoretical syntax.
  - I became a part-time lecturer/part-time lab manager (Language Acquisition Lab) in same department. Continued to do research to stay competitive.
  - Applied to tenure-track jobs every year (between 2-4/year, limited to big cities in the US). Got a few long-listed and three short-listed interviews.
  - As anxiety crippled and hope diminished, I decided to try and work on a few side projects for two branding companies. It was fun and well-paid, but jobs like these are project-based (i.e., unstable), and ultimately it was not what satisfied me most.
  - Eventually, I was at the right place and time, and I got my dream job here! ☺