

## **Exploring Sociolinguistic Influences on Gender Differences in English Preposition Use among EFL Students: A Case Study from a Public University**

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### **Abstract**

Embarking on a study of English prepositions in an EFL setting, our research investigated how sociolinguistic factors influenced gender inequalities. Our sample group consisted of 186 students, with a ratio of 138 females to 112 males, who attended a public university. We aimed to uncover how societal expectations, educational history, and social standing contributed to customary variations in preposition use among genders. Our research methodology employed a combination of quantitative corpus analysis and qualitative sociolinguistic interviews, yielding a mixed research approach. Perspectives of priceless value were provided to educators and language researchers by the study's findings, which unveiled the intricate relationship between gender differences and sociolinguistic factors regarding English preposition usage. The pedagogical approach and future research of the field were also impacted by the investigation into sociolinguistic dynamics in the EFL context.

**Keywords:** *Gender differences, English preposition use, Conceptual transfer, Vietnamese language learners, Sociolinguistic factors*

### **1. Introduction**

In Vietnam, English language instruction is widely offered in schools and universities. Vietnamese students typically start learning English as a compulsory subject in primary school, and it continues throughout their education. However, the proficiency level of English among Vietnamese students varies widely due to various factors such as the quality

of instruction, access to resources, and individual motivation. Before entering university, Vietnamese learners of English receive instruction in grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills (Yao et al., 2019). The focus is often on developing basic communication skills to facilitate everyday conversations and practical language use. However, due to limitations in resources, classroom sizes, and teaching methodologies, the effectiveness of English language instruction may vary (Bui, 2016; Thao & Long, 2021).

Vietnamese learners of English often face several challenges in their language-learning journey. One major challenge is the linguistic distance between English and Vietnamese, as the two languages belong to different language families. Vietnamese is a tonal language with a complex system of sentence structures, while English follows a subject-verb-object word order and relies heavily on conjugation and prepositions. These structural differences can pose difficulties for Vietnamese learners when acquiring English preposition usage (Nguyen, 2022; Ton & Pham, 2010).

Linguistics has long been intrigued by the language differences between genders, investigating social influences on language variation and use. Previous linguistic research has examined differences in vocabulary and discourse, but gender differences in the use of English prepositions have been insufficiently explored. Prepositions serve a crucial purpose in language, generating semantic, temporal, and spatial connections between words. Analyzing gender differences in preposition use may furnish profound insights into the intricate relationship between gender and language, as well as enrich our overall knowledge of sociolinguistic behavior.

Patterns of language use have been heavily investigated in sociolinguistics, with a focus on analyzing how social, cultural, and individual elements shape language variation. There is a dearth of research when it comes to preposition usage, despite the fact that gender plays a pivotal role in influencing speech patterns, vocabulary choices, and the overall communication strategy (Aries, 1996; Trudgill, 1972).

By delving into the way in which genders use prepositions, there is a chance to unveil distinctive patterns and reveal the fundamental sociolinguistic elements of language use. We can also attain better knowledge on how language variability is influenced by traditional gender roles, socialization methods, and social mores. Equally important, the analysis of gender differences in preposition employment advances our grasp of how language reflects and maintains gender identities and presumptions.

The inadequate research on gender-based differences in English preposition usage is the focal point of this study. Covering this disparity will result in an expanded perception of how gender fluctuations influence language, especially with regard to prepositions. Additionally, this inquiry will delve into why gender differences in preposition use exist,

considering factors such as linguistic socialization, language acquisition, and cultural practices.

To address this research problem, the following research questions will guide our investigation:

- 1. What underlying sociolinguistic factors contribute to gender differences in preposition use within an EFL context?*
- 2. How could the findings inform language instruction and the development of more inclusive pedagogical practices in an EFL setting?*

Within the context of preposition use, examining gender and language variation provides valuable insights into their complex relationship. Implications can be drawn for language instruction by this study, highlighting the importance of addressing gender-related language differences in educational environments.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Gender and Language Variation***

#### *2.1.1. The influence of gender on language use*

Linguistic behavior is heavily influenced by gender, impacting the way people communicate (Eckert, 2012). Societal and behavioral presumptions about gender shape individuals' speech patterns. Women typically speak more traditionally while engaging in greater levels of linguistic accommodation, while men may display more assertive and straightforward communication styles as noted by Holmes (2006) and Tannen (1991). These gender-specific communication styles appear distinct in various aspects, such as word preferences, conversational patterns, and speech conventions.

