

Theses of a Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

**The study of gender-related expressions and the
historical change in their usage in the Finnish
language**

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The aim of the dissertation

The aim of the dissertation is to present how natural gender can be expressed in the Finnish language, and what changes have occurred in its usage from the 1600s to the present day. There are significant differences between languages in how they express natural gender. The Finnish language, like other Finno-Ugric languages, has no grammatical genders, so gender is expressed in other ways, using lexical elements.

The question is whether the sociocultural background of societies is related to how a given language represents genders, and whether the change in social structure—in this case, the shift from a patriarchal mindset toward gender equality—is reflected in the changes in gender-related vocabulary. Gender equality is of paramount importance in Finnish society, so it is assumed that language use also strives for an inclusive, gender-neutral approach, which results in changes to previously male-centered linguistic elements.

The dissertation begins from a cognitive linguistic perspective, discussing the relationship between language, the socio-cultural environment, and thought from a cognitive point of view. In the theoretical introductory sections, I also show how gender can appear in languages, what linguistic possibilities exist for expressing natural gender, and then I touch upon the topics of gender linguistics and linguistic sexism. Following this, the focus narrows: I describe the history of gender equality efforts, the possibilities for expressing gender, as well as the appearance of linguistic sexism and efforts for inclusive language use within the context of Finland and the Finnish language.

The second part of the dissertation contains three original corpus studies, two of which examine gender-related vocabulary in the Finnish language from a historical perspective, and one that focuses on current, contemporary language use. In the first analysis, I compare the gender-related vocabulary of five Finnish translations of the Gospel of Luke (1642, 1776, 1938, 1992, 2020) to reveal long-term trends of change. In the second study, I analyze the gender-related vocabulary of two Finnish translations of the Grimm's fairy tales (1946, 1999). The third study, which examines everyday language use, focused on the forms in which gender is expressed in everyday life, in occupational names, and on the attitudes of native Finnish speakers toward inclusive, gender-neutral language use.

Literature Review

The physical and social environment plays a significant role in meaning-making: through everyday experiences, it determines the formation of basic-level categories, the prototypical members of categories, the interpretations belonging to specific conceptual frameworks, and the conceptualization of feelings or time (Kövecses – Benczes 2010; Tolcsvai Nagy 2011). According to the theory of linguistic relativism, language (and through language, the socio-cultural environment) influences thought by structuring reality in a certain way. The structure of one's native language, similar to attention, directs thought, determining which aspects of reality should be emphasized, thereby creating different representations of reality for speakers of different languages. This can be observed in many areas, such as color names, spatial reference frames, classifiers, and grammatical genders (Fekete – Pléh 2008, Sándor 2016). Changes in the socio-cultural environment and social structure thus also influence language (and through it, thought), primarily through changes in vocabulary (Márton, 1970: 1297–1298). At the same time, linguistic changes follow social changes more slowly, so the system of relations preserved in language also influences the perspective of later generations (Huszár 2009: 97).

The world's languages show great diversity in the extent to which they express the gender of the subject of speech. In certain languages, nouns are categorized into grammatical genders, which in the case of living beings, generally coincide with natural gender (Huszár 2009: 33–34, Huszár – Kegyes 2014: 181, H. Varga 2016: 300). No accepted explanation for the function and development of grammatical genders has been reached among researchers. Grammatical genders can be considered empty linguistic forms in some respects, yet they influence how speakers of a given language see the world. For speakers of languages with grammatical genders, it is essential to mark grammatical genders whenever they produce an utterance, and this sheer repetition can create semantic traces that result in representations associated with that gender. In languages with grammatical genders, the grammatical gender of inanimate objects influences whether speakers associate more feminine or masculine qualities with that object. The reason for this is that grammatical gender as a grammatical category distinguishes objects by gender, and categorization draws attention to the similarities between members of the same category and the differences between members of different categories. The grammatical genders of one's native language therefore influence an individual's description of certain objects, as well as their thinking about the degree of similarities and differences between objects (Huszár – Kegyes 2014: 180–181, Kövecses –

Benczes 2010: 37, Phillips – Boroditsky 2003: 928–933, Sándor 2016: 139, H. Varga 2016: 307–315).

