

# **How we speak matters:** Explore How Language Shapes Our World



*The Language and Communication Training Unit (LCTU), within the Capacity Building and Operational Training Service (CDOTS), is part of the Office of Support Operations (OSO) in the Department of Operational Support ( BACK).*

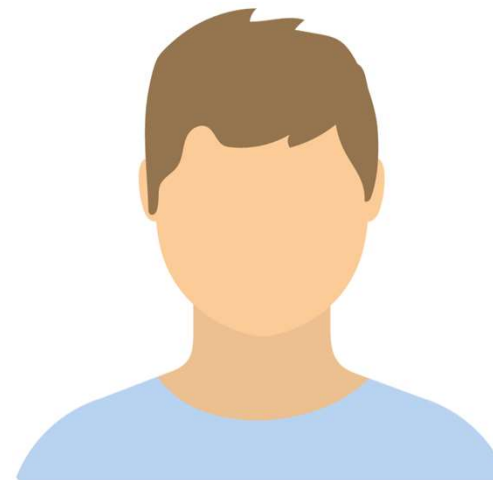
**CONSULTANT FOR LCTU and CDOTS**  
**INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER AND FRENCH LANGUAGE EXPERT**  
**TEACHER OF FRENCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**  
**TEXTBOOK AUTHOR**

**HEAD of the ENGLISH LANGUAGE and COMMUNICATIONS**  
**PROFESSOR OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS**  
**CO-AUTHOR OF « HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH ANYONE , ANYWHERE »**

**CONTRIBUTION TO THE SAP**



**MANON GRIMAUD**



**DAN BULLOCK**





**INTRODUCTION:**  
Key concepts and  
keywords

**PART 1:**  
4 facts about the  
English language

**PART 2:**  
4 myths about inclusive  
language

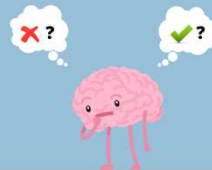
**PART 3:**  
Tips and  
resources

**CONCLUSION:**  
Questions and  
reflections

Understand where the need  
for inclusivity comes from



Break down some of the  
misconceptions about  
inclusive language



Discover best practices



Defend the values of  
inclusiveness



Use inclusive language out  
of conviction



Improve future  
communications



# What is linguistics?

**Linguistics** is usually defined as the scientific study of human language.

« **Linguists** are scientists of language. When you're a linguist, you don't ask yourself whether [inclusive writing, for example] is right or wrong. We observe linguistic facts.»

Sources :

- Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales, [cnrtl.fr](http://cnrtl.fr)
- *Le français va très bien, merci*, Collectif « Les linguistes atterrées »



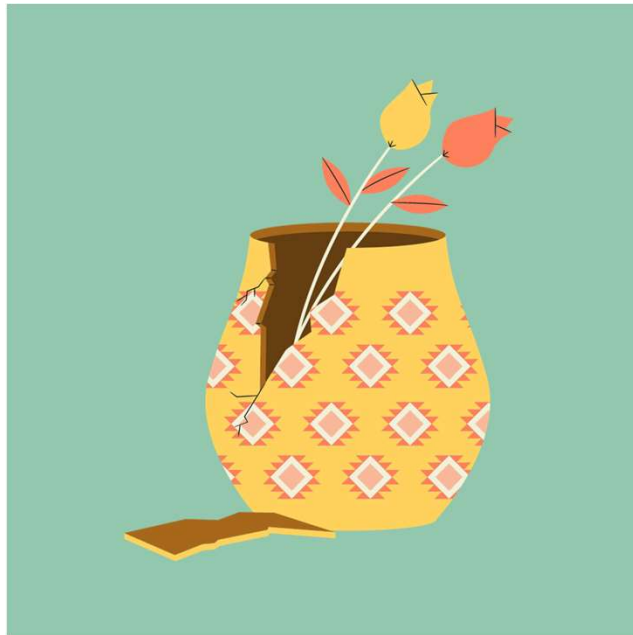
# "Language shapes the way we think."

---

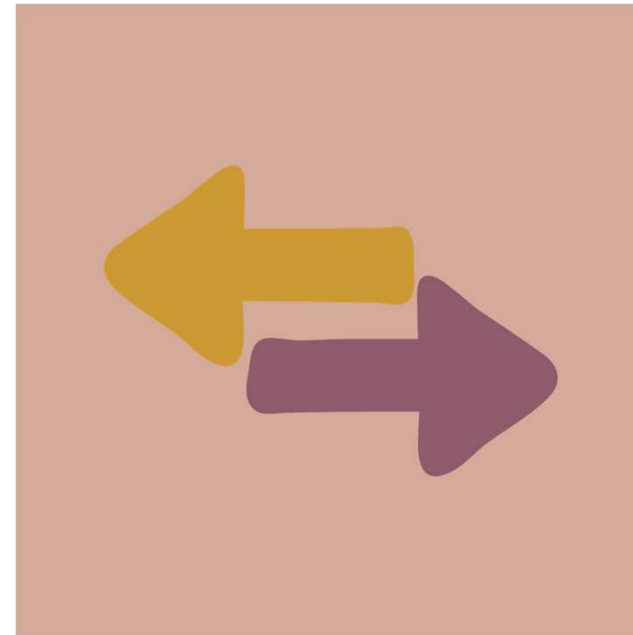


Dr. Lera Boroditsky

Languages differ in how...



