



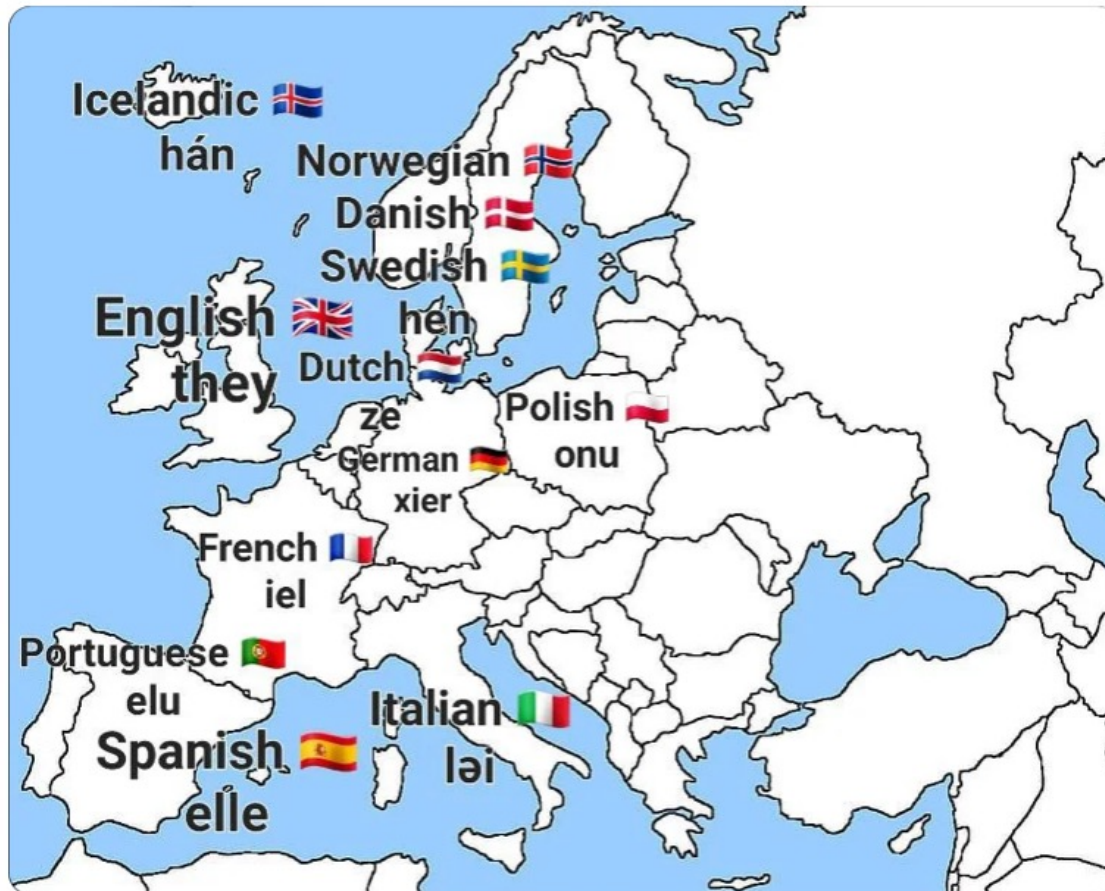
Kristianstad
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Effects of gender-inclusive pronouns on gender conceptualizations

Current research and future directions

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Most popular non-binary/gender-neutral pronouns in European languages



What are some gender-neutral pronouns and neopronouns in different languages?

LANGUAGE	GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS
English	they/them/themself ze/hir/hirself xe/xyr/xyrself ve/ves/veself ey/em/emself <i>and many more! English has near-infinite neopronoun options</i>
Spanish	elle
French	iel øl al
German	xier/xies/dier sier/sies/dier
Portuguese	elu
Galician	eli elu
Catalan	elli
Chinese	他 "he" and 她 "she" are pronounced the same way (tā) even though they are written differently! To make the written words gender-neutral, X也 or 无也 are used

Gender-inclusive pronouns



Pronouns common and influence social perception

The paired pronoun he/she reinforces a binary view of gender and stereotypes about women and men (Lindqvist et al. 2020; Bigler & Leaper, 2015).

Increased awareness of gender diversity has led pronouns to become important identity markers (Hekanaho, 2020).

Hen är här nu.

