

Gender Neutral Pronouns

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There are a few languages that do not differentiate between he and she. People using these languages do not have to invent new ways of addressing this divisive issue, like using they, in order to slide into the 21st century. Really, guys and girls, (hmmm?) they is plural.

Some other languages that use a single pronoun for he and she are Hungarian, Finnish, Turkish and Hawaiian. Artificial Intelligence (AI) tells me that Mandarin Chinese is unique in that there is a difference in the written symbols for he and she, but there is no distinction in the pronunciation.

I am fascinated by languages! Of the languages mentioned above, I am most familiar with Hungarian; the word for he or she is ő. The question to ask is does the gender neutral pronoun implies less gender discrimination? In Hungarian, apparently not. The word for kindergarten teacher in Hungarian is óvónő, which translated into English is protective (ovó) lady (nő). Also, there are two different words for secretary. Titkár is used to cover the case of the Secretary of State, for example, while titkárnő (you now know that nő is lady) is used for the woman who takes dictation for and brings coffee to the Secretary of State.