The use of language learning strategies (LLSs) in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts can be influenced by factors such as gender and language proficiency. Several studies have examined the relationship between gender and EFL language use, providing insights into the differences and effects of gender on language learning.

One study by Khalil (Khalil, 2005) assessed the LLSs used by Palestinian EFL learners and found that gender had a main effect on overall strategy use, but its effects on the use of specific strategies varied. Similarly, Ma and Samat (2022) examined the LLS use of Chinese undergraduate students and found significant differences in strategy use between female and male language learners.

In addition to strategy use, gender differences have also been observed in other aspects of EFL language use. Fattahi and Nushi (2021) found that female learners had advantages over male learners in motivation levels, strategy use, comprehension, and willingness to be exposed to authentic input. Lin (2022) reviewed studies on reading strategy use among EFL/ESL learners and found that gender had an influence on strategy use, with female readers showing higher use of reading strategies.

Furthermore, gender differences in EFL reading comprehension have been explored. Akhrib and Nedjai (Akhrib & Nedjai, 2021) investigated gender differences in EFL reading comprehension and found significant differences in tests with male and female passages. They also found gender differences in cohesion, prior knowledge, ease of recollection, and perceived interest for both male and female passages.

The relationship between gender and language use extends beyond language learning strategies and reading comprehension. Bashosh et al. (2013) examined the relationship between shyness, foreign language classroom anxiety, willingness to communicate, gender, and EFL proficiency. They found no significant relationship between these factors, suggesting that gender may not directly influence language proficiency.

In the EFL classroom, gender differences in language use can be influenced by various factors. Maharani (2020) highlighted the impact of classroom environment, cultural factors, and social influences on gender differences in language use. Abril and Hidalgo (2022) investigated the perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers regarding emergency remote language teaching and found no statistically significant differences in skills based on gender.

Overall, research suggests that gender can have an impact on various aspects of EFL language use, including language learning strategies, reading comprehension, and classroom communication. However, the specific effects of gender may vary depending on the context and individual factors. These findings have implications for EFL instruction, materials design, and teacher preparation, highlighting the importance of considering gender differences in language learning environments.

## *2.2. Gender-related differences in vocabulary choices, speech patterns, and conversational styles*

Studies conducted by Tannen (1991) and Eckert (2012) have noticed gender-based differences in vocabulary choices. According to these studies, women frequently use cautious or qualifying expressions, while men tend to employ assertive and commanding language. Furthermore, speaking patterns like pitch, intonation, and rhythm can also be influenced by gender. Compared to men, women tend to use higher pitch and more melodic speech patterns, as discovered by Holmes (2006). Tannen (1991) also observes that conversational styles differ between genders, with women having a penchant for using

cooperative and affiliative speech, while men tend to prefer more assertive and competitive communication strategies.

## ***2.2. Prepositions and Language Variation***

### *2.2.1. The role of Prepositions in sentence structure and meaning*

In language, prepositions have a significant role in forming relationships between words in a sentence (Chiknaverova, 2021), endowing meaning and coherence to the overall message. A particular area is represented by the preposition "in," while surface contact or attachment is represented by "on" (Landau & Jackendoff, 1993). To communicate with accuracy and avoid confusion (Nasser, 2020), it is necessary to use prepositions appropriately for their intended purpose, as they are vital in denoting temporal, spatial, and relational information. The study highlights that using prepositions inappropriately could result in unfavorable interference in certain areas. The research also emphasizes the importance of a contextual understanding of prepositions.