Nya tider, nya ord. Fjortonde upplagan har anlänt.

[hen is here now]



hen [hen'] pron.; gen. *hens*; objektsform
hen hellre än *henom* **1** könsneutral
benämning på person som är omtalad ev
implicit i sammanhanget **2** benämning på
person som inte vill kategorisera sig
som vare sig man el. kvinna

Current research on effects of pronouns on gender conceptualization

Focus on Swedish

Study 1: Male bias

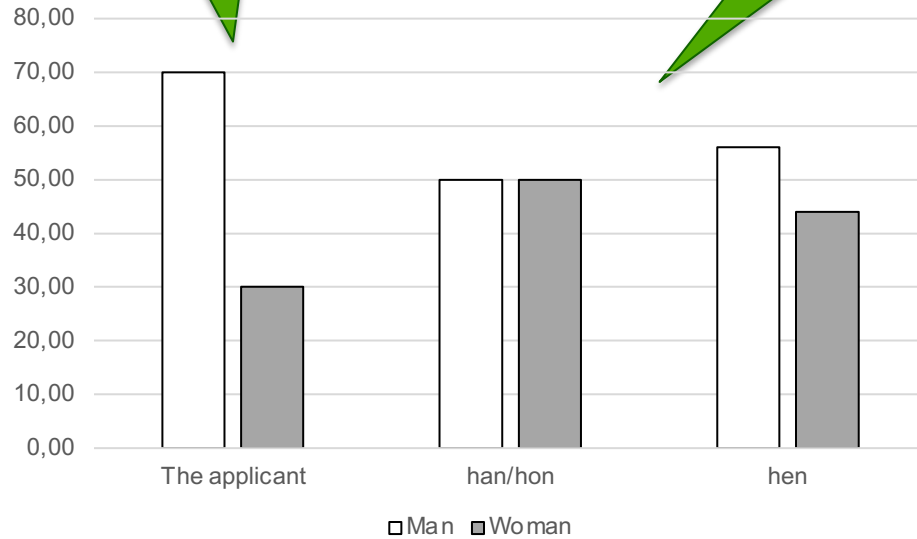
- Experiment
 - Participants read a short text describing a candidate for a job (real estate agent).
 - The candidate is referred to as:
 - "The applicant"
 - Hen
 - Han/hon
 - "Who did you read about?"



(Lindqvist et al., 2019)

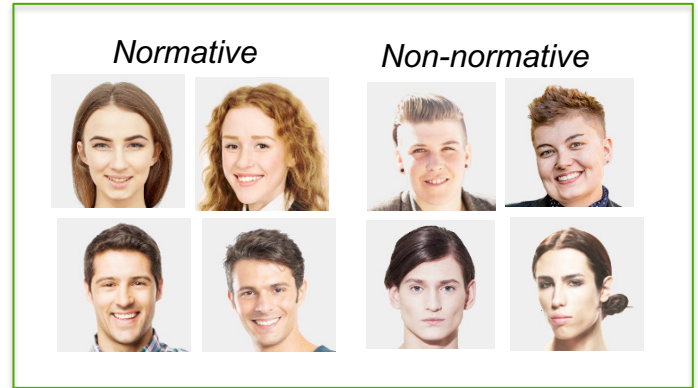
"The applicant" is clearly male biased

He/she and hen both lead to a more even distribution



Study 2a: Normative bias

- Experiment
 - P's read one of seven short sentences mentioning a person referred to as either han/hon or hen
 - Ex.
A person read a book, hen [he/she] thought the book was interesting
 - The sentence each participant read was randomized.

