• Why are we reading old articles?
• The discursive construction of meaning
  • Laconic
  • Tongzhi
• Epicene pronouns and the ordering of binomials
LACONIC?
• After church their laconic, slow-paced Sunday afternoon began with her grandparents’ table laden with foods they raised, caught or canned.

• The short lyric forms used in Slow Motion are perfect vehicles for the laconic voice of the waterman.

• Rather, the adjacent bar/cafe was often empty, unevenly stocked, and staffed with laconic, slow-moving folks that may or may not have had a bottled beer or panini to offer you.

• Lloyd Ruby, a laconic Texan whose slow speech belied his fast and hard driving style, amassed over 150 recorded victories.

• Few moviegoers would have guessed from his laconic and occasionally blissed-out performances.

• A collection of laconic and beautiful sentiments, culled from ancient and modern poetry.

• A mixtape … designed for a laconic Sunday drive to the ocean. Put the top down on the Karmann Ghia and drive west on Sunset to the sea.
The 2014 Gucci fall collection “... proved once again that a truly beautiful lady doesn’t have to wear thousands of accessories. The collection is very laconic yet super stylish and cool.”
Laconic

Oxford: “(of a person, speech, or style of writing) using very few words: his laconic reply suggested a lack of interest in the topic.”

Miriam Webster: “using or involving the use of a minimum of words. Concise to the point of seeming rude or mysterious.”
“It is difficult to pin down the current, received meaning of *laconic*. A statistically meaningless straw poll suggests that in Australia at present it means something like “laid back, relaxed”. I confess to having thought that was its proper meaning, but I lack a classical education.

In 1989, in Pacific Dunlop Ltd v Hogan, Sheppard J described Crocodile Dundee as being portrayed in the film of the same name: “... in a laconic, laid-back style and yet [the feats of the character in the film] are all pervaded with a certain cockiness and insolence.”
- Uninterested, disengaged
- Laid-back, not rushed
- Unwilling, not disposed to talk/communicate much
- Sad, looking at a distance, quiet
- Relaxed
- Lazy
- Lazy, slow moving, with little energy
- Related to slowpaced, relaxed, lazy kind of style, typical
- Reserved, slow slow-moving
- Lazy
- Mellow
- Not caring too much about the results of your actions, relaxed
- Depressed, bored, melancholic, unsatisfied, similar to lethargic
- Lazy, relaxed
- Someone who is kind of apathetic in an attempt to be cool
- Lazy
- Laissez-faire, laid back, couldn’t care less
- Kinda lazy and relaxed in approach to life
- Bored, uninterested, a bit lazy
- Nonchalant
- Superior, snobby
- Laid back, droll
- Laid back, easy-going
- Melancholic
- Slow & relaxed
- Droll
- Laid back
- Devilish
- Laid back, slow
My Institute Class (with no prompts)

- quiet
- quiet, dry, serious
- easy going, uninterested
- nonchalant, without much affect
- disinterested, mellow, meh
- dead pan
- slow, sleep-inducing
- lazy and slow-moving
- short
- pithy, witty (of speech or writing)
- tearful, sad
- sad, hopeless
- acerbic
- wry or humorous
- pleasant to be around
- interested, passionate about a topic
- tending to use few words, terse
- A person with very few words
- using few words, brief and not containing any details
- Don’t know (8)
- the use of vegetables in denaturing chemicals
- combination of lexical items and emoji expressions
- socially meaningful icon
- a not ideal form
- signature, or like Laocoön
Students in LINGUIST 150 (several years ago with no prompts)

- Slow, lazy, relaxed?
- Annoying???
- Laid-back and disinterested as if due to existential doubt
- Lazy (best guess)
- Quiet
- Laidback, low energy, chill in speaking. Concise and to the point. Dispassionate.
- Boring, slow?
- Judgmental (wild guess)
- Not speaking much or speaking slowly?
- Dry, dull?
Collins
Terse
Short
Brief

VisualSynonyms.com
Crisp
Curt
Terse

Thesaurus.com
Brusque
Pithy
Terse
• Why is this adorably **terse and** sexless pop diva so famous? (Is Shania Twain human?)

• Tense, terse and troubled .. Tiger Woods shows the strain days before Open.

• “The United States Constitution is terse and old, and it guarantees relatively few rights”

• What was the name of the newspaper where Hemingway wrote for seven months, and learned his hallmark writing style of being “**terse and clear**”? 