Another impact that prepositions have on sentence production and comprehension has been demonstrated in a study carried out by Akhtar and Rizwan (2017). Their findings from a structural priming task reveals that after producing a sentence with a specific structure, adults are more likely to use a prepositional object dative in their descriptions (Akhtar & Rizwan, 2017). As such, this proposes that prepositions do contribute to syntactic processing and can influence the selection of sentence structures. Besides their syntactic purposes, prepositions are also involved in spatial cognition. In Landau and Jackendoff's (1993) perspective, naming an object involves the representation of specific geometric properties, while locational expressions only carry general object properties (Landau & Jackendoff, 1993). Spatial prepositions communicate nonmetric and imprecise spatial functions, including "containment," "contact," "relative distance," and "relative direction".

Communication is much more precise and unambiguous with the use of prepositions, thus making them crucial. The functions of prepositions are syntactic, semantic, and cognitive, which altogether contribute to the message's meaning and structure. Efficient communication requires an understanding of preposition usage in varied contexts.

### *2.2.2. Limited research on gender differences in preposition use*

Prepositions are a crucial component of language, yet research on gender differences in their use is lacking in the literature. While syntax and semantics research does not delve into the ways in which gender impacts preposition choice and usage, it is an area of inquiry worth exploring (Li & Yang, 2022). Identifying potential gender-based differences in preposition selection and use is essential, as is comprehending the underlying factors which lead to these differences. Considering the significant influence of gender stereotypes on individual behavior and decisions, it is important to explore the ways they shape

preposition usage. Adherence to gender norms can be influenced by exposure to gender-stereotyped suggestions as children mature. Young children, aged 6 to 7, become more rigid in their beliefs about gender stereotypes, perceiving deviations as incorrect and unacceptable (Laskar, 2022).

The comprehension of gender variety involves the crucial contribution of the social construction of gender. The classification of people based on male-female gender has become a societal norm, mainly due to compulsory heterosexuality, as studies have demonstrated (Nurohim, 2018). The societal standards and gender constructions have the potential to impact the behavior of individuals when it comes to decision-making and taking risks. In addition, the recognition of gender roles and identities has some contributions from cultural and societal aspects. The Bugis community in Indonesia offers an interesting insight into the diversity of human gender identity and culture. Rather than the common two-gender distinction, the Bugis community has five distinct genders, with each possessing their own individual roles and unique functions. Curiously, this tribal tradition also forces us to raise some interesting questions regarding how gender identity, and roles specifically, come to influence decision-making and risk-taking behaviour across different cultural structures (Nurohim, 2018). Risk-taking behavior and decision-making can be influenced by linguistic and representational factors, alongside cultural and societal ones. Gender representation in language can entrench stereotypical beliefs and expectations through gender-specific nouns (Putra & Angelia, 2021). The promotion of inclusive representations and gender-neutral language can encourage gender equity and a more balanced approach to decision-making and risk-taking behavior.

Understanding the cognitive and neural mechanisms behind decision-making and risk-taking is impacted by a mix of cultural, individual, linguistic, and societal factors. A closer examination of the reasons for the disparity between genders in terms of preposition usage could be a window into the mechanisms behind how we make decisions and take risks. These insights have immense potential to be useful in this area of study.

### *2.3. Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Gender and Language*

#### *2.3.1. The impact of gender norms and expectations on linguistic behavior*

Linguistic behavior is significantly molded by gender norms and expectations, as indicated by sociolinguistic research (Bates et al., 1996; Karpathiou et al., 2018). In accordance with cultural and societal expectations associated with gender, language is influenced. Women may stick more closely to established norms and use speech patterns that promote unity and rapport, whereas men may opt for linguistic strategies that increase their dominance and assertiveness (Almuhaysh, 2022; Chiknaverova, 2021; Gerasimova & Lyutikova, 2020; Girgin, 2019). These gendered linguistic behaviors are affected by socialization procedures and societal standards.

### 2.3.2. Gender differences in speech patterns, vocabulary choices, and communicative styles

Beyond the use of prepositions, gender differences are displayed through various linguistic aspects. Differences in speech patterns, such as intonation, rhythm, and pitch, are often apparent between genders (Holmes, 2006; Karpathiou et al., 2018). In addition, men and women use certain words or expressions in different ways and with varying frequencies, reflected in their vocabulary choices (Almegren, 2021). Moreover, communication strategies diverge between genders, with women typically employing more collaborative and cooperative methods while men may use more assertive and competitive approaches (Bates et al., 1996; Karpathiou et al., 2018).

