

FSD4034 ENGLANNIN KIELEN YKSIKÖN KOLMANNEN PERSONAN PRONOMINIEN KÄYT-
TÖ JA KIELIASENTEET 2017

FSD4034 GENERIC AND NONBINARY PRONOUNS IN ENGLISH: USE AND ATTITUDES 2017

TÄMÄ DOKUMENTTI ON OSA YLLÄ MAINITTUA YHTEISKUNTATIETEELLISEEN TIETOAR-
KISTOON ARKISTOITUA TUTKIMUSAINESTOA.

DOKUMENTTIA HYÖDYNTÄVIEN TULEE VIITATA SIIHEN ASIANMUKAISESTI LÄHDEVIIT-
TEELLÄ.

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The survey form

[Informed consent]

Thank you for your interest in this survey. The survey is a part of a PhD dissertation currently being conducted at the University of Helsinki by doctoral student Laura Hekanaho. The purpose of this research project is to study language use and attitudes. If you wish to know more about the study, or have any questions regarding the survey, please contact me at email deleted. This research project has been approved by the ethical review board of the University of Helsinki.

This survey will be held online until February 10th 2017.

You are welcome to participate in this survey if you are over 18 years old and a) a native speaker of English (any variety) or b) a native Finnish or Swedish speaker who speaks English fluently. *If you have taken part in a pilot for this survey, please do not participate again*

The survey consists of 7 parts and will take approximately 15-30 minutes to fill in, depending on your own input. On the first page you will be asked to give information about your background (e.g. gender, education, age), and the rest of the survey concentrates on language use and attitudes (parts 1-7). Please notice that once you have moved on from one part to another, you cannot go back.

The data will be used for research purposes. The data will be archived after this study has been conducted and may be used for other research purposes as well.

The responses to this survey are collected anonymously (e.g. no directly identifiable information is collected and your IP will not be visible to the researcher). All information will be handled confidentially. Please take into account, however, that with any information shared online there is always a chance of information leakage due to hacking etc.

Participation is voluntary. You may quit the survey at any time, in which case your answers to parts 1 through 7 will not be used in the analysis. Your background information may still be used to identify what demographic groups dropped out of the survey. If you want to completely remove your answers from the study or you have already submitted your answers and wish to withdraw from the study, you may do so within 3 weeks of your submission by contacting me at laura.hekanaho@helsinki.fi. Please take into account that since no contact information is required, in order to delete your responses, your submission will have to be identifiable. If you think you might want to withdraw later on, please copy and save your answer to part 1 (after the background information) on your computer; this can be later used to identify your submission along with the background information you are asked to provide.

Finally, your participation is highly appreciated, but no compensation is offered.

If you agree to the aforementioned, please tick the box below and then press 'next'. If you do not agree, please exit the survey by either closing your browser or clicking the 'exit survey' button in the top-right corner of this page.

☐ I agree to the terms and wish to continue

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Background information.

[B1] Age (in years): _____

[B2] Gender (Please indicate if your gender is not the gender you were assigned at birth): _____

[B3] Current country of residence [ready options excluded]

[B4] Where did you spend most of your childhood and adolescence (ages 0-18)?
[ready options excluded]

[B5] In what type of city or town did you spend most of your childhood and adolescence (ages 0-18)?

- ☐ The capital of the country or other metropolitan city
- ☐ Other larger city (over 100,000 inhabitants)
- ☐ Smaller city or town (under 100,000 inhabitants)
- ☐ Small town or village
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

[B6] Have you lived in another country (other than in question 3 or 4) for more than 3 years? [options: yes/no/other]

[B7] Ethnicity [ready options excluded; e.g. *African American*, *Asian Finnish*, ...]

[B8] Native language(s).

