

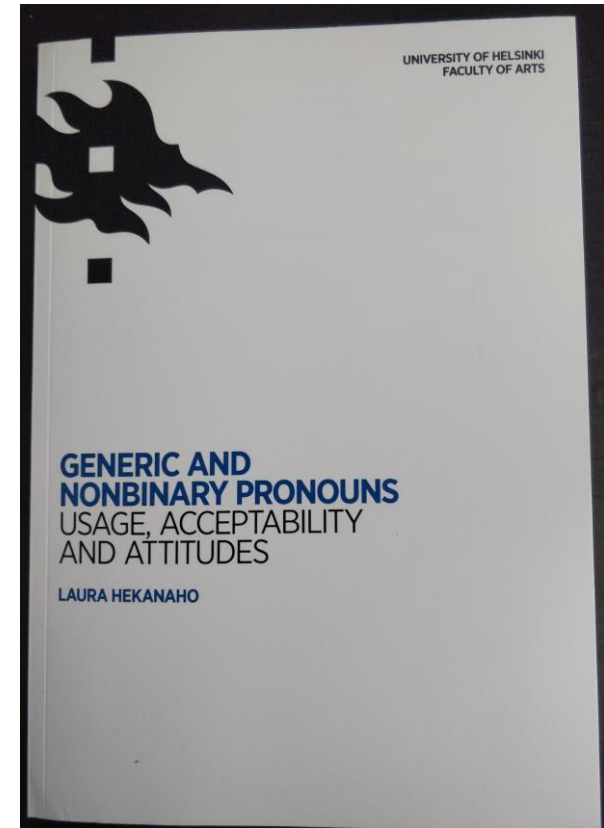
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Finnish perspective Laura Hekanaho

Language and Gender: Academic Research and Practical Implementation 17.11.2023

Background: English studies

- PhD in 2020: Generic and Nonbinary pronouns: Usage, acceptability and attitudes
- Survey (n=1128)
 - Qualitative & quantitative data
 - Cissexism & nonbinary/trans issues in focus
- Now: Project LAIF → Language attitudes and ideologies in Finland (PI Elizabeth Peterson, no gender component)
- Ongoing side project: Gender exclusive language in Finnish



Dissertation available:

<https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/321581>

Gender in Finnish

- Finnish is 'genderless' but not 'gender neutral'
- No gendered pronouns, but lexicon still gendered
- (-)*mies* (man) very productive as epicene
 - Joka *miehen* oikeudet (every *man's* rights)
 - Occupational titles, e.g. *esimies* (supervisor/foreman), *palomies* (fireman)
- Similar feminine constructions rare, but exist, e.g. *lentoemäntä* (stewardess; literal: flight hostess)
- Other gendered expressions, e.g., *mie-h-istö* (crew[+masc]), *miehittää* (to man); but also e.g. *äidinkieli* (mother tongue), *tytäryhtiö* (daughter company)
- Discussions about adopting gender inclusive language started only in 2017

Finnish survey study: Usage and attitudes

- RQ1: Do Finns use gender exclusive or inclusive language?
- RQ2: Do Finns find gender exclusive language acceptable?
- RQ3: What kind of attitudes do Finns have towards gender exclusive and inclusive language?
- Focus: occupational nouns, but also attitudes towards gender exclusive language more generally
- Data collection in 2022
- Participants (n=1146), mostly monolingual native Finnish speakers
- Main results so far: masculine generics are used and accepted by majority of participants (60%)



Thank you 😊