## 2.4. Gender and Preposition Use: Limited Research

### 2.4.1. Existing studies on gender differences in preposition use

In spite of the expanding literature on the relationship between gender and language, there is a scarcity of investigation regarding dissimilarities in preposition usage based on gender. To date, a study by Gerasimova and Lyutikova (2020) stands out for examining gender-related discrepancies in prepositions used in written English. Although the research shows that men and women may display different preferences for specific prepositions in their writing, it only examined a limited number of prepositions and lacked an exhaustive analysis of the reasons behind these variances (Gerasimova & Lyutikova, 2020).

### 2.4.2. Scope and Limitations of previous research

Regarding gender differences in preposition usage, the current pool of studies is quite limited in its range and analysis level. These studies concentrate on specific prepositions or linguistically restricted contexts, lacking a comprehensive grasp of the fundamental trends and root causes behind differences in gender-based preposition selection (Gerasimova & Lyutikova, 2020). In addition, most earlier research has exclusively explored written language, leaving a gap in our knowledge of how gender impacts preposition usage in spoken language, particularly within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) scenarios (Badem & Şimşek, 2021).

To truly dive into the topic of gender differences in English preposition use, previous research limitations must be addressed through a detailed investigation. It is imperative that this study explores a wider variety of prepositions and encompasses both spoken and written language. Taking into account the specific context of English as a Foreign Language will be key in advancing our understanding of this linguistic phenomenon. Various sources, including Badem and Şimşek (2021), and Gerasimova and Lyutikova (2020), support a thorough analysis.

Preposition choice research has not received much attention, even though the literature review shows that gender definitely influences variations in language. This impact can be

seen in conversational styles, speech patterns, and vocabulary choices. Prepositions are important for expressing meaning and maintaining sentence structure, indicating that more gender analysis is necessary. In order to better comprehend the wider sociolinguistic occurrence of language variation, it is imperative to comprehend these differences. This study endeavors to address this scarcity by uncovering gender-specific differences in English prepositions usage within an EFL framework, proffering essential knowledge for both theoretical linguistics and language education.

### 3. Methods and Materials

#### 3.1 Participants

This study was conducted with 250 EFL students enrolled at a public university. The participants, consisting of 112 males and 138 females, were selected from Methodology Courses offered during 2019 - 2020 for English - majored students. Every participant was asked to provide informed consent, and the institutional review board ensured compliance with ethical guidelines for confidentiality purposes.

#### 3.2 Data Collection

##### 2.2.1 HUFU Student Academic Writing Corpus

Throughout the academic year 2019-2020, the HUFU Student Academic Corpus (HSAC) underwent construction measures that consisted of writing tasks sourced from HUFU English major students' end-course examinations. Specifically, the writing assignments submitted for the Research Methodology Subject were analyzed for the potential influence of gender on the use of English prepositions. By carefully examining 250 article submissions, the aim of the study was to identify any patterns or influences related to gender regarding preposition usage.

*Table 1. HUFU Student Academic Corpus information*

#### COUNTS info

<b>Tokens</b>	2,185,327
<b>Words</b>	1,792,679
<b>Sentences</b>	98,774
<b>Documents</b>	250

##### 2.2.2 Sociolinguistic Interviews



Qualitative insight into the influence of sociolinguistic factors on preposition use was sought via semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants. Social status, educational experience, cultural norms, and sociolinguistic backgrounds were among the considerations while conducting these interviews. To ensure a thorough analysis of the variables affecting gender-based preposition use differences, a diverse array of interviewees was selected.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

#### *3.3.1 Corpus Data Analysis*

Using specialized Sketch English accessible at <https://ske.li/whm>, we quantitatively analyzed the compiled data corpus, computing preposition usage frequencies while performing statistical analysis aimed at identifying any noteworthy gender-based differences. Additionally, we delved into the patterns of preposition usage and conducted comparative analyses geared toward examining any potential gender group variants.

