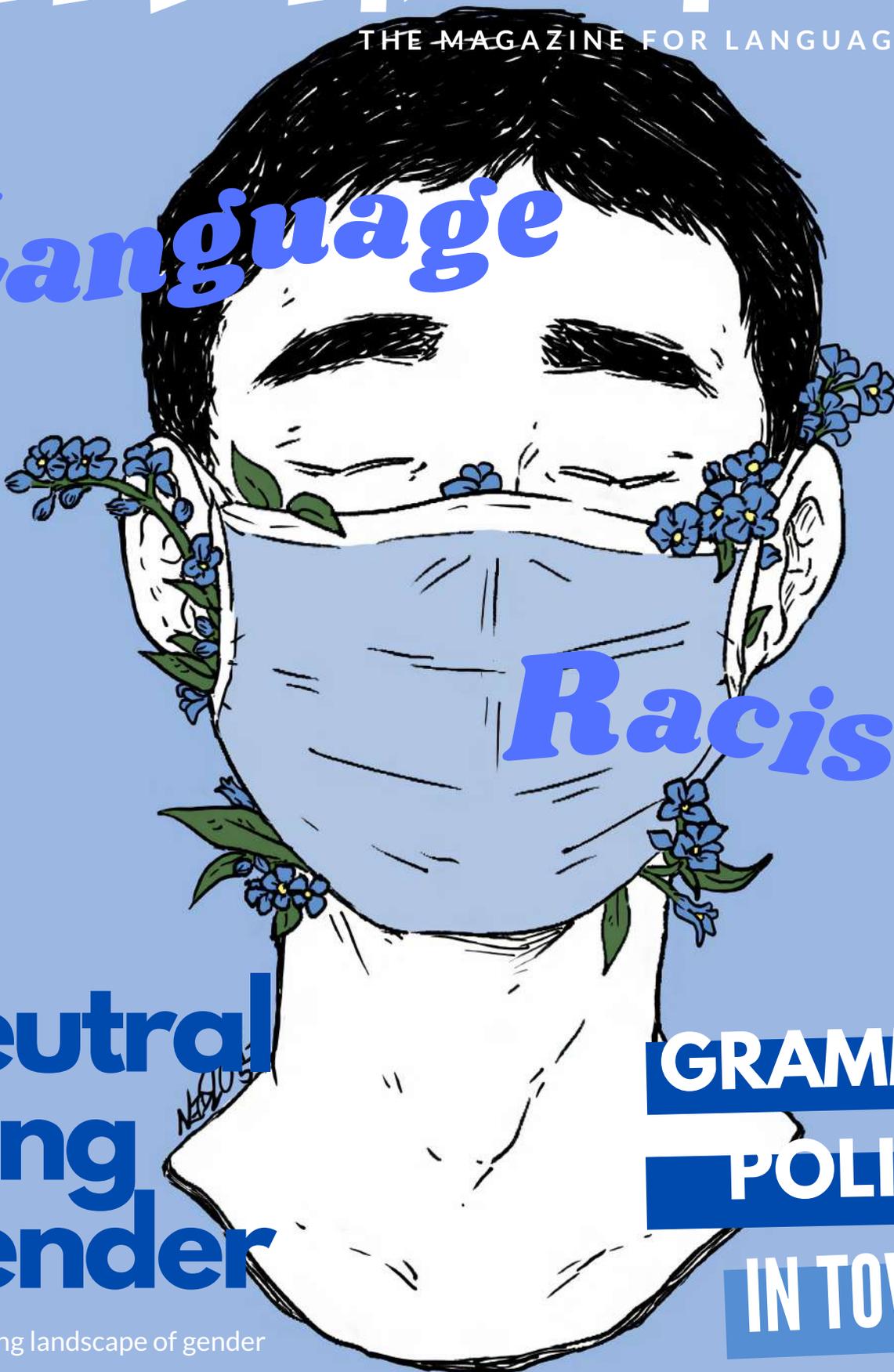


SILLY LINGUISTICS

THE MAGAZINE FOR LANGUAGE LOVERS

Language



Racism

**neutral
izing
gender**

the shifting landscape of gender

GRAMMAR

POLICE

IN TOWN

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This week's page numbers are in Dutch!

S is for...

Style it out

By Chris Davy

Ok, so let me start by saying, my intention was to write an article called S is for...Syncretism. If you don't know that that is, don't worry, neither do I! Hahaha! I mean, I have an idea of what it is, I have my interpretation of what syncretism is. But even if you do a quick internet search of what syncretism is you'll soon stumble across one of the biggest problems that we have within language; the fact that a lot of things have multiple definitions. Forget the fact we have multiple languages.

Oh man, it's like the hardest part of communication. One word, a hundred different meanings and uses. What chance do we really have of understanding each other? What chance do we really have as individuals, let alone as a collective, of making sense of anything.

So, I'll leave delving into syncretism in greater detail for another time. Because I want to put together a 'good' article on it. Like, I want to give you something a bit juicy on it. Because there is so much to that topic. But I'll do a bit more digging and then come back to you with something a little bit more than just a word. Although, a word is often all the S is for...Seed that you need to get yourself going and get stuck into something. Syncretism is definitely one of my seeds. Something that I draw on frequently for motivation and serenity.

Now, this might seem a little bit awkward. Start an article, and the first few paragraphs of the article be about the fact that I wanted to write an article on something else, but I didn't. Now what? It's almost embarrassing, in a way it kind of makes me look a bit stupid. Errrrrr, how am I going to get out of this one?

Well, I had the idea whilst I was writing the first sentence of the S is for... Syncretism article. And I figured whilst I was writing it, that this is a way, way, way more important topic. And this applies to anything, so it can apply to learning language, using language, whatever. It literally applies to anything. Writing articles...?

S is for...Style it out

If you don't know what that means, have never heard of it, or have an idea but aren't sure if it's the same as what I'm getting at. Fear not, let me eradicate any uncertainty you might have. What I'm talking about is basically making it up. Making the best of it. Winging it. Improv. Making it look like you meant it.

How does that help you? Well, you are trying to learn language, right? You are trying to learn more about linguistics, right? But, let's not kid ourselves you prrrrroooooobbbabbly make mistakes daily. Like, literally everyday. Might only be the odd one or two. You make a typo, but correct it.

You go to say something, but mix your words. You stutter, you mumble, you get tongue tied. If you don't do those things, you maybe do something like them. And if you don't do it every day you do it every now and again, or at the very least you did it once upon a time.

If you don't make mistakes and never ever have, then you've had some incredible teachers, and are some kind of super human as far as I'm concerned. For the rest of us mere mortals, we make mistakes. So we have a couple of choices. Either we get really annoyed at ourselves and stressed out about it. Or, we accept it, learn from it, aim to not make the same mistake again, and move on.

We style it out.

If you already do that in some shape or form then great. Genuinely, I'm happy for you. If you don't do that, then now you at least know about it. You know about the concept. So next time you make a mistake and perhaps start to feel a little bit stressed, frustrated, or embarrassed about it. Just style it out. Make things better again, somehow. I mean, it's up to you how you do it. I can't say getting into the habit of being like,

"Yeah, that's what I meant."

all the time is a good thing. Because it isn't. You'd basically get a reputation of being a blagger and a liar. So you know, be sincere and cool about it. Don't try and con anyone. That's not cool. That's just not healthy. I mean if you really want to do that, perhaps consider becoming an actor or a politician?

Phew, almost looked like I didn't know what I was doing with this whole article writing thing for a second. Hoping I got away with that one. Oh no wait. I meant it. Or did I?

Meh, whatever. I'm going to find something else to do. I wonder what's in the fridge?