Natural gender can also be expressed lexically (so-called lexical-natural gender), with so-called common-gender nouns, and with so-called variable-gender nouns. Lexical expression includes gender-specific nouns that—although they do not contain a gender-indicating element—are clearly used to denote female or male living beings. Common-gender nouns can theoretically refer to both genders because they are semantically neutral, but in practice, they often primarily refer to men, while reference to the female gender is expressed with lexical elements. Since the unmarked base form generally refers to a man, it can be assumed that the female variant developed later, as a reaction to social changes. Variable-gender nouns are widespread in languages with grammatical genders; in these cases, the noun stem largely remains unchanged, and the article and/or the word ending refers to the natural gender (Huszár 2009: 97, H. Varga 2016: 301–306, Vasvári 2014: 136).

Gender linguistics is a field of study that examines the characteristics and differences of language use between genders, as well as the linguistic tools of gender-based discrimination, known as linguistic sexism. Various forms of discrimination based on belonging to a certain gender—primarily the discrimination against women—also appear in language. According to gender linguists, this includes, first, the phenomenon that the male is considered the prototype of a human being, and the woman is defined in relation to him: the base form referring to a man is unmarked, while the form referring to a woman can be expressed with morphemes or adjectival phrases. Secondly, words that contain an element meaning ‘man’ but refer to all of humanity can be considered a linguistic imprint of male-centricity. Thirdly, *generic masculine* belongs here, which is the phenomenon that the theoretically gender-neutral, universally applicable base form actually primarily refers to men, definitely includes them, but does not necessarily include women. Furthermore, words—mostly occupational names—that already contain some gender-related element (usually male) are also connected to this (Huszár 2009: 16–17, 33, 95–101, Huszár 2011: 79–80, H. Varga 2016: 301–305, Vasvári 2014: 136–140).

The value changes following World War II, the spread of birth control methods, the development of the welfare state, and the emergence of the two-earner family model in post-industrial societies led to the decline of the traditional family model and the redefinition of gender roles. The mass employment of women became common; they had the opportunity to earn qualifications and thus become financially independent, and their legal rights expanded (Huszár 2009: 97, Rosta – Ádám 2014: 25–37, Tomka 2011: 79, 86–87). These social changes gave rise to the demand for so-called inclusive language use. This approach avoids

biased or derogatory language based on biological or social gender. Since the 1980s, special attention has been paid to this in order to reduce gender stereotypes and promote gender equality. The efforts for inclusive language use aim to reduce the manifestations of linguistic sexism mentioned above and to achieve gender-neutral language use (Európai Parlament 2018a, Európai Unió Tanácsa 2018).

In Finland, it was very quickly recognized that traditional gender roles and tasks did not correspond to the needs of the changing society. Since both men and women began to work outside the home, it was thought that both genders should share in household tasks. Thus, ensuring gender equality has played a key role in Finnish society since the 1960s, which has visible results today. The employment rate of women, the proportion of women in leadership positions, and women participating in politics are all above the European Union average. In addition, great emphasis is placed on ensuring that this social view supporting gender equality is also reflected in their language through inclusive language use (European Commission 2017, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2006).

The Finnish language has no grammatical genders, so its category system does not require the speaker to pay heightened attention to gender distinction. The expression of natural gender is possible with words of lexical gender (e.g., *nainen* ‘woman’, *vaimo* ‘wife’, *mies* ‘man, husband’, *äiti* ‘mother’, *isä* ‘father’), with prefixes (*mies-* ‘male-’, *nais-* ‘female-’) and suffixes (*-mies* ‘-man’, *-herra* ‘-mister’, *-nainen* ‘-woman’, *-emäntä* ‘-mistress’), and with the derivational suffix *-tar/-tär* ‘-woman/-ess’ (Engelberg 2018: 17, Huszár 2009: 36, Kegyesné 2003: 61–65, Maticsák 2001: 10).