• "**Terse and** to the point," remarked Holmes, stretching his long, thin legs towards the fire.

• Jay Cutler has a tendency to be rather surly, insouciant, condescending, cold, terse, apathetic and even rude to the media at times.
... after church their terse, slow-paced Sunday afternoon began with her grandparents’ table laden with foods they raised, caught or canned.

Rather, the adjacent bar/cafe was often empty, unevenly stocked, and staffed with terse, slow-moving folks that may or may not have had a bottled beer or panini to offer you.

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A collection of terse and beautiful sentiments, culled from ancient and modern poetry.
In other words ...

- MEANING IS LEARNED/MADE IN USE
- THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION IS TURTLES
Smart men

• I was asked once, “you’re a smart man, why ain’t you rich? I replied “you’re a rich man, why ain’t you smart?"

• A smart man makes a mistake learns from it, and never makes the mistake again. But a wise man finds a smart man and learns from him how to avoid the mistake altogether.

• A smart man can’t beat a hardworking man and a hardworking man can’t beat a happy working man.

• I’m not a smart man, Jenny, but I know what love is.

• A smart man only believes half of what he hears, a wise man knows which half.
Smart women

• A smart woman lets his actions speak for him not his words.

• A smart woman kisses but doesn't love, leaves before she is left and forgets before she is forgotten.

• Men who marry smart women live longer.

• Smart women make each birthday count.

• You see a lot of smart guys with dumb women, but you hardly ever see a smart woman with a dumb man.
• Akshay: Why does MG use language acquisition as a metaphor for speech inequalities? Was this more clear to other people?

• Claire Baker: I was very intrigued by the statement "men are much more likely than women to be unaware that their own view is not universally shared". Does this relate to the way it is thought that women use more qualifiers in their speech to indicate that they are not sure about something (like "seems" or "could be" or "in my opinion")?

• Elizabeth: Could we simply say to the man who says "you think like a woman" something along the lines of "I don't understand; what do you mean?" until he is forced to confront the underlying sexist attitudes?
Tongzhi

• (2,200 years ago): ‘pertaining to people who have the same ethics and ideals’

• Dr. Sun Yat-Sen: will calling on his followers to carry on the revolution.

• Communist Revolution: replace address terms that signal differences in social status.

• 1980’s: Appropriated by gay rights activists in Hong Kong to refer to those of non-normative sexual orientation.

• 1991: Decriminalization of homosexuality in Hong Kong, birth of *tongzhi* movement.

Non-activists

• Sometimes I wonder why I have to call myself tongzhi or tung-sing-lyun je. Heterosexuals don’t walk around telling everyone that they are heterosexual.... I actually prefer not to label myself as tongzhi or tung-sing-lyun je. I don’t really like these labels because they categorize me. They take out a certain part of my identity and magnify it.... I don’t like to highlight my sexual orientation. For me, it is sort of like highlighting a particular sex organ. It’s rather strange to me.

• I actually don’t use any labels for myself. I only know that I’m attracted to women.
**Anti-language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Literal meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mem-ba</td>
<td>Gay (or lesbian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wui-so</td>
<td>Gay bar or club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chau-fui</td>
<td>To be attracted to white men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diu-yu</td>
<td>To go cruising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yu-tong</td>
<td>Cruising places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Em</td>
<td>To be the insertor in sexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep yan</td>
<td>To be in a relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Possibly an abbreviation of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English word <em>man</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Gay Hongkongers’ anti-language
[naming] ...is not just a matter of hanging linguistic labels on a pre-existing chunk of reality which was always ‘there’ just waiting to be named. The production of the opposed categories ‘homosexual’ and ‘heterosexual’, for instance, reconfigures the reality which the labels purport to describe, bringing into view something - what we now refer to as ‘sexual orientation’ or ‘sexual preference’ - that had not been part of previous understandings of sexual behaviour.


there is no social agent who does not aspire, as far as his [sic] circumstances permit, to have the power to name and to create the world through naming.