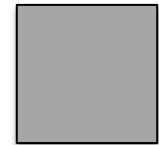
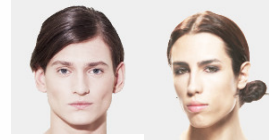
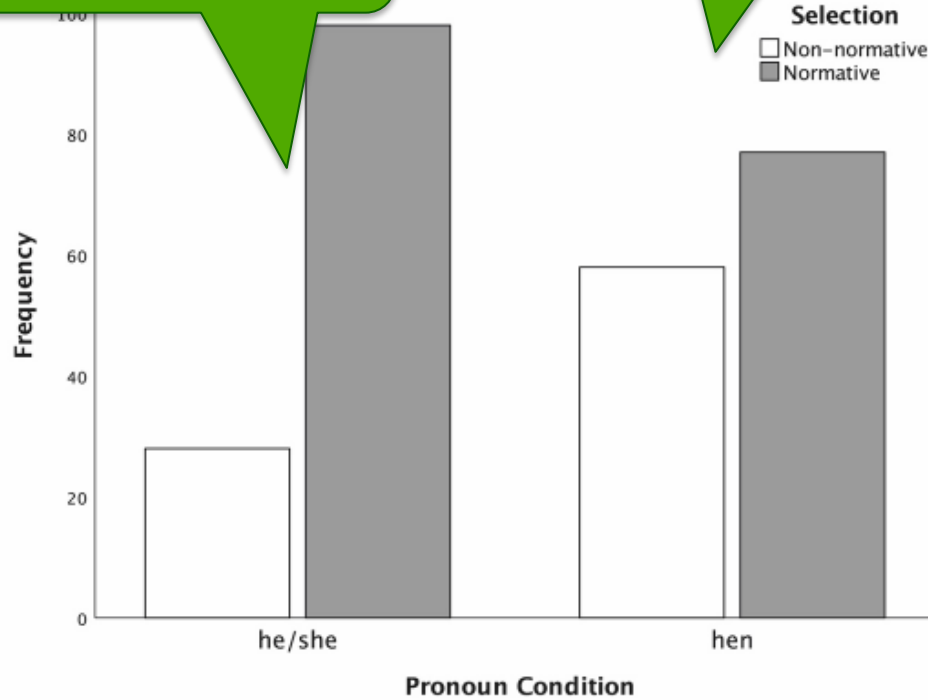


- "Who did you read about?"

(Renström et al., 2023)

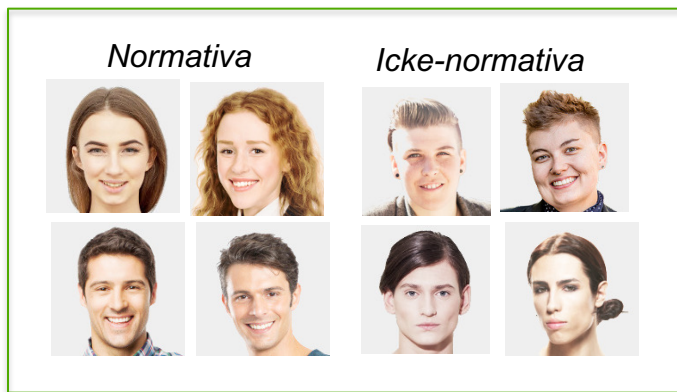
He/she clearly normatively biased

Hen is not biased



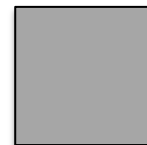
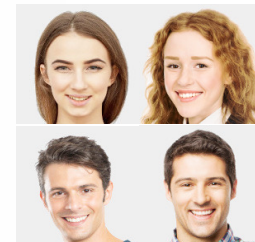
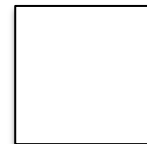
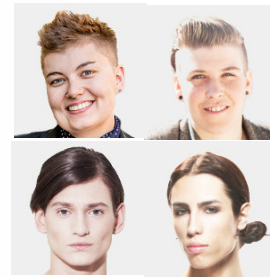
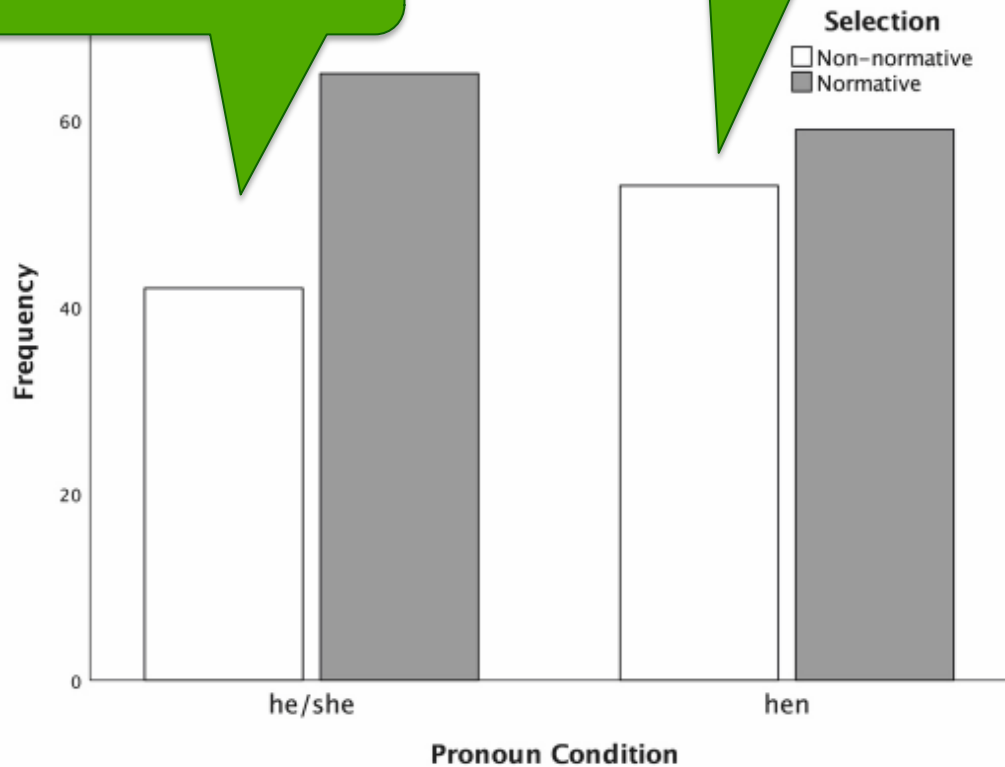
Study 2b: Normative bias replication and extension