Words with the *nais-* prefix are quite rare, and most are no longer in use today, but the 1950 list of occupational names still included several such occupational names, e.g., *naispuutarhuri* ‘female gardener’, *naiskonstaapeli* ‘female police officer’. As a suffix, the element *-mies* is the most common, especially for occupational names, as for centuries these occupations could only be pursued by men, e.g., *kielimies* ‘language+man, linguist’, *lakimies* ‘law+man, lawyer’, *merimies* ‘sea+man, sailor’, *tiedemies* ‘science+man, scientist’, *virkamies* ‘office+man, official’. The suffix *-nainen* occurs mainly in words created as a female counterpart to words with the *-mies* suffix, e.g., *lakimies* ‘law+man, lawyer’ ~ *lakinainen* ‘law+woman’, *virkamies* ‘office+man, official’ ~ *virkanainen* ‘office+woman’. The suffix *-tar/-tär* was very common until the mid-20th century, especially for mythological figures and occupational names, e.g., *jumalatar* ‘goddess’, *luonnotar* ‘nature+woman, nymph’, *laulajatar* ‘female singer’, *hoitajatar* ‘female nurse’, *tarjoilijatar* ‘waitress’ (Engelberg 2018: 86,

Hakulinen 1979: 181–182; Ikola 1971: 91–92; Karlsson 1974: 26, Lepämaa – Lieko – Silfverberg 1996: 55–56, Maticsák 2001: 9–10).

In the context of the Finnish language, one of the main problems of gender-neutral language use is the still significant number of occupational names ending in *-mies*, which are still common, especially for occupations requiring heavy physical work (e.g., *kaivosmies* ‘mine+man, miner’) or political positions (e.g., *valtionpäämies* ‘state+head+man, head of state’). Inclusive language use recommendations urge the avoidance of these and the use of gender-neutral alternatives instead, e.g., *apumies* ‘help+man’ > *apulainen* ‘assistant’, *kielimies* ‘language+man’ > *kielentutkija* ‘language+researcher, linguist’, *lehtimies* ‘newspaper+man’ ~ *toimittaja* ‘journalist’, *poliisimies* ‘police+man’ > *poliisi* ‘police officer’. *Mies* can also appear with the meaning ‘person’ or ‘human’, e.g., *jokamies* ‘everyone’, *miespolvi* ‘generation’, *miesvoima* ‘human power’. In this case, too, inclusive language guidelines recommend the use of gender-neutral synonyms: *jokamies* ~ *jokainen*, *miespolvi* ~ *sukupolvi*, *miesvoima* ~ *ihmisvoima* (Engelberg 2018: 86; Európai Parlament 2018b, Karlsson 1974: 26, Maticsák 2001: 10–11, Suomen kielen lautakunta 2007).

Methods

The purpose of the studies was to determine whether the language changes aimed at gender neutrality, which are also mentioned in the literature, can be detected in literary and spoken language, and if so, to what extent and in what form they appear. The first two studies dealt with literary translations, which require special care due to their specific characteristics. Translations are influenced not only by the linguistic categories that exist or are missing in the target and source languages (e.g., grammatical genders) but also by current social conditions and general language use trends, as well as the translator's own values, goals, and gender sensitivity.

The first analysis examined the gender-related vocabulary in five Finnish translations of the Gospel of Luke. These are:

Biblia. Se on Coko Pyhä Raamattu Suomexi, 1642

Vanha kirkkoraamattu, 1776

Kirkkoraamattu, 1933, 1938

Pyhä Raamattu, 1992

Uusi testamentti, 2020

A huge advantage of studying biblical texts is that they cover an extremely long time span and that exactly the same passages can be compared, thus eliminating differences stemming from contextual variations. A disadvantage, however, can be that they are conservative, more rigid texts that presumably react more slowly to changes in the common language and preserve more archaic words. In building the database, I first selected the words that in some way refer to gender, based on the new, revised Bible published by the Hungarian Bible Society in 2014, and then collected the corresponding words from the Finnish translations. Then, I separated those that had changed in some way regarding the expression of natural gender.