...we describe events



...we perceive space  
and time

**« Mrs. Grimaud »**

**« Manon »**

**« Professor »**

**« M'am »**



**« Miss Grimaud »**

# What is **inclusive language**?

Inclusive language is the practice of intentionality using language that respects diverse and intersectional identities.

## For example:

- "Fireman" → "Firefighter"
- "turn a deaf ear" → "ignore"
- "digital native" → "proficient in digital solutions"

## **BENEFIT:**

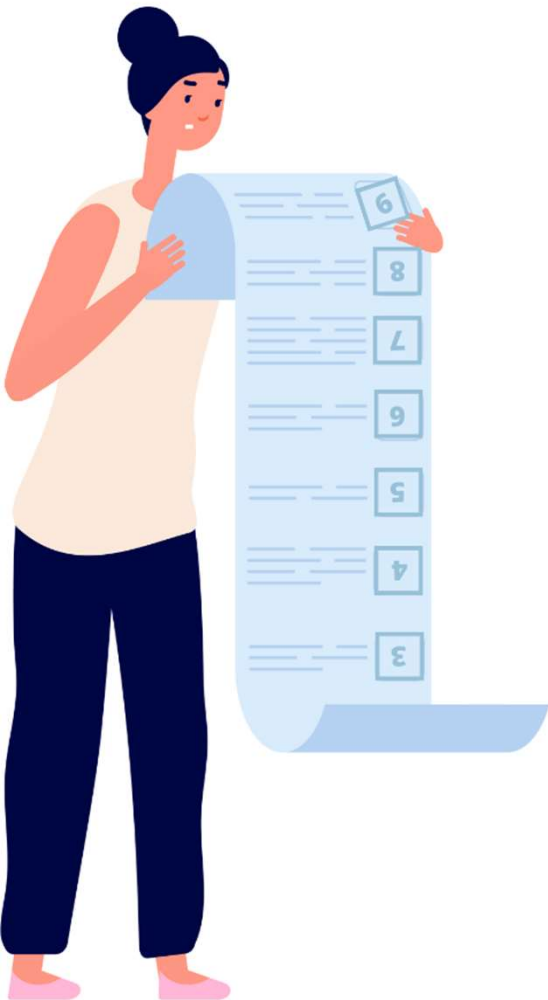
By using inclusive language we can promote inclusive policies, practices, and workspaces.

# « Human beings are complicated »

---



Dr. Suzanne  
Wertheim



« For example, I am:

- **female** (and was assigned female at birth),
- **heterosexual**,
- **short**,
- **a sister**,
- a person who grew up **speaking English at home**,
- [...]
- and a whole lot more. »

~~« Majority » vs. « minority »~~

« Dominant » group vs. « underrepresented » or « marginalized » group



According to Dr. Suzanne Wertheim, *The inclusive language field guide*

### Individually

- Race and ethnicity
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Neurodiversity
- Age
- Weight
- Height



### Professional context

- Work content and field
- Management status
- Etc.



### Social context

- Socioeconomic class and income
- Educational background
- Etc.





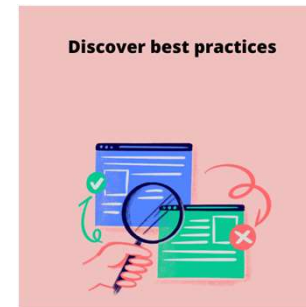
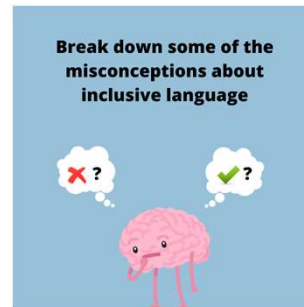
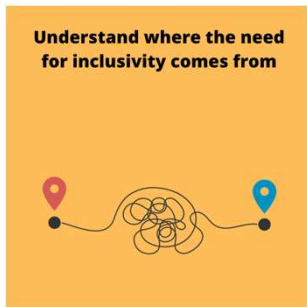
**INTRODUCTION :**  
Key concepts and  
key words