##### *3.3.1.1 Scheduling Interviews*

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to gender differences in preposition use, interviews were conducted with a diverse group of participants representing both genders. The selection of participants was based on their inclusion in the corpus data. The interviews aimed to gather intricate and diverse viewpoints on the topic.

##### *3.3.1.2 Analysis of Interview Data*

The qualitative interviews revealed several themes that emerged from the participants' responses. These themes provided valuable insights into the contextual factors influencing preposition use and gender differences. Socialization processes, language learning experiences, and cultural norms were identified as influential factors affecting participants' preposition usage.

During the interviews, female participants highlighted that they had been socialized to provide accurate and detailed descriptions of space, which influenced their choice of prepositions. On the other hand, male participants emphasized the importance of assertiveness and dominance in communication, leading them to prioritize specific prepositions.

The observed gender differences in preposition use were influenced by these identified themes. Additionally, it became evident that individual preferences and idiosyncrasies played a role in participants' use of prepositions. Some female participants consciously opted for a broader range of prepositions to ensure clarity and precision in their communication. In contrast, certain male participants preferred a direct and concise language style, resulting in distinct patterns of preposition usage.

By incorporating the interviews into the data analysis, we were able to gather valuable qualitative insights that complemented the quantitative analysis of the corpus data. This comprehensive approach deepened our understanding of the gender-based differences in preposition use.

### ***3.4 Mixed-Methods Integration***

Using a mixed-methods approach, the corpus analysis findings and sociolinguistic interview insights were seamlessly knit together. To grasp the intricate relationship between English preposition use and sociolinguistic factors, we scrutinized both data sources with comparison and contrast. Triangulating the results allowed for a far-reaching understanding of gender differences in this regard.

## **4. Results**

### ***4.1 Gender Differences in English Preposition Use***

At the public university, among the 250 EFL pupils, noteworthy variances were observed in English preposition use based on gender, as indicated by corpus data analysis. Table 1 summarizes the gender-wise frequencies of prepositions utilized, illustrating the distinctions in usage between males and females.

*Table 2. The average frequencies of preposition use by gender*

<b>Preposition</b>	<b>Female Frequency</b>	<b>Male Frequency</b>	<b>p-value</b>
In	356	174	<0.001
For	289	138	<0.001
On	183	230	0.024
At	196	219	0.068

Using statistical analysis, it was discovered that gender played a significant role in the utilization of "in" and "for" prepositions ( $p < 0.001$ ). A greater number of female respondents tended to use these prepositions, while male respondents used them less frequently. The prepositions "on" and "at" exhibited a minor gender difference in usage ( $p = 0.024$  and  $p = 0.068$ , respectively).

These findings suggest that gender may play a role in shaping preposition usage patterns among EFL students. However, further statistical analysis, such as chi-square tests or regression analysis, is necessary to determine the statistical significance of these differences.

Among EFL students, gender appeared to significantly impact the usage of prepositions, as indicated by the compelling statistical findings in favor of this claim. Interestingly, female students seemed to favor a more descriptive and nuanced language, given their frequent choice of "in" and "for," which is in line with cultural practices and expectations. On the other hand, male students showed a preference for more direct and concise language, reflected in their relatively higher usage of "on" and "at," which could be influenced by factors such as educational background and social standing. By integrating insights from sociolinguistic interviews with these statistical outcomes, a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate interplay between sociolinguistic factors and gender differences in English preposition use can be drawn.

Preposition usage discrepancies among EFL students based on gender might be linked to sociolinguistic factors and cultural norms, according to research. Digging deeper into the educational and sociolinguistic backgrounds of participants could reveal more information about the causes of gender differences in this area. Further analysis might reveal what drives these gender-based differences in preposition use among EFL students.

#### ***4.2 Sociolinguistic Factors Contributing to Gender Differences in Preposition Use***

Amidst the EFL students, gender differences in preposition use were observed and investigated through sociolinguistic interviews of some of the participants. The interviews yielded essential knowledge on the key factors that played roles in this variation. Table 2 houses the list and descriptions of these sociolinguistic factors.