The second study analyzed the gender-related vocabulary and its changes in the Finnish translations of the Grimm's fairy tales. Two translations were included in the study: *Grimmin kauneimmat sadut* [The Most Beautiful Grimm's Tales] translated by Kaarlo Merikoski and from 1946 and *Grimmin sadut* [Grimm's Tales] translated by Raija Jänicke and Oili Suominen from 1999. I included the fairy tales (a total of twenty-two) that appeared in both translations, which allowed for a comparative study. The Hungarian equivalents were provided based on Elek Benedek's 1904 translation, *A Grimm testvérek összegyűjtött meséi* [The Collected Tales of the Grimm Brothers]. I created the database by following similar steps as for the Bible translations. An advantage is that a sufficient amount of time passed between the two Finnish translations, and their publication dates roughly coincide with the publication dates of the two 20th-century Bible translations I examined (1938 and 1992).

The third study was a questionnaire-based data collection, the purpose of which was to investigate how the language use changes mentioned in the literature and identified in the literary translations appear in spoken language, and what gender-specific and gender-neutral occupational names speakers use. The questionnaire also included questions related to the perception of inclusive language use, as well as demographic questions. In the first part of the questionnaire, respondents saw a total of 40 pictures of people in various occupations and had to provide the occupational names that they thought best fit the person in the picture (they could give multiple answers). A total of 20 occupations were included in the study: carpenter, nurse, car mechanic, banker, miner, architect, construction worker, IT specialist, cashier, doctor, baker, waiter, postman, police officer, cleaner, sailor, scientist, firefighter, electrician, plumber. For each occupation, two pictures were included: one depicting a man and one a woman.

In the second part of the questionnaire, the subjects had to rate 20 words on a seven-point Likert scale according to how unnatural (1) or common (7) they found them. I collected the words based on the literature and my previous research. Half of the words were gender-specific, containing a gender-related element, while the other half were gender-neutral, in many cases newly created words. The third part of the questionnaire focused on attitudes toward inclusive language use. I examined attitudes by scoring statements: respondents had to rate a total of six statements related to inclusive language use on a seven-point Likert scale based on how much they agreed with them (1 – strongly disagree, 7 – strongly agree). The study concluded with five demographic questions, asking about: gender, age, highest educational attainment, place of residence, and native language.

Results

Based on the analysis of the vocabulary of the Bible translations, five categories could be distinguished. The first large group consists of words that became gender-neutral; in these, the lexical element referring gender disappears, and the usage changes toward gender neutrality (e.g., *kalamies* ‘fish+man’ > *kalastaja* ‘fisherman’; *leskivaimo* ‘widow+woman’ > *leski* ‘widow’). Within this, the first – and largest – subgroup consists of words that refer to a man, previously contained a male-referring element but became gender-neutral in later translations. Within this group, occupational names, names of family members, and other words not falling into the previous two categories can be distinguished. Within the group of words that became gender-neutral, I also separated a subgroup of words referring to women and children.

The second large group includes words with fluctuating gender marking. In these, a change is noticeable, but it is not clearly toward gender neutrality or gender specificity (e.g., *ystävä* ‘friend’ > *ystävätär* ‘female friend’ > *ystävä* ‘friend’). The third large category is the group of words that became gender-specific, where words that previously did not contain a gender-related element were replaced by words that explicitly referred to gender (e.g., *publikaani* ‘tax collector’ > *tullimies* ‘customs+man’). The fourth category contains only one element, which, however, cannot be classified into any other group: in this case, a complete "gender switch" occurred, and the word previously referring to a man was replaced by a word referring to a woman (*veli* ‘brother’ > *sisar* ‘sister’). The fifth large group includes words where there was no change in gender reference, but the usage of the gender-referring words is relevant for the study (e.g., *herra* ‘mister’ > *isäntä* ‘host, master’).

The results show that in the Finnish Bible translations, numerous changes have taken place in gender-related vocabulary, clearly shifting toward gender neutrality. One of the most important changes is the significant decrease of general masculine words – mostly occupational names – (e.g., *kalamies* ‘fish+man, fisherman’, *sotamies* ‘war+man, soldier’, *valtamies* ‘empire+man, ruler’, *päämies* ‘head+man, leader’, *maaherra* ‘land+mister, governor’, *esimies* ‘front+man, supervisor’, *työmies* ‘work+man, worker’, *peltomies* ‘field+man, farmer’, *johtomies* ‘lead+man, leader’, *raatimies* ‘council+man, councillor’, *valkamies* ‘debt+man, debtor’, *kylänmies* ‘village+man, neighbour’, *miestappo* ‘man+killing, homicide’) and the emergence of gender-neutral occupational names (e.g., *kalastaja* ‘fisherman’, *sotilas* ‘soldier’, *johtaja* ‘leader’, *käskynhaltija* ‘governor’, *ylipappi* ‘high priest’, *naapuri* ‘neighbour’, *omistaja* ‘owner’, *päällikkö* ‘chief, leader’, *työläinen* ‘worker’, *viljelijä* ‘producer’, *hallitsija* ‘ruler’). This is consistent with the changes described by Tiililä (1994: 16–19) and Engelberg (1998: 74–92): the number of occupational names with the *-mies* suffix has radically decreased since the 1950s, and neutral occupational names are becoming more widespread. Another characteristic trend is the gender-neutral change in the naming of family members and children, e.g., *isä* ‘father’ > *vanhemmat* ‘parents’, *veli* ‘brother’ > *perheenjäsen* ‘family member’, *tytär* ‘daughter’ > *jälkeläinen* ‘descendant’, *poika* ‘son’ > *lapsi* ‘child’. This change may be due to inclusivity, as in these cases, the words mostly refer to general, overarching categories rather than specific individuals.

The other significant change is the appearance of the *-tar/-tär* suffix and the *nais-* prefix in the 1938 and 1992 translations (neither appears in the 1642 translation, and only *kuningatar* ‘queen’ appears in the 1776 one), along with the disappearance of previously used female forms (e.g., *piika* ‘maid’, *prophetissa* ‘prophetess’). Although *-tar/-tär* was one of the most common female occupational name suffixes until the 1950s, its use in everyday speech began to decline sharply after that. In contrast, these suffixes remained in the 1992 translation. The reason for this may be that the translations are conservative and have not yet been reached by the linguistic reflection of social changes. However, in the 2020 translation, these do not appear, and instead, a gender-neutral form that does not contain a female-referring element is used (e.g., *palvelija* ‘servant’, *profeetta* ‘prophet’, *naapuri* ‘neighbour’, *ystävä* ‘friend’). At the same time, the word *emäntä* ‘wife, woman, mistress’ does not appear at all in the 20th and 21st-century translations, either alone or as a suffix, even though in the early 1990s it was the most common female occupational name suffix (Engelberg 1998: 74–92).

There are some cases where early translations used a gender-neutral form, but a gender-referring element appeared in later translations. An important trend is that the 2020

translation, in these cases, predominantly returned to the use of gender-neutral forms. There were very few cases of change in the opposite direction, toward gender specificity, especially in the 2020 translation. A characteristic example of this is the change from *publikaani* ‘tax collector’ to *tullimies* ‘customs+man, tax official’, and – presumably for the sake of clarity and intelligibility – the appearance of the word *mies* ‘man’ in place of *ihminen* ‘human’ or personal pronouns.

In some cases, the gender reference remained, but the vocabulary changed. For male-referring words, the most characteristic change is *herra* ‘mister’ > *isäntä* ‘host, master’, while for female-referring words, the change from *vaimo* ‘woman, mistress, wife’ to *nainen* ‘woman’ and *emäntä* ‘(house)wife, mistress’ to *vaimo* ‘wife’ occurred consistently in every instance. The reason for this could be to increase intelligibility: *vaimo* is already used in the common language with the meaning ‘wife’, and only in some dialects is it used with the meaning ‘woman, mistress’.

The words collected from the Finnish translations of the Grimm’s fairy tales can be categorized into three larger groups. The first is the group of words that became gender-neutral, where the gender-referring element typically disappears, and the usage changes (e.g., *ratsumies* ‘horse+man, horseman’ > *husaari* ‘hussar’). Within this, two subgroups can be distinguished: words referring to men and words referring to children or offspring. The second group contains words where the opposite happens: gender-neutral words become gender-specific (e.g., *prinssi* ‘prince’ > *kuninkaanpoika* ‘king’s son’), with subgroups of words referring to men and words referring to women. The third group includes words where the gender reference did not change, but the usage did (e.g., *ukko* ‘(old) man, husband’ > *mies* ‘man, husband’), as these changes are also informative when examining gender-related vocabulary.

A similar trend to the Bible translations can be observed in the Finnish translations of the Grimm’s fairy tales regarding the decrease in the number of male-referring words, e.g., *sotamies* ‘war+man’ > *sotilas* ‘soldier’, *pikkumies* ‘little+man’ > *kääpiö* ‘dwarf’, *raatiherra* ‘council+mister’ > *neuvonantaja* ‘advisor’, *maaherra* ‘land+mister’ > *käskynhaltija* ‘governor’. In contrast, there is no clearly identifiable trend for words referring to women. The reason for this may be that in the Bible translations, a significant change in words referring to women is most noticeable between the 1776 and 1938 translations, and later between the 1992 and 2020 translations, but there is no particular difference in the period covered by the Grimm translations.

The difficulty of studying literary translations is that the vocabulary is greatly influenced by the translator's style and purpose. This is precisely why a comparison with the source language was particularly useful, as it shed light on factors that explain changes in the translations that contradict the expected trends. One such factor is that the later 1999 translation adheres more closely to the original German text, e.g., *der Husar* 'hussar' ~ *ratsumies* 'horseman' > *husaari* 'hussar', *die Königstochter* 'king's daughter' ~ *prinsessa* 'princess' > *kuninkaantytär* 'king's daughter'.

For male-referring words, especially occupational ones, the assumption was confirmed that the linguistic trends of shifting toward gender neutrality appear in the vocabulary, similar to the Bible translations. Regarding grammatical elements referring to the feminine gender, no clear trend of change could be identified in the case of the Grimm's fairy tales; however, in the Bible translations, too, there were significant changes only between the first two (1642 and 1776), the second two (1938 and 1992), and the last one (2020), and the Grimm's translations coincide in time with the second two Bible translations.

The comparison with the source language proved to be useful as it provided an explanation for the "anomalies" that contradicted the assumed trends. One must be very careful when studying translations, as the translator's purpose and style greatly influence the result. However, in the case of words with the *-mies* and *-herra* suffixes (e.g., *matkamies* 'way+man, wanderer' > *kulkijaparka* 'poor traveller', *pikkumies* 'little+man, dwarf' > *kääpiö* 'dwarf', *sotamies* 'war+man, soldier' > *sotilas* 'soldier', *raatiherra* 'council+mister, councillor' > *neuvonantaja* 'advisor', *maaherra* 'land+mister, governor' > *käskynhaltija* 'governor'), this is likely not the main factor in the changes in most cases, especially when compared with the coincidences in the Bible translations. It is worthwhile to compare such changes in vocabulary, which can be clearly attributed to social changes, with data from spoken language, thereby excluding changes that are only due to the translator's personal preferences.

A total of 712 usable responses were received for the questionnaire. The sample distribution is not uniform: almost 80% of the respondents are women with a higher education degree. The average age was 46.9 years, with the youngest respondent being 18 and the oldest 80. A very significant amount of vocabulary was collected during the completion of the questionnaires; from the 713 respondents, a total of 830 different responses were received for the 20 pictures depicting men, and a total of 893 for the 20 pictures depicting women. The questionnaire-based study of spoken language confirmed that the efforts for inclusive

language use are indeed clearly detectable in everyday language. One of the most significant findings is the preference for gender-neutral alternatives over occupational names with the *-mies* suffix, especially when referring to women, e.g., *palomies* ‘fire+man’ ~ *palopelastaja* ‘firefighter’, *kaivosmies* ‘mine+man’ ~ *kaivostyöntekijä* ‘mine worker’, *sähkömies* ‘electricity+man’ ~ *sähköasentaja* ‘electrician’, *postimies* ‘post+man’ ~ *postinjakaja/postinkantaja* ‘postman’. At the same time, for certain occupations – typically traditionally masculine ones – the use of the gender-specific form is still common in everyday language, e.g., *merimies* ‘sea+man, sailor’, *kaivosmies* ‘mine+man, miner’, *kirvesmies* ‘axe+man, carpenter’, *rakennusmies* ‘building+man, construction worker’, *sähkömies* ‘electricity+man, electrician’, *putkimies* ‘pipe+man, plumber’. This is consistent with the data from the literature and the results of the previous two corpus studies. Speakers explicitly rarely mark natural gender with a gender-referring element attached to a gender-neutral occupational name (e.g., *nais-*, *mies-*, *-tar/-tär*), which is in line with the recommendations of the Finnish Language Board (Suomen kielen lautakunta, 2007) for inclusive language use.

Based on the evaluation of gender-neutral and gender-specific words, speakers consider the gender-neutral versions to be completely normal, which shows that these words, included in inclusive language use recommendations, have already become part of everyday language. They consider gender-specific words to be somewhat less conventional; however, speakers still judge the general masculine words (*jokamies* ‘every+man, everyone’, *tullimies* ‘customs+man, customs official’, *päämies* ‘head+man, leader’) as acceptable, while they find words containing a female-referring element (*palvelijatar* ‘servant+-ess’, *naistarkistaja* ‘woman+inspector’) to be particularly strange. This explains the rather rare use of such elements.

Regarding attitudes toward inclusive language use, it can be generally stated that Finns have a positive attitude toward it and believe that the message of acceptance and equality fits with Finnish social values. For this reason, they are even willing to accept the use of sometimes unusual new words. Finns are particularly well-informed about the issue of inclusive language use; the proportion of those who have never heard of it is negligible, and the vast majority have above-average knowledge of the topic. Knowledge about inclusive language use is correlated with attitudes toward it (attitudes are more positive with more knowledge), which points to the importance of knowledge transfer about inclusive language use, especially among the older generation, as they have less knowledge. Women and nonbinary people have a more positive attitude toward gender-neutral language use, which

may be because these are the groups who feel the topic of gender equality is particularly important.

Summary

The socio-cultural environment influences language by determining certain elements of the meaning-making process. Changes in socio-cultural conditions thus also lead to linguistic changes, primarily in vocabulary. One of the most important social changes of recent decades can be considered the transformation of gender roles and the traditional family model. Gender equality is one of the key values of Finnish society. The dissertation examined whether this socio-cultural orientation is also reflected in the language, and what language use changes the increasing emphasis on gender equality has resulted in over the past decades.

Based on the results, it can be said that from the second half of the 20th century, a shift in vocabulary toward gender neutrality is observable in literary language. This is consistent with the data from the literature and supports the fact that social changes lead to changes in vocabulary. Inclusive language use was also characteristic of spoken language, which shows that social structure and attitudes are also reflected in language. The respondents considered it important that the values of Finnish society be reflected in the language as well.

The results of the research illustrate the connection between the socio-cultural environment, language, and thought: in a Finnish society that values gender equality, this value system is reflected in language use and in individual opinions, and the changes in language use are well identifiable in a historical context as well. The determination of the causal relationships and direction of the connection between society, language, and thought was not the subject of this dissertation, but it could be a valuable research area for future studies.

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List of publications related to the dissertation

Hungarian book chapters (2)

1. **Hajdú-Pukánszky, A.:** A nemek kifejezésének változásai Lukács evangéliumának 2020-as finn fordításában.
In: A nyelvtörténeti kutatások újabb eredményei XII.. Szerk.: Forgács Tamás, Németh Miklós, Sinkovics Balázs, Szegedi Tudományegyetem Magyar Nyelvészeti Tanszék, Szeged, 203-210, 2024. ISBN: 9789636880224(nyomtatott)
2. **Hajdú-Pukánszky, A.:** A természetes nem (sexus) jelölése a Grimm-mesék finn fordításaiban.
In: A nyelvtörténeti kutatások újabb eredményei XI.. Szerk.: Forgács Tamás, Németh Miklós, Sinkovics Balázs, Szegedi Tudományegyetem Magyar Nyelvészeti Tanszék, Szeged, 351-360, 2022. ISBN: 9789633069097

Hungarian scientific articles in Hungarian journals (4)

3. **Hajdú-Pukánszky, A.:** A nemekre vonatkozó szóhasználat a finn anyanyelvi beszélők körében.
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List of other publications

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8. Baksa, M., **Hajdú-Pukánszky, A.**: Többkezűség Mikael Agricola munkáiban.

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The Candidate's publication data submitted to the Tudóstér have been validated by DEENK on the basis of the Journal Citation Report (Impact Factor) database.

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