- ☐ American English
- ☐ Australian English
- ☐ British English
- ☐ Canadian English
- ☐ Finnish
- ☐ Irish English
- ☐ Scottish English
- ☐ Swedish
- ☐ Welsh English
- ☐ Bilingual Finnish-Swedish
- ☐ Bilingual English-Finnish
- ☐ Bilingual English-Swedish
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

[B9] What other languages do you speak? Include all languages that you know at least at a beginner level, that is, you have studied the language either at school or independently, you can understand and construct simple sentences, and you can have short conversations over every-day topics. [ready options excluded]

[B10] If English is not your native language, please indicate for how many years you have studied English at school. If you have not studied English at school, please choose 'other' and specify how you have learned English. [ready options excluded]

[B11] What is the highest level of education you have completed? If you are currently studying, please choose the degree you are currently studying for.

- ☐ Comprehensive schooling: elementary and junior high school (peruskoulu/grundskola)
- ☐ Secondary schooling: High school or vocational school (lukio, ammatikoulu/gymnasium, yrkesskola)
- ☐ Bachelor level
- ☐ Master level
- ☐ Doctoral level
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

[B12] Have you studied any of the following subjects either at a university/college level or independently? Studying independently in this context refers to reading scientific books or articles on the subject.

- ☐ Anthropology (e.g. cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology),
- ☐ Communication studies (e.g. journalism, information),
- ☐ Education (e.g. teacher training, education sciences),
- ☐ Gender studies (e.g. women's studies, men's studies, transgender studies)
- ☐ Health and Medicine (e.g. medicine, psychiatry, health services),
- ☐ Humanities (e.g. theology, philosophy),
- ☐ Law and Political science (e.g. jurisprudence, political science),
- ☐ Linguistics (e.g. general linguistics, sociolinguistics),
- ☐ Social and behavioral sciences (e.g. sociology, psychology).
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

[B13] Which of the following would best describe your beliefs?

- ☐ Agnostic
- ☐ Atheist
- ☐ Atheist Agnostic
- ☐ Christian – Anglican
- ☐ Christian – Catholic
- ☐ Christian – Evangelical Lutheran
- ☐ Christian – Protestant
- ☐ Islam – Sunni
- ☐ Islam –Shia
- ☐ Judaism – Orthodox
- ☐ Judaism – Conservative
- ☐ Judaism– Reform
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

[B14] Is religion important to you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

[B15] Which of the following would best describe your political views?

- ☐ Very liberal
- ☐ Somewhat liberal
- ☐ Somewhat conservative
- ☐ Very conservative
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

[B16] Where did you come across this survey? [ready options excluded]

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The purpose of this survey is to study language use. There are no right or wrong answers, so you should not worry about what grammar books might imply to be correct or incorrect language use. You can answer all language related questions based on what feels most natural to you.

Part 1

In this part, your task is to describe what in your view is 'a successful person'. You do not need to worry too much about what you write. You may write freely, but please use full sentences. Please continue the following with 3-5 sentences: "A successful person is someone who..."

If you cannot think of anything, please continue to the following page.

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The purpose of this survey is to study language use. There are no right or wrong answers, so you should not worry about what grammar books might imply to be correct or incorrect language use. You can answer all language related questions based on what feels most natural to you.

Part 2

In this part, please fill in the blanks in the sentences. You can fill in more than one word if needed. If you cannot think of anything, please write "I don't know". If you don't think anything should be added, leave it blank. Phrases and words such as *college students*, *anyone*, and *the child* refer to people in general, i.e. they do not refer to any particular person.

[Fillers marked with a *]

1. If you get injured, you should go _____ hospital.*
2. Anyone can learn how to paint if _____ can find the time to practice every day.
3. The students were asked to enroll _____ the courses online.*
4. My friend studies Chemistry _____ University*
5. Every child should know that _____ can always ask for help from the teacher.

6. It's no use crying over _____ milk.*
7. Everyone should try to focus on what _____ can do best.
8. The children were trying to learn how to write, they had already _____ how to read*
9. In the shop, we had to stand _____ line for 30 minutes.*
10. Each student knew that _____ should finish the assignment before the deadline.
11. Three students were chosen to play _____ football team.*
12. What harm can come from gossiping about someone if _____ will never find out.
13. College students often come home _____ weekends*
14. Any student who feels that _____ might be getting sick should stay home from school.
15. There was a fire and the house _____ down.*
16. When a child learns to read, _____ can do more at school.
17. The results of the study were different _____ what we had hypothesized.*
18. A person is only as old as _____ feels.
19. Could you please fill _____ this form?*
20. The average child learns to read before _____ can write.