As McConnell-Ginet (2002: 153) argues, the use of *queer* as a term of abuse in homophobic discourse, as well as its suggestions of ‘odd’ and ‘strange,’ gave the queer activists’ slogan “We’re here, we’re queer, get used to it!” its in-your-face effectiveness. Using a word that has lived a different social life - e.g., *gay* or *homosexual* (“We’re here, we’re gay/homosexual, get used to it!”) - would be far less effective. Thus, the discursive history of *queer* enhances the political efficacy of activists’ appropriation of the term. In a similar fashion, the revolutionary connotations of *tongzhi* contribute to its political effectiveness as a label for members of sexual minorities.

Elizabeth: Additionally, this made me think of a lot of examples of layers of reclamation of polarizing language in the last 2 years: “nasty woman” and “nevertheless, she persisted” on the left, and “deplorable” and “clinging to guns and religion” on the right.
“Politically correct”

• Early 20th C. Conforming to Stalinist (and Nazi) orthodoxy

• 1960’s-70’s, New Left used ironically, to guard against orthodoxy.

• 1990’s, re-derogated by the Right to focus negative attention on reforms in higher education.
  • “Political Correctness was invented by the Left so as not to hurt the feelings of their poor snowflakes.”
• Eve: At what point, if any, does it become okay for someone outside of a community use a reclaimed word? For instance, while the n word has been reclaimed by many people, it is not at all acceptable for people outside the black community to use it. However, queer is sometimes used by cisgendered and heterosexual people without offending.
Meanings are produced and reproduced within the political structures that condition discourse.

(McConnell-Ginet 1989 p.50)

Everyone should bring his/their own lunch

Gender  Number
A Comedy of Errors, Act IV, Scene 3:
There's not a man I meet but doth salute me
As if I were their well-acquainted friend

The Rape of Lucrece:
Now leaden slumber with life's strength doth fight;
And every one to rest themselves betake,
Save thieves, and cares, and troubled minds, that wake.
Many of the grammatical and lexical oppositions in language are not between equal members of a pair but between two entities one of which is more "marked" than the other (to use the technical term). The more marked member carries more information, lends to be less frequent, and always means exactly what it says. The less marked member carries less information, since it can be used ambiguously or as a cover term for both, tends to be the more frequent, and can be substituted for the marked member. Thus the plural is more marked than the singular, since, for example, the singular can be used for plural reference (many a horse horse-thief), but not the other way around. Markedness is one of the fundamental principles which govern the organization of the internal economics of all human languages.
For people and pronouns in English the masculine is the unmarked and hence is used as a neutral or unspecified term. This reflects the ancient pattern of the Indo-European languages, seen also, for example, in French: hommes et femmes heureux "happy men and women" (with the masculine form of the adjective). Thus we say: All men are created equal. Each student shall discuss his paper topic with his section man. Madam Chairman, I object.

The fact that the masculine is the unmarked gender in English (or that the feminine is unmarked in the language of the Tunica Indians) is simply a feature of grammar. It is unlikely to be an impediment to any change in the patterns of the sexual division of labor toward which our society may wish to evolve. There is really no cause for anxiety or pronoun-envy on the part of those seeking such changes.
• Some will set the Carte before the horse, as thus. My mother and my father are both at home, even as though the good man of the house ware no breaches, or that the graye Mare were the better Horse.... let us kepe a natural order, and set the man before the woman for maners Sake (Wilson 1560)

• Properly speaking, a man is not married to a woman, or married with her; nor are a man and a woman married with each other. The woman is married to the man....she has been attached to him by a legal bond, not he to her....we do not speak of tying a ship to a boat, but a boat to a ship.... so long, at least, as man is the larger, the stronger, the more individually important ... it is the woman who is married to the man. (White 1886)
• The Relative agrees with the Antecedent of the more worthy gender: as, the King and the Queen whom I honor. The Masculine gender is more worthy than the Feminine (Poole 1646).

• Act of Parliament 1850: An Act for shortening the language used in all acts of Parliament ... in all acts words importing the masculine gender shall be deemed and taken to include females ...
Binomial ordering

• Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls vs. he and she

Law and order
Rich and famous
Rules and regulations
Out and about
Assets and liabilities

• http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=1998
A few constraints

• Power constraint: Word whose referent is more powerful or central in society appears first.
  • Mother and child
  • Husband and wife

• Metrical constraints
  • number of syllables
  • smallest number of consecutive unstressed syllables
  • avoidance of ultimate stress

• frequency

Mollin, Sandra (2012). Revisiting binomial order in English: Ordering constraints and reversibility. English language and linguistics. 16:1. 81-103