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*Making voices, making publics: Language history and linguistic memorialization*

What has the role of Historical Linguistics been in the constitution of modern Western social formations? To what extent and how have the discipline's practitioners crossed over to the public sphere in order to bring their specialized knowledge to bear in the organization of society and political debates? Do different strains of the discipline better equip linguists to engage as public intellectuals?

On the basis of my research on the development of historical linguistics in contemporary Spain and Latin America, in this lecture I will try to examine the disciplinary concerns raised by these questions. Is the data-driven, empirical approach dominant in Historical Linguistics and Sociolinguistics independent of its own sociohistorical embeddedness? Does it connect in any "organic" manner with broader processes of linguistic memorialization, that is, with the political activation of historical linguistic narratives in the constitution of social identities?