At this point, do you think you know what the purpose of this survey is? If yes, please write below what you think the purpose of the survey is. You can also guess.

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Part 3

In this part you are presented with different sentences that include a pronoun expression. You are asked whether the underlined pronoun expression in each sentence is acceptable or unacceptable. 'Acceptable' in this context refers to an expression that *you* would view as natural or correct language use. Please read the whole sentence before answering.

1. The campaign has set a goal of making sure every child gets the food they need.
2. The campaign has set a goal of making sure every child gets the food he needs.
3. The campaign has set a goal of making sure every child gets the food she needs.
4. The campaign has set a goal of making sure every child gets the food he or she needs.
5. The campaign has set a goal of making sure every child gets the food she or he needs.
6. You can't make a child who has had all the sleep they need go back to sleep
7. You can't make a child who has had all the sleep he needs go back to sleep
8. You can't make a child who has had all the sleep she needs go back to sleep

9. You can't make a child who has had all the sleep he or she needs go back to sleep
10. The average person believes they watch too much TV.
11. The average person believes he watches too much TV.
12. The average person believes she watches too much TV.
13. The average person believes he or she watches too much TV.
14. The average person believes ze watches too much TV.
15. The average person believes xe watches too much TV.

[Ready options for each sentence separately: Acceptable, Not acceptable, Other + text box]

Comments (optional):

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Part 4

In this part you are presented with different statements and you are asked whether you agree or disagree with these statements. There is also an option for “no opinion”, which you can also choose if you do not wish to answer. With all of the statements you are asked to think about the situation in your current place of residence, for example ‘our society’ refers to the society you are currently living within

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree for each of the following statements.

[Options for each statement: Strongly agree – Somewhat agree – Neutral – Somewhat disagree – Strongly disagree | No opinion]

- [L1] Using proper grammar is important.
- [L2] Grammar can change.
- [L3] Words may affect the way we view things.
- [L4] Grammar is needed for the language to remain structured.
- [L5] Language can affect our perception of the world.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree for each of the following statements. Transgender in this context refers to all individuals who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth and/or do not identify as female or male.

- [F1] Feminists ignore the issues of men.
- [F2] Feminism strives for equal rights for all genders.
- [F3] Feminism is not needed anymore in our society.
- [F4] I consider myself a feminist.
- [F5] Our society should strive for gender equality for men and women.
- [F6] Our society should strive for gender equality for men, women and transgender individuals.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree for each of the following statements. *Sexist language in this context refers to using gendered expressions that exclude,*

trivialize or diminish a group of people based on gender.

[S1] We should not change the way the English language has traditionally been written and spoken

[S2] There is no such thing as sexist language use.

[S3] Women who think that being called a “chairman” is sexist are misinterpreting the word “chairman”

[S4] Worrying about sexist language is a trivial activity

[S5] If the original meaning of the word “he” was "person", we should continue to use “he” to refer to all people

[S6] The English language will never be changed because it is too deeply ingrained in the culture

[S7] The elimination of sexist language is an important goal

[S8] Sexist language is related to sexist treatment of people in society

[S9] Although change is difficult, we still should try to eliminate sexist language

[S10]. Using gender equal language is important.

[S11] Using gender equal language supports gender equality

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree for each of the following statements.
Transgender in this context refers to all individuals who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth and/or do not identify as female or male.

[T1] It would be beneficial to society to recognize being transgender as normal.

[T2] Transgender individuals are a viable part of our society.

[T3] Transgender individuals should be accepted completely into our society.

[T4] There should be no restrictions on being transgender.