- Same set-up as Study 1
 - Hen or han/hon
- "Who did you read about?"



He/she clearly normatively biased

Hen is not biased

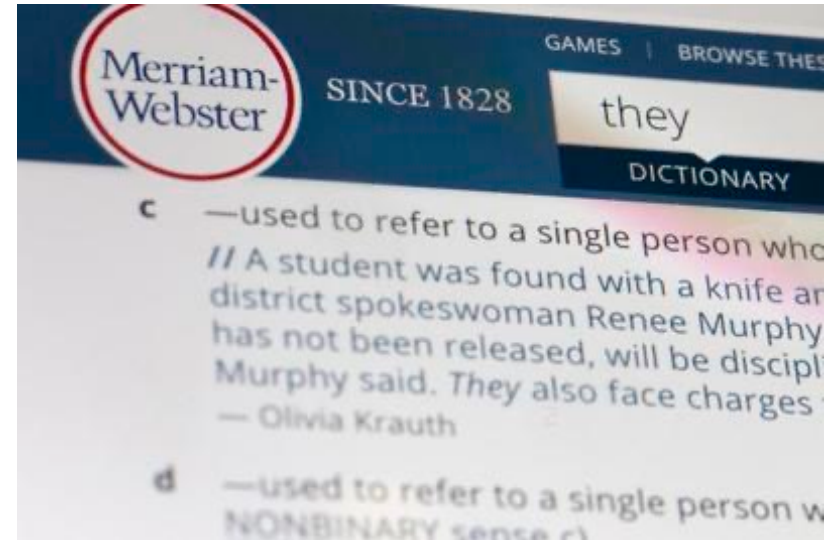


The dual meaning of gender inclusive pronouns

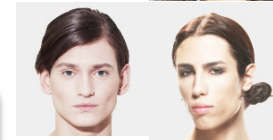
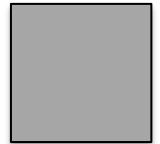
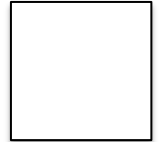
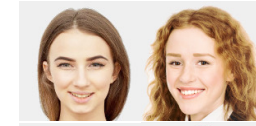
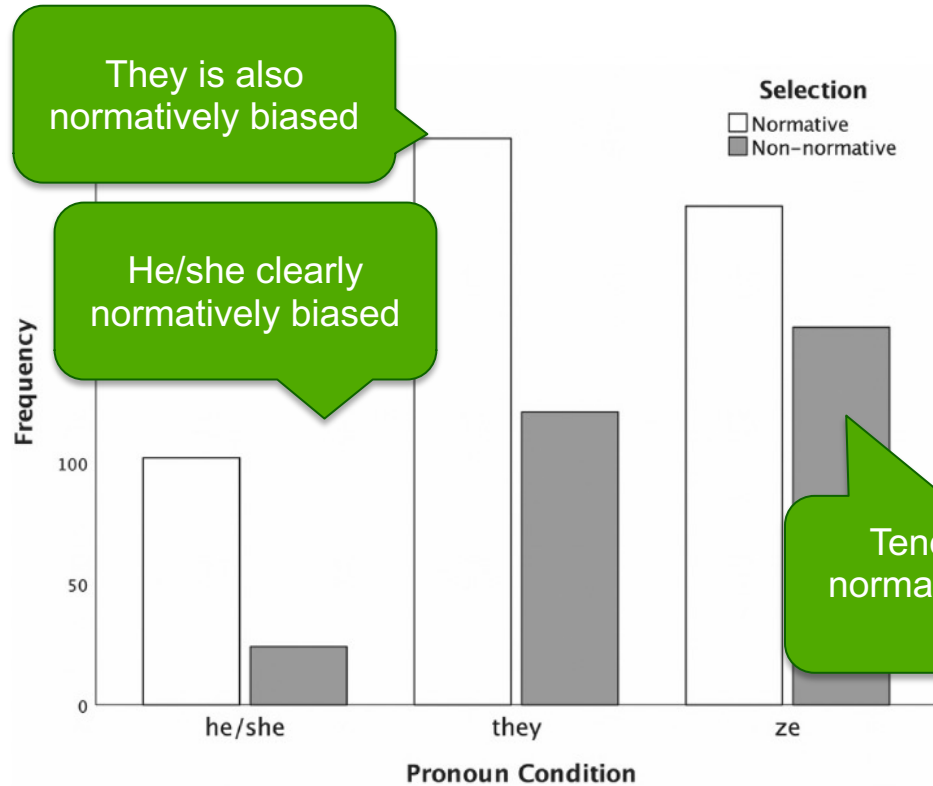
- De-gendering and multi-gendering (Morgenroth et al., 2020)
 - De-gendering – neutralization/removal of gender cues
 - Multi-gendering – draw attention to gender as non-binary
 - E.g. Singular they
 - De-gendering: Generic use
 - Multi-gendering: nonbinary/specific use

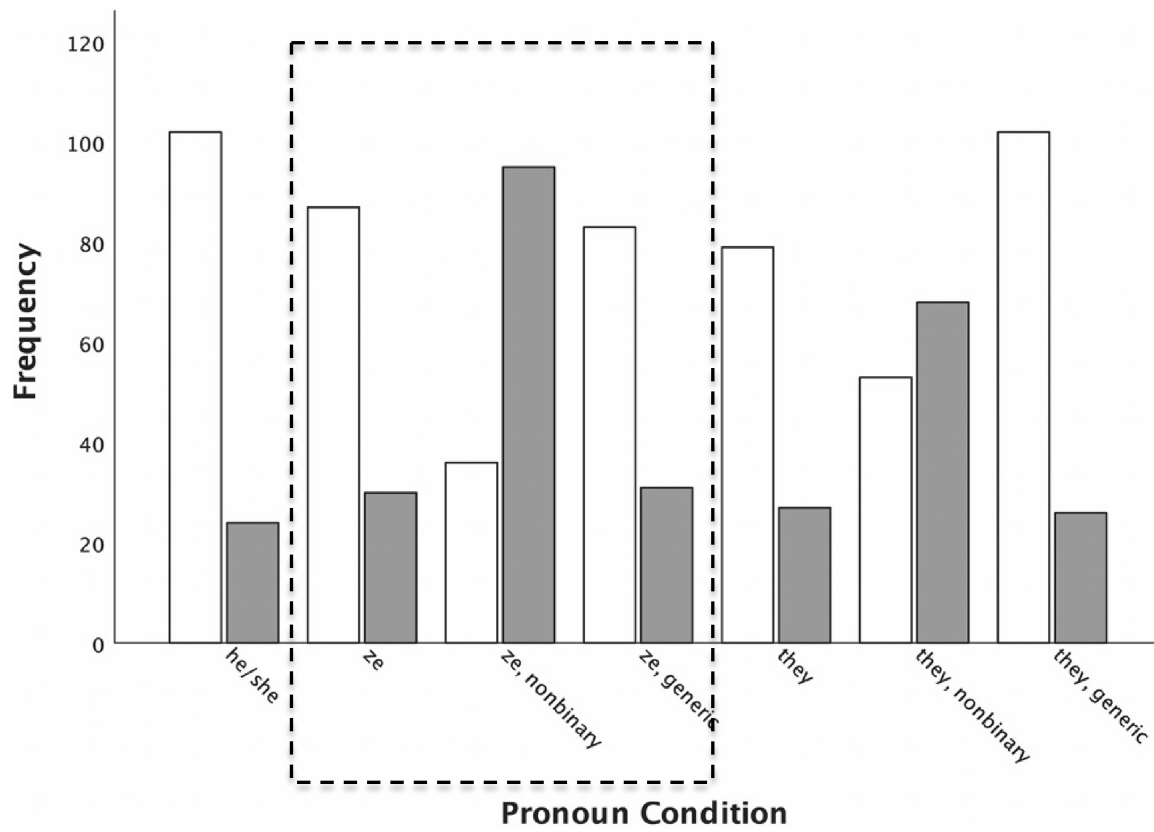
English study

- Replication testing normative bias
- Pronoun Conditions:
 - He/she
 - They
 - ze
- Information about use:
 - Anonymizing (Generic/de-gendering)
 - Nonbinary (specific/multi-gendering)
 - No information



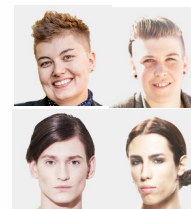
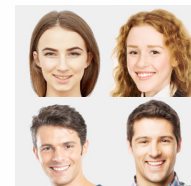
All conditions collapsed

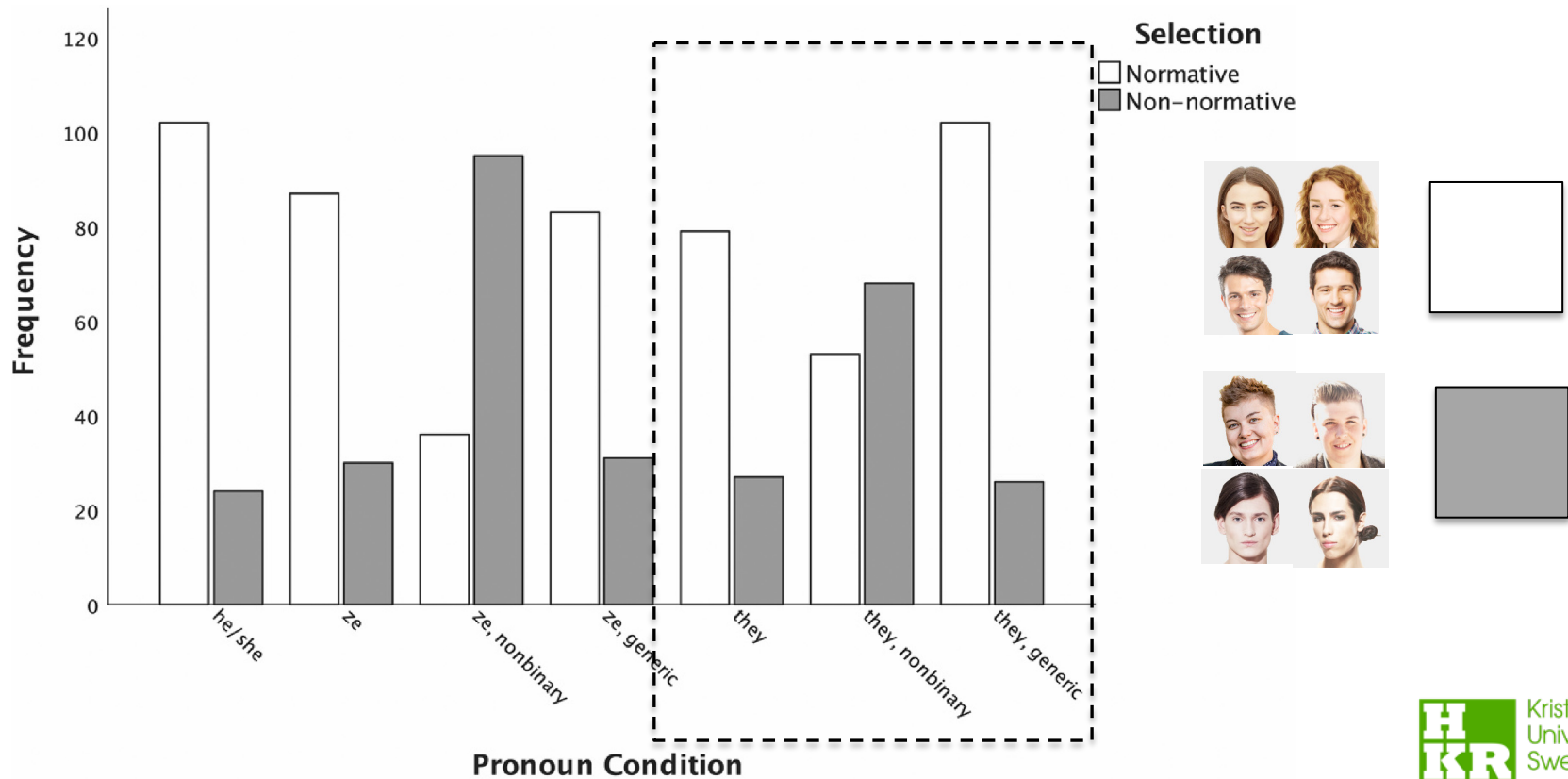




Selection

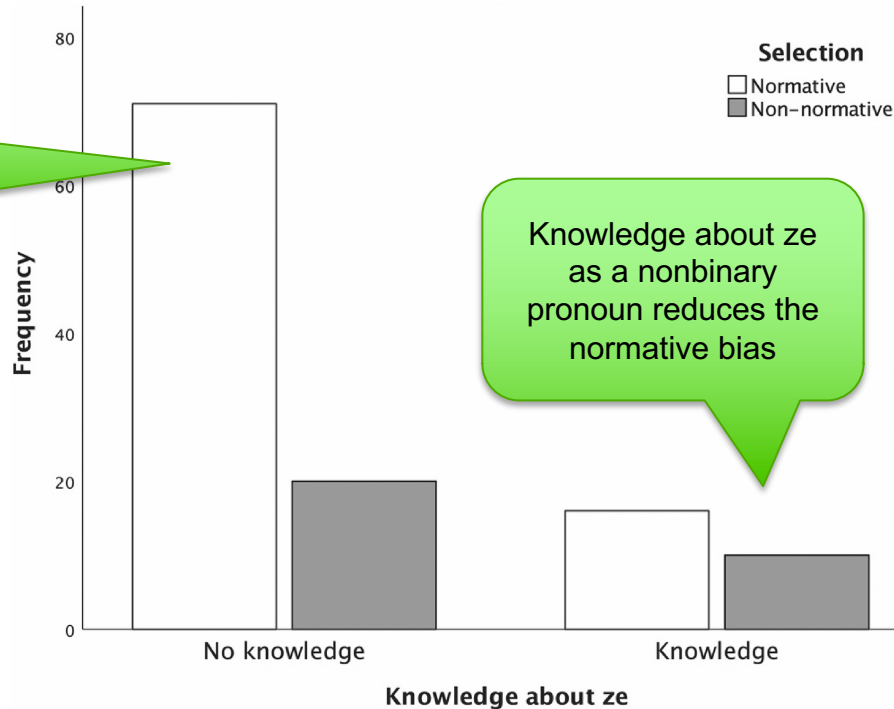
- Normative
- Non-normative





Effects of knowledge

No knowledge
of ze →
normative bias



Knowledge about ze
as a nonbinary
pronoun reduces the
normative bias



Future directions



- More research!
 - **Across languages**
 - **Over time**
- Importance of taking both *information* about use and *knowledge* into account

Challenges

Politicization of gender

- Polarization of gender attitudes
 - Esp. among younger
- Obstructs implementation – resistance
- Ideological resistance:
 - Binary sexism is ok/gender ideology (Vergoossen et al., 2021; Hekanaho, 2020)
 - Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) (Renström & Klysing, manuscript)

International | Of Mars and Venus

Why young men and women are drifting apart

Diverging worldviews could affect politics, families and more



ILLUSTRATION: LOUISE ZERGAENG POMEROY

Mar 13th 2024 | ATLANTA, BEIJING AND WARSAW

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Thanks for listening!

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