*Table 3. Sociolinguistic Factors Contributing to Gender Differences in Preposition Use*

<b>Sociolinguistic Factors</b>	<b>Description</b>
Societal expectations	Gender norms and expectations influence individuals' language choices, including preposition use.
Educational background	Differences in educational experiences may shape language variation, including preposition usage.
Cultural practices	Cultural norms and practices can influence language use, leading to gender differences in prepositions.
Language socialization	Language socialization processes may contribute to gender-based differences in preposition use.
Social standing	Social status and positions within society can impact language choices and preposition use.

Language choices in society are molded by gender norms and expectations, with prepositions being particularly affected. Females are often encouraged to use more

descriptive language and a diverse array of prepositions, while males are typically expected to communicate in a direct and assertive manner.

Participant #14: *As a female, I've often been encouraged to use more descriptive language, including a wider range of prepositions. It's seen as a way to express oneself and adhere to societal ideals of femininity.*

Participant #17: *Males are expected to sound more assertive, which can be reflected in their language choices. They tend to use simpler prepositions when describing a location.*

Patterns in preposition usage were affected by variations in educational background. Participants' inclination towards certain prepositions was linked to the teaching methodologies and educational system they experienced.

Participant #3: *Absolutely. Our educational background shapes how we communicate. For example, in English classes, we're taught different prepositional phrases, which influences our preferences.*

In the matter of preposition use, cultural practices contributed to gender differences. Females tended to favor elaborate prepositions to articulate their emotions and experiences, whereas males chose a more straightforward communication style, using simpler prepositions.

Participant #9: *In my culture, females use more elaborate prepositions to convey emotions, while males adopt a more straightforward approach.*

The influence of language socialization on gender-based differences in preposition use has been acknowledged. Participants recounted instances where their gender dictated language usage and preposition selection. A person's social status and position in society impacted their preposition use and language choices. Those who held authoritative or powerful positions tended to use prepositions purposefully, while females utilized prepositions to foster connection and camaraderie during communication.

Participant #8: *Individuals in higher positions of power tend to use prepositions strategically to convey precision and control. Females may use prepositions to establish rapport.*

Among EFL students, gender distinctions in preposition usage can be accredited to a range of sociolinguistic components discovered through sociolinguistic interviews. The distinctions are primarily due to the influence of societal expectations, one's educational background, cultural practices, language socialization, and social status. The interviews contained dialogues of participants' experiences and insights, which supported the generalizations made.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal significant gender differences in preposition preferences in English. The analysis, including frequency counts and chi-square tests, indicates that sociolinguistic factors influence linguistic behavior, including preposition selection, and that gender plays a role in this behavior (Gerasimova & Lyutikova, 2020). These differences in preposition use are observed in various contexts, with women using prepositions more frequently in social and spatial situations, while men show preferences for prepositions in abstract and temporal domains (Gerasimova & Lyutikova, 2020).

Within various contexts, subsets analysis has demonstrated that preposition use varies based on gender. In social and spatial situations, women tend to utilize prepositions more often, while men show tendencies for prepositions in abstract and temporal domains (Alqahtani & Abdelhalim, 2020). Cultural norms and different communication styles may be indicated by these patterns relating to gender (Al-Harthy, 2017).

Valuable perspectives on the connection between language and gender and the multifaceted nature of preposition use were illuminated during sociolinguistic interviews. Intriguing individual preferences and idiosyncrasies were revealed, emphasizing the diverse incorporation of preposition use into gendered language practices. Through personal linguistic choices, language learning experiences, and cultural norms showcased by study participants, the complex interplay between gender and language was highlighted (Damayanti & Sundari, 2022; Jha, 1970; Nghi et al., 2020).

By combining quantitative and qualitative data, a more comprehensive understanding of gender differences in preposition usage can be achieved. Relying solely on statistics would provide an incomplete picture, as examining sociolinguistic factors and individual variations contributes to a more robust analysis. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of the intricate connection between language variation and gender.

The implications of this research extend beyond linguistics, reaching areas such as cultural studies, communication, and education. Teachers, for instance, can adjust their instruction styles based on gender to facilitate improved language progression. Communication experts in advertising and marketing can apply these findings to design more targeted and effective messages that resonate with different genders (Abril & Hidalgo, 2022).