[T5] There is nothing wrong with being transgender.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree for each of the following statements. *3rd person singular pronouns refer to pronouns such as he and she. Gender neutral pronouns in this context refer to pronouns such as they, ze, and xe, which can be used in generic contexts, for example when the gender of the referent is not specified. For example: “A child needs to know that they are loved”. Non-binary individuals in this context is used as an umbrella term to refer to all individuals who do not identify as female or male. Pronouns that are sometimes used to refer to non-binary individuals include they, ze and xe.*

[P1] There should be a specific 3rd person singular pronoun that could be used when referring to non-binary individuals.

[P2] There should be a gender neutral 3rd person singular pronoun in English other than singular they that could be used in generic contexts when the gender of the referent is not known.

[P3] We do not need a specific 3rd person singular pronoun for non-binary individuals.

[P4] There is no need for a new gender neutral generic 3rd person singular pronoun in English since singular they is sufficient.

[E1] Prior to taking this survey, were you familiar with new pronouns such as ze and xe? For example, had you seen or heard someone use these pronouns previously?

- ☐ Yes, I am familiar with these pronouns.
- ☐ I use these (or some of these pronouns) myself.
- ☐ I have seen or heard someone else use these (or some of these) pronouns.
- ☐ No, I did not know about any of these pronouns previously.
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

[E2] Are you or have you personally been in contact with any transgender individuals? There is no need to indicate your own gender in this question; question 2 in the beginning of this survey already asked about your gender. Transgender is used as an umbrella term to refer to all individuals who do not identify with their original gender assigned at birth and/or do not identify as female or male.

- ☐ Yes, some of my friends and/or family members are transgender.
- ☐ Yes, some of my acquaintances are transgender.
- ☐ No, I do not know anyone who is transgender.
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

[E3] Do you consider yourself to be a part of the LGBT community? LGBT refers to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities.

- ☐ Yes, I consider myself to be a part of the LGBT community.
- ☐ No, but I am sympathetic to their overall aims (e.g. equal rights for all sexuality and gender minorities).
- ☐ No.
- Other (please specify): _____
- Comments (optional): _____

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Part 5

In this part, you are presented with sentences which include a non-specific human reference and a pronoun expression referring to the non-specific human reference. You are asked 'who could be included in the sentence'. All of the sentences refer to a group of people in general, i.e. they do not refer to any particular person. The pronoun expression in each sentence is underlined, but please read the whole sentence. *Non-binary individuals in this context is used as an umbrella term to refer to all individuals who do not identify as female or male.*

1. Everyone has their own opinion about politics.
2. The average person will lose about a third of their muscle mass during their adult life.
3. Everyone who hears a song relates it to her own experience.
4. The average person spends roughly 32% of his or her income on housing.
5. The average person sleeps away a third of his life.
6. Everyone can get through his or her down days
7. Everyone who doesn't have his head stuck in a hole knows who the president is.
8. The average person can only hold five hundred faces in her memory.

[Ready options for each sentence separately: Females, Males, Non-binary individuals, All of the above, no opinion]

Comments (optional):

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Part 6

In this part you will be presented with different sentences and you will be asked which ones you find acceptable. 'Acceptable' in this context refers to a sentence that you would view as natural or correct language use. You can also make your own suggestions or comments by choosing 'other'.

In the following sentences Chris and Lee are individuals who do not identify as females or males. For each of the examples, the underlined pronoun in the second sentence refers to the individual in the first sentence.

1. Have you met Chris? They work at the local shop.
2. Have you met Chris? They works at the local shop.
3. Have you met Chris? Xe works at the local shop.
4. Have you met Chris? Ze works at the local shop.
5. Lee has decided to get a cat. They already have a dog.
6. Lee has decided to get a cat. They already has a dog.
7. Lee has decided to get a cat. Xe already has a dog.
8. Lee has decided to get a cat. Ze already has a dog.

[Ready options for each sentence separately: Acceptable, Not acceptable, Other + text box]

Comments (optional):

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Part 7

This is the final part. There are several questions about language use and you can choose which ones to answer, or not answer any of them. There are also some specific questions for transgender individuals at the end, but everyone is welcome to comment. If you do not wish to answer any of the following questions, please scroll down to submit your answers.