**PART 1 :**  
4 facts about the  
English language

**PART 2 :**  
4 myths about inclusive  
language

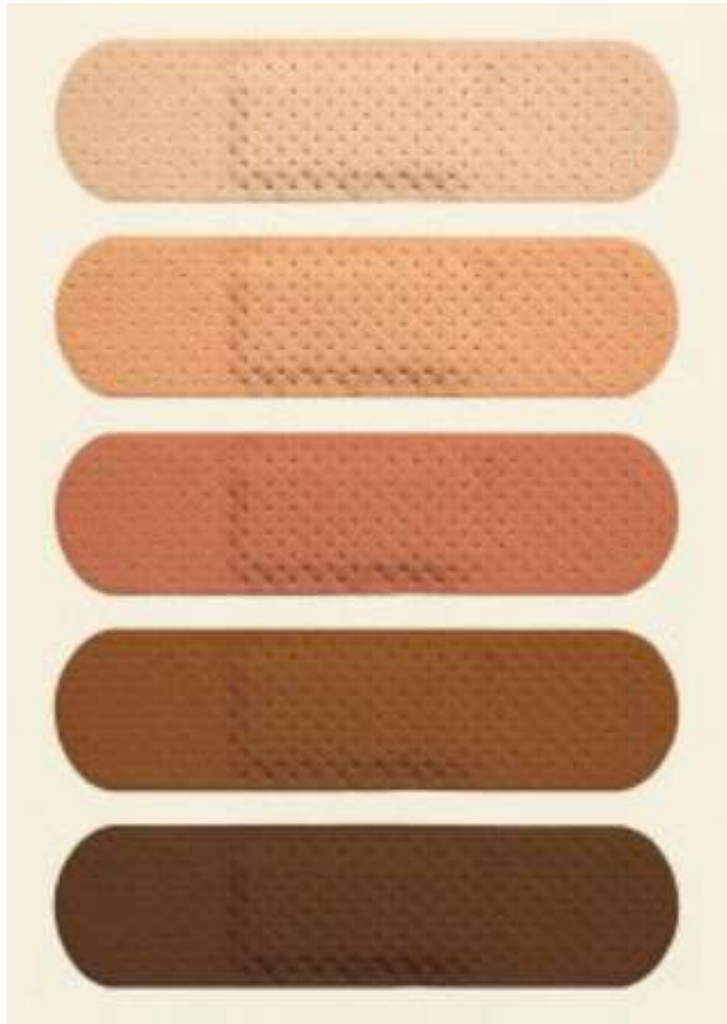
**PART 3 :**  
Resources and  
tips

**CONCLUSION :**  
Questions and  
reflections



# Fact #1: The language we use by default is not always inclusive





**Lupita Nyong'o**   
25 juillet 2020 · 

Finally, a bandage that blends! Thank you, [BrownDages](#) for helping me conceal my clumsiness!  
(Tip: wipe off your shea butter for the best stick.)



  37 K

632  1,3 K 

A social media post from Lupita Nyong'o. The post features a close-up photograph of her looking over her shoulder, with a brown adhesive bandage on her left shoulder. The bandage is perfectly matched to her skin tone. The post includes a caption, a tip, and engagement statistics.



# HUMANIAE

# BY

# ANGELICA DASS



-> **Pantone SkinTone™ Guide**

- to develop cosmetic products
- to enhance a person's complexion (fashion)
- to design video games and toys creating realistic avatars and characters
- to create prostheses for the medical sector...



1-6 C



PANTONE, 75-9 C



PANTONE, 53-7 C



PANTONE, 66-3 C



-8 C



PANTONE, 59-4 C



PANTONE, 70-7 C



PANTONE, 51-7 C



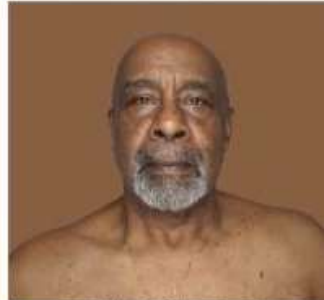
-7 C



PANTONE, 109-9 C



PANTONE, 51-6 C

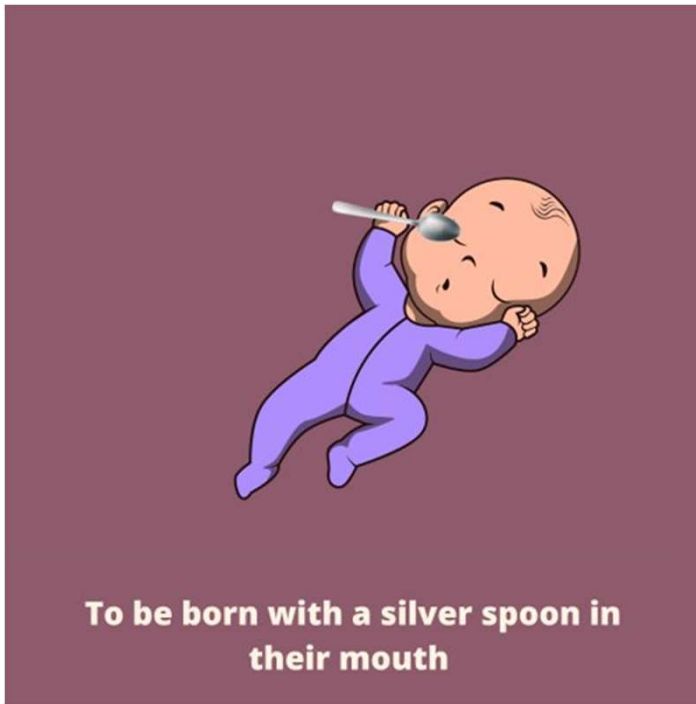


PANTONE, 66-5 C



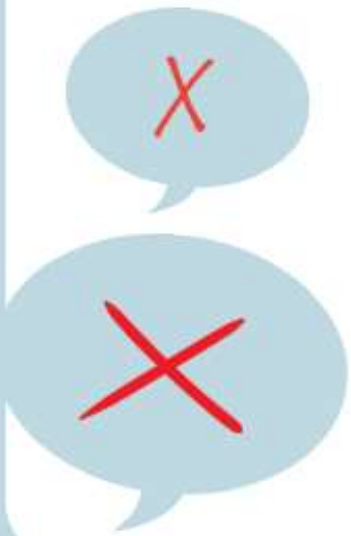
## Fact #2: Our everyday language can convey stereotypes

---



Some idioms = **linguistique heritage**

# SOME ~~IDIOMATIC~~ EXPRESSIONS PROBLEMATIC



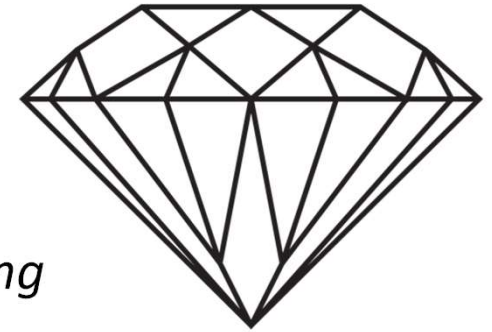
- *"Don't judge a book by its cover"*
- *"Wear the pants in the relationship"*
- *"It runs in the family"*
- *"Off the beaten path"*

## SOLUTION:

Ensure idioms don't perpetuate stereotypes and instead enhance communication



# Unconscious bias



Some idioms are part of **unconscious bias**



*social stereotypes about different groups without having an awareness of the offense that may be caused.*

## What is *unconscious bias*?

Instinctively categorising people and places without being aware of it.

## How to mitigate our biases?

Think Critically. Look at problems as a diamond –with multiple facets. And not a coin with only two sides. Take on multiple views and perspectives.

Being mindful of our words enhances our relationships and our workspaces.



**NO  
STEREOTYPES**

Yes to  
diversity



inclusion



I speak  
therefore I  
am

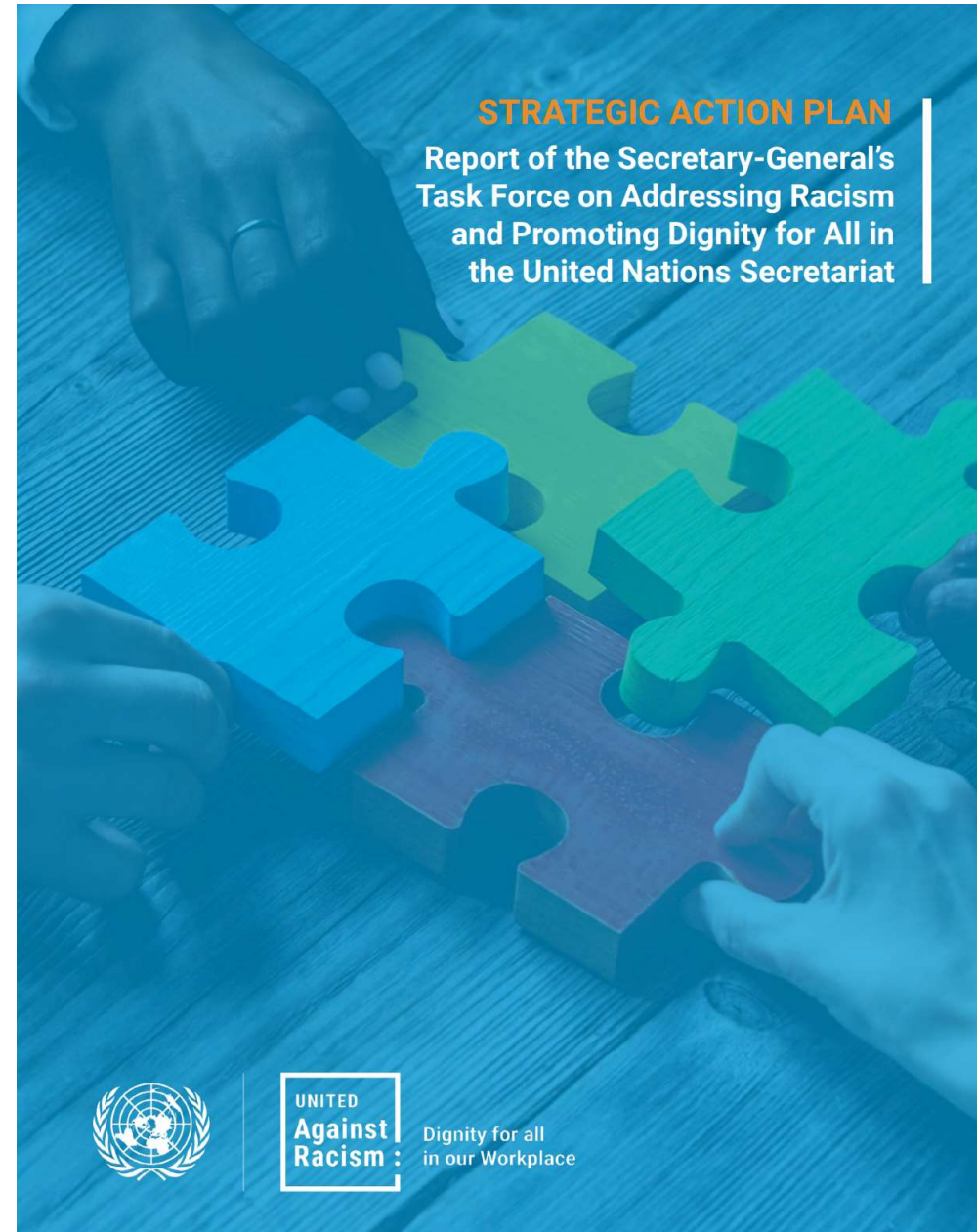


respect



Participants [of the dialogues on racism] noted the need for greater sensitivity to the use of the official languages, which could potentially include **words which might have racist or colonial undertone, sometimes unknown to the speaker.**

From the « Report of the Secretary-General's Task Force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations Secretariat” (2021)



## Fact #3: Language can be sexist

---

« If a woman is swept off a ship into the water, the cry is **Man overboard**. If she is killed by a hit-and-run driver, the charge is **manslaughter**. If she is injured on the job, the coverage is **workmen's** compensation. But if she arrives at the threshold marked Men Only, she knows the admonition is not intended to bar animals or plants or inanimate objects. It is meant for her. »

Fromkin, V., R. Rodman & N. Hyams. An Introduction to Language. (8th Edn.) Boston, U.S.A.: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007.

Gentlemen before ladies ? (Motschenbacher, 2013, Journal of English Linguistics)

Let me introduce you to :

- my brothers and sisters
- my sons and daughters
- these boys and girls
- these men and women
- Mr and Mrs. ...
- these actor and actress
- the King and Queen of...

Let me introduce you  
to my mom and dad !

**Mx**

**Mrs ?**

**Miss ?**

**Ms ?**

**Mr**



# Even artificial intelligence can be sexist

Détection automatique ▼

↔ français ▼

automatique ▼

Glossaire

Écrivez ou collez votre texte ici.

Pour traduire des fichiers PDF, Word (.docx) ou Powerpoint (.pptx), déposez-les directement dans notre interface de traduction de documents.

Cliquez sur le microphone pour lancer la saisie vocale.

# Fact #4: Our sentences reflect our societies

---

Is this a yes or no in the end ? You've had quite a schizophrenic position on this project so far... You have to chose.

**ABLEIST**

Is this a yes or no in the end ? You've have had a quite changing poision on this project so far... You have to chose.

He takes care of their kids tonight so that she can go out with a friend.

**HETEROCENTRIC**

He babysits their kids tonight so that she can go out with a friend.

**SEXIST**

(See the wedding ring Oscar is wearing).  
I bet your wife would love this place, Oscar.

I bet your spouse would love this place, Oscar.

« Language is a social act »

Example from « The language field guide » (Wertheim)

---

**Option 1** : Correct John and tell him that he is indeed married, but to a man called Fred.

**Option 2** : Say nothing.







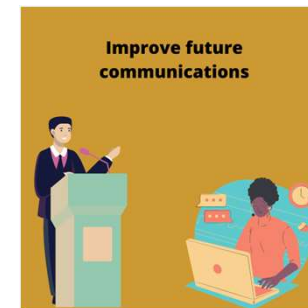
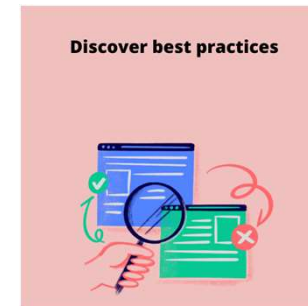
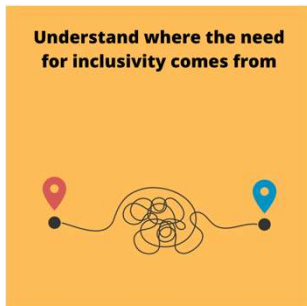
**INTRODUCTION :**  
Key concepts and  
key words

**PART 1 :**  
4 facts about the  
English language

**PART 2 :**  
4 myths about inclusive  
language

**PART 3 :**  
Resources and  
tips

**CONCLUSION :**  
Questions and  
reflections



## FACT #1:

Language can present groups equally

### Statement 1:

Men are as good as women at *managing time*.



**Subject-complement structure** (comparing *men* (the complement) to *women* (the standard)).

### Statement 2:

Men and women are good at *managing time*.

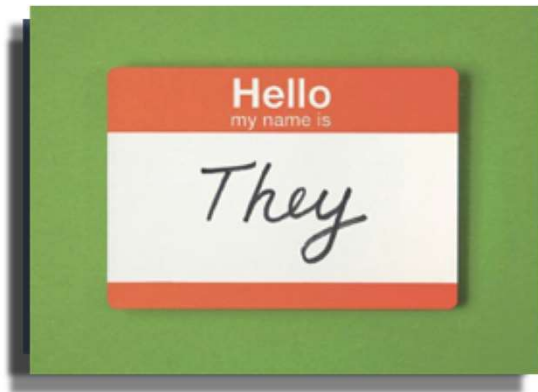


**Subject-subject structure** (placing *men* and *women* at the same position without comparing to a standard).

## Example: Do not make groups visible when not relevant to the situation

### Example:

“Before submitting your document, send it to the focal point for **their** review; **they** will return it to you with comments.”



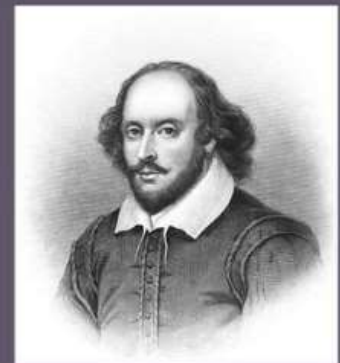
### Which is correct? WHY?

- (a) Everybody knows each other.
- (b) They know each other.
- (c) He knows each other.

**FACT #2:** We can always enhance our use of inclusive language

**Thou --> They**

William  
Shakespeare  
(1564-1616)



# FACT #3: Inclusive language promotes dignity & equality

## Mind your language



### Gender Decoder Tool

Polite / Kind / Cooperative  
Active / Innovative / Competitive

Danielle Gaucher, Justin Friesen,  
and Aaron C. Kay, *Journal of  
Personality and Social  
Psychology*,  
July 2011, Vol 101(1), p109-28.

## Recommandations from «The Art of Hiring Talent» course

### Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality

Danielle Gaucher and Justin Friesen

Aaron C. Kay

Social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) contends that institutional-level mechanisms exist that reinforce and perpetuate existing group-based inequalities, but very few such mechanisms have been empirically demonstrated. We propose that gendered wording (i.e., masculine- and feminine-themed words, such as those associated with gender stereotypes) may be a heretofore unacknowledged, institutional-level mechanism of inequality maintenance. Employing both archival and experimental analyses, the present research demonstrates that gendered wording commonly employed in job recruitment materials can maintain gender inequality in traditionally male-dominated occupations. Studies 1 and 2 demonstrated the existence of subtle but systematic wording differences within a randomly sampled set of job advertisements. Results indicated that job advertisements for male-dominated areas employed greater masculine wording (i.e., words associated with male stereotypes, such as *leader*, *competitive*, *dominant*) than advertisements within female-dominated areas. No differences in the presence of feminine wording (i.e., words associated with female stereotypes, such as *support*, *understand*, *interpersonal*) emerged across male- and female-dominated areas. Next, the consequences of highly masculine wording were tested across 3 experimental studies. When job advertisements were constructed to include more masculine than feminine wording, participants perceived more men within these occupations (Study 3), and importantly, women found these jobs less appealing (Studies 4 and 5). Results confirmed that perceptions of belongingness (but not perceived skills) mediated the effect of gendered wording on job appeal (Study 5). The function of gendered wording in maintaining traditional gender divisions, implications for gender parity, and theoretical models of inequality are discussed.

**Keywords:** inequality, intergroup relations, gender inequality, social dominance, belongingness

Despite widely touted egalitarian ideals, women in North America continue to be underrepresented in many areas of employment including high levels of business, the natural sciences, and engineering. In Canada, for example, less than 20% of engineering undergraduates and only 9% of registered professional engineers are women (Engineers Canada, 2010). A similar picture emerges in the United States. Women comprise only 2.4% of Fortune 500 chief executive officers (Catalyst, 2008a), 20% of full professors in the natural sciences (Catalyst, 2008b), and 11% of engineers

(U.S. Department of Labor, 2007). Why do women continue to be underrepresented in these areas?

Individual-level factors that serve to keep women out of male-dominated areas are well documented. Such factors manifest within individuals in the form of beliefs, attitudes, and other motivated tendencies. For example, system justification research (see Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004) has demonstrated that in-junctification—people's tendency to defend the status quo via construing whatever currently is as natural and desirable, and the way that things ought to be (Kay, Gaucher, et al., 2009; Kay & Zanna, 2009)—is an individual-level process that can account, at least in part, for women's continued underrepresentation in male-dominated areas. Female participants who learned about prevailing inequality (i.e., women's underrepresentation in the domains of business and politics) subsequently defended this inequality as desirable and natural, an effect that was most pronounced when system justification concerns were experimentally heightened (Kay, Gaucher, et al., 2009).

Likewise, benevolent sexist beliefs (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001a, 2001b) and complementary (see Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay et al., 2007) or compensatory (see Kay, Czapliński, & Jost, 2009; Kervyn, Yzerbyt, Judd, & Nunes, 2009; Napier, Thorisdottir, & Jost, 2010) stereotypes are especially well suited to justify gender inequalities. Endorsing the warm but incompetent stereotype of housewives justifies women's domestic role and exclusion from the workplace (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Similarly, the competent but cold stereotype of

This article was published Online First March 7, 2011.  
Danielle Gaucher and Justin Friesen, Department of Psychology, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; Aaron C. Kay, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience and Fuqua School of Business, Duke University.

This research was prepared with the support of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowships to Danielle Gaucher and Justin Friesen and research grants to Aaron C. Kay from SSHRC and the Ontario Ministry for Innovation. We thank Fatima Mitchell, Sandra Olheiser, and Gary Waller at Co-operative Education and Career Services, University of Waterloo, for their valuable assistance with Study 2.

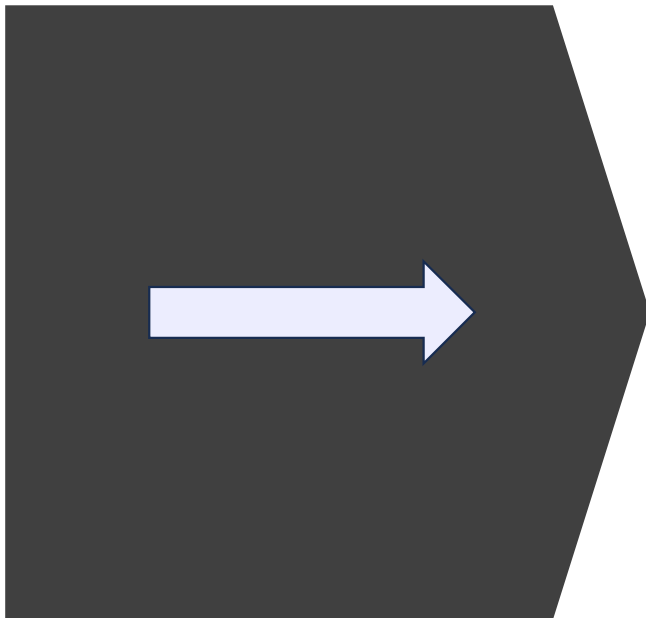
Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Danielle Gaucher, who is now at the Department of Psychology, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08540-1010, or Justin Friesen, Department of Psychology, University of Waterloo, 200 University Avenue West, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1, Canada. E-mail: dgaucher@princeton.edu or jp2fries@uwaterloo.ca

*Recommandations from  
«The Art of Hiring Talent» course*

## Mind your phrasing




« **proven** management **skills** are required »  
-> « **experience in** leading teams is required ».



 **International Labour Organi...**    
@ilo · [Follow](#)

Diversity + inclusion t work =

-  greater productivity
-  innovation
-   workforce well-being

Yet too little is being done to promote them.

 Check out our new report to learn more.  
[ow.ly/Mpf050IBFGK](https://ow.ly/Mpf050IBFGK)

11:00 AM · Apr 6, 2022 

---

 16  Reply  Share

[Read more on X](#)

## FACT #4: Our brain can reorganise itself and form new connections throughout life (Neuroplasticity)

“Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in our societies. It is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone. Inclusion is about creating a better world for everyone.”

**Diane Richler**, Chairperson,  
Inclusion International Catalyst for  
Inclusive Education





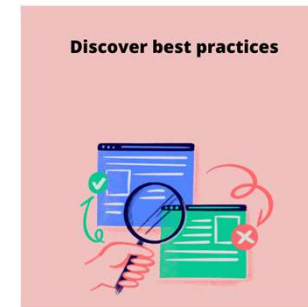
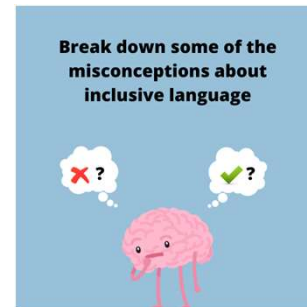
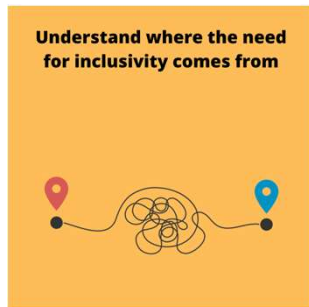
**INTRODUCTION :**  
Key concepts and  
key words

**PART 1 :**  
4 facts about the  
English language

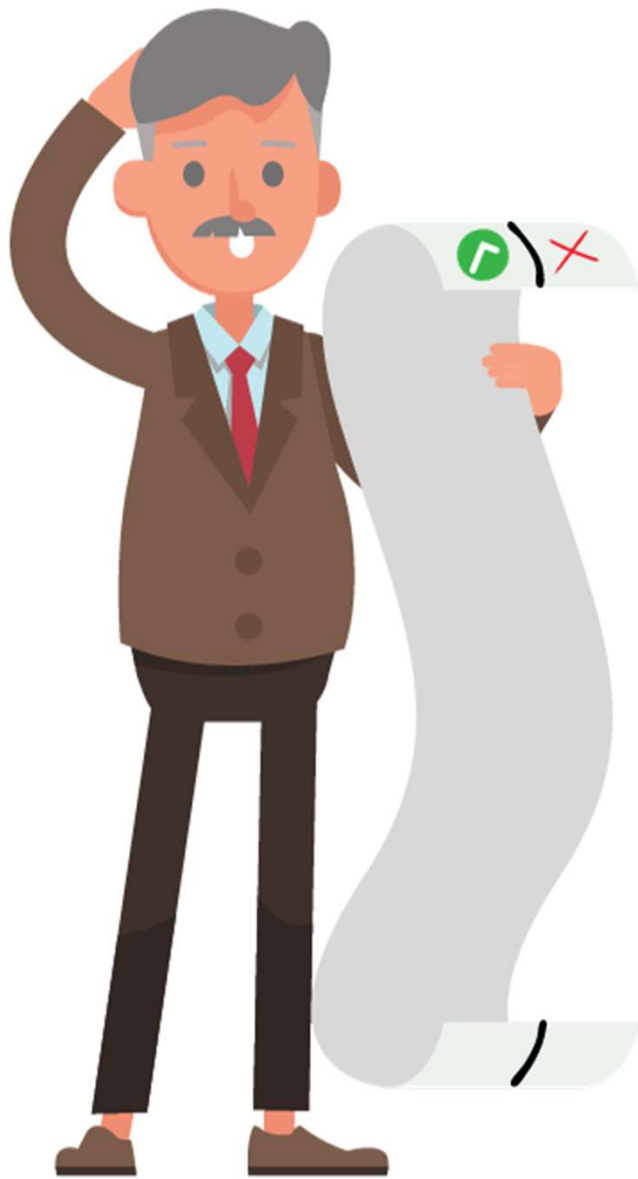
**PART 2 :**  
4 myths about the  
inclusive language

**PART 3 :**  
Resources and  
tips

**CONCLUSION :**  
Questions and  
reflections







Inclusive language, like  
language, will evolve  
over time

---

« Some words that are  
considered acceptable just a  
few years ago are seen as less  
desirable or even unacceptable  
today. And this is a cycle that  
keeps on going. »

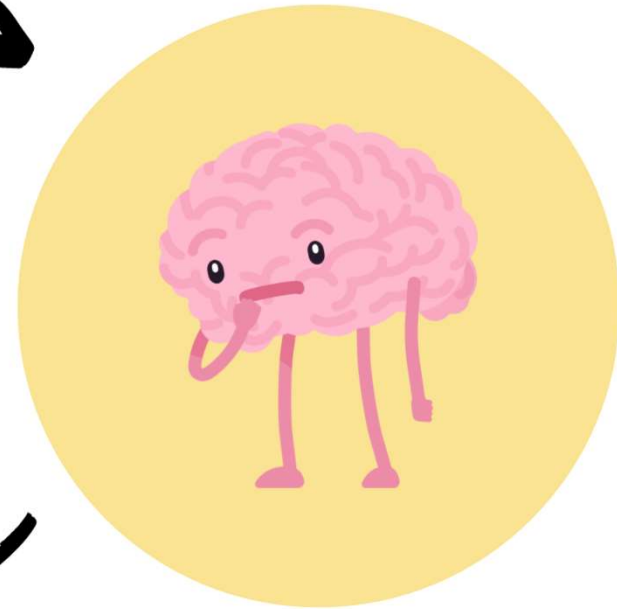
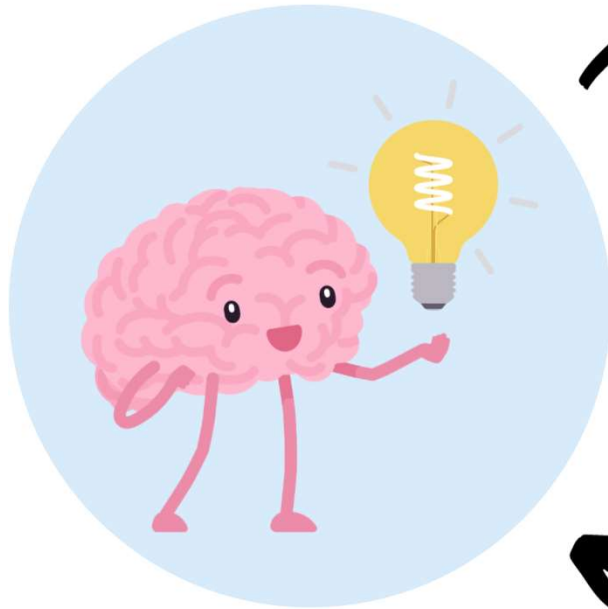
Dr. Suzanne Wertheim





*Extrait Ted Talk | Language around gender and identity evolves (and always has) | Archie Crowley*

**Share your  
knowledge**



**Ask**



---

**INTRODUCTION :**  
Key concepts and  
key words

**PART 1 :**  
4 facts about the  
English language

**PART 2 :**  
4 myths about the  
inclusive language

**PART 3 :**  
Resources and  
tips

**CONCLUSION :**  
Questions and  
reflections