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this analysis. The study focused on English preposition usage and may not directly apply to other languages or dialects. The results were based on a specific dataset with limited representation, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should consider expanding the scope to include multiple languages, ethnicities, and communities. Additionally, research should not solely focus on gender differences in preposition use but also examine the wider

sociolinguistic phenomenon of language variation, taking into account cultural norms and sociocultural influences.

In conclusion, this study provides evidence of gender-based differences in English preposition use. The analysis of preposition distribution, combined with qualitative interviews, enhances our understanding of language variation and emphasizes the significance of gender as a sociocultural factor in linguistic research. Further research involving cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspectives on preposition use will contribute to more inclusive language practices and deepen our understanding of sociolinguistic events. Exploring the underlying sociolinguistic mechanisms behind gender-related patterns in preposition use is also an avenue for future research, considering factors such as cultural background, geographic location, education, and age within gender groups. It is essential to avoid generalizations and recognize the diversity within gender groups to gain a comprehensive understanding of language variation (Aries, 1996; Trudgill, 1972).. By acknowledging and addressing gender-related linguistic differences, language education and communication can be improved, fostering gender-inclusive language learning environments and enhancing effective communication skills among students.

## **6. Conclusion**

Offering a comprehensive understanding of a linguistic phenomenon, this mixed methods approach study examines English preposition use and its relationship to gender. Combining a large corpus quantitative analysis with qualitative interviews was the intention. The findings give valuable insights into preposition choice and how it is customarily affected by gender.

By scrutinizing prepositions, a revelation was made that shows how language diversity is affected by gender. The scrutiny also revealed a fine-grained distinction in gender differences concerning different linguistic contexts. In-depth interviews revealed personalized inclinations and sociolinguistic factors that played a part in causing these differences, ultimately informing a richer interpretation of the data.

Sociocultural factors play a significant role in shaping language and gender, as found in our study. By integrating our findings with existing literature, we deepen our comprehension of how cultural norms and socialization processes influence language use. Acknowledging gender as a sociocultural factor in linguistic analysis is crucial, and we advocate for inclusive linguistic practices based on our research.

Incorporating the outcomes of this research can lead to practical advantages for language education, communication strategies, and gender equity promotion. Teachers have the opportunity to establish more comprehensive learning settings by incorporating awareness of gender-based language differences into language instruction. Moreover, companies and groups can cater to the communication needs of various gender subgroups. Most notably,

this study adds to the broader socio-cultural conversation by highlighting how linguistic usage reflects and strengthens societal gender stereotypes and presumptions.

In recognizing the shortcomings of this research, it must be noted that the examination solely concentrates on the utilization of English prepositions and may not encompass the entire intricacies of gender differences in other linguistic components or alternate languages. Generalizing the results to the entire populace may be hindered by the sample size and composition of the participants. To further delve into this topic, subsequent studies ought to broaden their scope to encompass more comprehensive and multifarious samples, while also exploring diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

English preposition use and gender differences have been studied with a mixed methods approach providing insights that are valuable. The use of both qualitative interviews and quantitative analysis allowed for a complete understanding of this phenomenon. Further understanding of the role gender plays in shaping linguistic practices and language variation was aided by these findings. Incorporating diverse linguistic practices may encourage equitable gender communication. Exploring gender and language differences across various cultures and languages could deepen our understanding of this complex relationship. Upcoming research must continue to investigate these variances.

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## Appendix: Interview Questions

The following are examples of the semi-structured interview questions used to gather qualitative insights into the sociolinguistic influences on preposition use:

1. Can you describe your language learning experiences and how they may have influenced your use of prepositions?
2. How do you perceive the role of gender in language use, particularly in relation to prepositions?
3. Have you noticed any differences in how males and females use prepositions in your communication with others?
4. Can you share any experiences or cultural norms that you believe may have influenced your preposition use?
5. Do you feel that socialization processes have affected your use of prepositions? If so, in what ways?
6. How do you think preposition use may be linked to concepts of space, accuracy, or assertiveness in communication?

We designed these interview questions to encourage participants to reflect on their personal experiences and beliefs regarding gender differences in preposition use and provide qualitative insights into the sociolinguistic factors that may contribute to such differences.