'Acceptable' in the first 7 questions refers to language use that you would find 'correct' or 'natural' language use.

[V1] What is your view on he when it is used generically to refer to an unknown person or a group of people? For example: "Everybody has his own opinion"; "Anyone who puts his mind to it can rise to the top"; and "The average person believes he watches too much TV".

☐ Acceptable

- ☐ Not acceptable
- ☐ Comments (e.g. why do you view this usage as acceptable/ not acceptable)

[V2] What is your view on she when it is used generically to refer to an unknown person or a group of people? For example: “A child must be careful when she crosses the street”; “An artist is someone who follows her passion”; and “Everyone has her own story to tell”.

- ☐ Acceptable
- ☐ Not acceptable
- ☐ Comments (e.g. why do you view this usage as acceptable/ not acceptable)

[V3] What is your view on using he or she or similar constructions when talking about an unknown person or a group of people? For example: “Everyone should get the health care he or she needs”; “A better leader is somebody who gets more out of the people he or she leads”; and “The more you tell your doctor, the better he or she can help you”.

- ☐ Acceptable
- ☐ Not acceptable
- ☐ Comments (e.g. why do you view this usage as acceptable/ not acceptable)

[V4] What is your view on singular they when it is used generically to refer to an unknown person or a group of people? For example: “Each person is the center of their own universe”; “Anyone who says they love to fight is a liar or a fool” and “I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt”.

- ☐ Acceptable
- ☐ Not acceptable
- ☐ Comments (e.g. why do you view this usage as acceptable/ not acceptable)

[V5] What is your view on singular they when it is used to refer to an individual who does not identify as female or male? For example, in the following examples they refers to Lee and Chris respectively (and not to some other referents): “Lee said they don’t like tea” and “Chris loves their dog”.

- ☐ Acceptable
- ☐ Not acceptable
- ☐ Comments (e.g. why do you view this usage as acceptable/ not acceptable)

[V6] What is your view on new pronouns such as ze and xe when they are used to refer to an individual who does not identify as female or male? For example: “Jo said ze doesn’t like coffee” and “Terry was going out but xe could not find xir keys”.

- ☐ Acceptable
- ☐ Not acceptable
- ☐ Comments (e.g. why do you view this usage as acceptable/ not acceptable)

[V7] What is your view on new pronouns such as ze and xe when they are used in generic contexts? For example: “Is there anyone who says ze doesn’t like chocolate?” and “It’s always nice to meet someone who knows what xe is doing”.

- ☐ Acceptable
- ☐ Not acceptable
- ☐ Comments (e.g. why do you view this usage as acceptable/ not acceptable)

[V8] What is your view on gender equal language use? For example, using words like chair or chairperson instead of chairman, and not using man or mankind to refer to all people.

- ☐ I support gender equal language use
- ☐ I think gender equal language use is needed
- ☐ I do not think gender equal language use is needed
- ☐ Comments (e.g. why do you think gender equal language use is needed/ not needed)

The following questions relate to terms that are used when talking about transgender individuals.

[TE1] Is there an umbrella term you prefer to use when talking about individuals who do not identify with the gender that was assigned to them at birth?

[TE2] Is there an umbrella term you prefer to use when talking about individuals who do not identify as female or male?

The following questions are targeted for transgender individuals, but everyone is welcome to comment.

[A1] Which pronouns do you want people to use when referring to you?

[A2] Is it important to you that people use the correct pronouns when talking about you?

[A3] How would you describe your feelings when someone uses the wrong pronouns when referring to you and/or misgenders you?

[A4] Have you ever felt discriminated by the language use of others?

Thank you for participating!

If you wish to learn more about the study, you can contact me at laura.hekanaho@helsinki.fi.

The PhD thesis is expected to be published in 2019, but preliminary results may be shared earlier. If you wish to receive a notification when the results are published, please send an e-mail to laura.hekanaho@helsinki.fi and I will add you to a separate e-mail list (you cannot leave your e-mail address with this form).

Feedback: