Challenging the Binary
Abstract booklet

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Bach, Xavier and Louise Esher
Slotting non-binary determiners into the French inflectional system

In today’s society, increasing numbers of individuals identify openly as non-binary, and seek respectful recognition of this identity in linguistic interactions. Where the existing grammar or lexicon of a language do not provide for such recognition, communicative needs prompt the creation of novel forms. Yet the existence of specific forms does not in itself suffice for correct gendering of non-binary individuals: crucially, the forms must find acceptance in the general speech community as part of ordinary language use, so that any person interacting with non-binary individuals can readily deploy suitable linguistic expressions. To be viable (i.e. permit learning, memory, and unselconscious use), novel forms must fit readily into the existing linguistic system. As established by Bach & Esher (2023, under revision), analytic tools from descriptive linguistics prove invaluable in identifying what linguistic properties the forms should have (e.g. familiar phonotactics, transparent form-meaning relationship), and in pinpointing exactly where novel forms are required, so that all communicative needs can be met, while incurring minimal cognitive load associated with learning new forms.

We apply these principles in a case study of non-binary determiners (articles, demonstratives and possessives) within the morphosyntax of French, which has an obligatory two-way contrast between ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ grammatical gender, ordinarily correlated with social gender for human referents. For both spoken and written French, we identify where existing forms suffice, and where novel non-binary forms are required. We
review existing proposals for non-binary determiners (LVEQ 2017, Alpheratz 2018, Ashley 2019, LFDN 2022), examining their compatibility with native grammars of French, and exploring the extent to which they find acceptance with speakers, as evidenced by attested usage in online corpora, and speaker self-reports of usage and attitude. Our findings lay an informed foundation for developing viable strategies suited both to non-binary individuals and to the wider speech community.

References


Beeri, Sima
How to speak LGBT+ in Yiddish

The modern world is getting better at recognising and accepting diversity, and as the world changes, language must reflect those changes. This is often achieved by adding new words to a language, or making adjustments to its grammar. Yiddish has been left behind in this context, but it should be no exception to this process of growth and change. With grows in popularity of Yiddish today, it is clear that LGBT+ communities need to be accommodated. This presentation will attempt to provide and illustrate the necessary vocabulary to allow all social groups to converse in Yiddish with confidence and comfort.

As an academic, educator and language teacher, it is of the utmost importance to use Yiddish like any other language and to normalise the modern shifts and needs of language users today, especially young impressionable students. There are others for whom this type of glossary and expression are a political statement, or a platform to assert identity, for me it is an educational and a linguistic challenge, but it is also an opportunity to bring in this topic into mainstream education as ‘just one more topic which I incorporate in introducing the theme of family’.

This talk will be on incorporating this topic into education and how to go about introducing it in a language class.
The accompanying comprehensive glossary is under free access for people to use if they require such information or simply want to embrace inclusiveness and respect for themselves and others.

**Bindrim, Yvonne**

**Argumentation for and against means of gender-sensitive language across languages**

Against the background of increasing liberalism on the one hand and right-wing populism on the other, I examine the argumentation for and against strategies for gender-sensitive language (visibility of gender vs. neutralisation of gender) and the linguistic means to achieve it (derivation, compounding, rephrasing). The focus is on German, Swedish, Finnish and Estonian languages.

The Germanic languages German and Swedish have a more or less pronounced system of grammatical gender, i.e., gender can hardly not be communicated. Thus, they have completely different language-immanent prerequisites than the Uralic languages Estonian and Finnish, both without grammatical gender. In terms of their historical and cultural preconditions, however, languages of the same language family also differ and can take opposite paths in terms of strategies to achieve the same goal.

In German, one strategy of gender-sensitive language is making female persons visible through the mean of the suffix -in. As a side effect, though, this strategy reinforces the imagined binarity of gender. In Swedish, on the other hand, the mean of gender inflection is mostly considered outdated. Instead, the strategy is to use gender-neutral language by avoiding explicitly feminine endings.

Speakers of Finnish pride themselves on their (supposedly) gender-neutral language, as it does not have separate personal pronouns for ‘he’ and ‘she’. However, many job titles end in the Finnish equivalent of ‘man’. The same is true for Estonian. In contrast to the other languages and countries studied here, however, Estonia is clearly more value-conservative regarding gender issues.

Which strategies are being preferred in which language to achieve gender-sensitive language and by which linguistic means? How do proponents and opponents of gender-sensitive language argue for or against particular linguistic means?

For the presentation, some linguistic means for the development of gender-sensitive language will be chosen, and the argumentation of proponents and opponents analysed.

**Chowaniec, Ula (Urszula)**

**When pronouns are not enough? On queering language: the case of the Polish language**

Queering language... aims to discuss the development of queer-sensitive language changes in an overview of the Polish contexts, presenting selected examples of dealing with the inclusiveness in language and increasing the flexibility of usually very binary lexical, grammatical and syntactical structures.

The paper will discuss several attempts to introduce new linguistic solutions for non-binary utterances. At the core of our discussion are linguistic strategies for dealing with sexism and how it can be eradicated, including gender-neutral pronouns and feminitives, as well as the state’s linguistic policies of emancipation and the development of queer linguistic discourses.
Egorova, Tamara
Lenguaje inclusivo in Spanish as a tool for gender neutralization of speech: opinions of native speakers

Lenguaje inclusivo is a set of lexical, grammatical and stylistic techniques that allow you to compose a gender-unmarked text. For the Spanish language, this phenomenon is currently especially relevant, since, on the one hand, Spanish has grammatical genders, and in controversial situations (for example, when a mixed group of people is designated), the masculine gender prevails, as a result of which all other gender groups, including non-binary persons, are excluded from the discourse; on the other hand, there are changes in society that are not uniform in nature. Thus, we are witnessing a stage at which there are already well-established options within the community for removing gender labeling of speech, but the phenomenon is still new, and native speakers have the opportunity to choose one or another lexeme or one or another language technique; at the same time, since these variations have not yet been normalized, there are differences of opinion in society regarding the correctness and relevance of the use of lenguaje inclusivo, including depending on the scope of application.

In this talk, based on the material of the social network Twitter, we will look at examples of using lenguaje inclusivo in Spanish, and also analyze what response this language tool causes among Spanish-speaking users and what arguments are given by different sides.

Facchini, Igor
Re-languaging queer identities across spoken languages: what is lost in translation into Italian?

Overcoming binary norms in languages with grammatical gender has resulted in experimental and creative strategies against the linguistic and social erasure of non-binary people (Greco 2019). This paper will deal with one of the most recent and popular techniques in Italian LGBTQIA+ activist circles: schwa endings (-ə). The schwa is a neomorpheme that avoids bi-gendered word endings, in speech and writing alike (Sulis & Gheno 2022), and has also been increasingly featured in mainstream communication, both in translated and original texts, to convey the same degree of gender neutrality or non-conformity when standard techniques are not functional for such purposes. However, speaking (compared to writing) beyond the gender binary raises significant issues in Italian. By providing alternatives to longer gender-generic expressions, the schwa allows economy of language. Yet, it entails non-standard morphological changes. Hence, time advantage may be nullified by the cognitive load imposed on the speaker. To determine whether schwa endings could be a viable option to avoid misgendering queer identities, an experimental study was conducted with 12 conference interpreters who were instructed to use schwa endings for all words referring to people while translating orally from English into Italian. Conference interpreting was conceptualised as a testbed to probe the feasibility of non-binary linguistic forms by virtue of being a particularly cognitively demanding activity with high constraints (fidelity, time) and because of the challenging comparative perspective (Elmiger 2013) between English and Romance languages. After going through the interlinguistic and trans-cultural practices currently available in spoken Italian – indirect vs. direct non-binary language approaches (López 2022) – this presentation will provide a contrastive analysis of speeches in order to assess what tools (e.g., schwa, as well as others that emerged spontaneously) were implemented to deliver a faithful rendition of the original message and whether queer meaning was conveyed or lost in translation.
Hama, Yoko, Fernando Gonzalez Lesniak, Camille Braun, James Ramsburg, Alejandra Takahira

Teaching beyond the binary: instructor attitudes towards inclusive language in the L2 Spanish classroom

Traditionally, Spanish has a binary grammatical gender system (i.e. masculine and feminine), and gender identities outside of the conventional binary have been linguistically excluded. Multiple different approaches have been taken in an effort to achieve a more equal linguistic representation of all genders (e.g. adopting a new morpheme that is not associated with the binary genders as in ‘latinx’ ‘amig@’ or ‘todes’ instead of ‘latino’ ‘amigo’ or ‘todos’). Correlating to this linguistic and social movement, there has been a recent effort to teach inclusive language in language classrooms. For example, Parra and Serafini (2022) promote language instruction that allows linguistic representation of diverse gender identities since it results in improving students’ attitudes towards social inclusivity. However, this relatively recent development of gender-inclusive language is rarely reflected in instruction materials, and students who study Spanish as a foreign language in the U.S. are still less likely to be exposed to the gender-inclusive varieties.

Based on interviews of 45 Spanish instructors in universities located in a midwestern U.S. state, we analyzed the motivations and attitudes behind each instructor’s decision to incorporate (or not to incorporate) gender-inclusive language in the classroom. The majority of the interviewees have positive attitudes towards gender-inclusive language, and stated that they explicitly discuss the topic of genders in Spanish and gender-inclusive forms during the first week of class, no matter which level they teach. The instructors made the decision based on their own personal reflections, rather than following departmental guidelines. However, the majority of the participants do not follow up during the rest of the semester, except for implicitly using the gender-inclusive forms in written communication. They have reported that they have had some students who successfully acquired gender-inclusive language, but the majority of their students are not actively conscious about the gender-inclusive forms.

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(Why) do we need genderization in language? The gap between femininity and masculinity in contemporary Polish language

The Polish language has been plagued by numerous problems of a cultural and social nature since the fall of socialism. However, the problem of gender in language was developed much earlier, and in recent years it has become much more visible, which was the trigger for the creation of this speech.

The main purpose of the presentation is to find answers to the following questions:

1. Is it necessary to provide information about the object's gender, and if so, is the information needed in all registers of the discourse?
2. Is the Polish language ready to fill the gap between femininity and masculinity?
3. What are the assumptions of an inclusive language and what may be the consequences of their implementation?

In this talk, the author briefly presents the systemic limitations of the contemporary Polish language, drawing the linguistic background of the current state of the communication sphere. It also presents contentious points in defining sex and gender in language, focusing on the phenomenon of the so-called natural gender. Having outlined the linguistic and cultural-social context, the author presents the current communication strategies used by and towards non-binary people, in order to then develop the topic of the need to genderize language and consider possible methods of taming the non-binary gender divisions in language and their consequences for the communication sphere.

References


Hartman, Cleo, Drew Rusignuolo, Grant Santos, and Ben Papadopoulos

Gender in languages with verbal gender

The world’s languages encode normatively gendered meanings in grammatical categories to varying degrees (Papadopoulos, 2022). Languages with verbal gender morphology have received far less attention in this discussion, and their place along this spectrum of gender in language remains unknown. To this end, we present analyses of verbal gender morphology in three widely-spoken languages: Arabic, Hebrew, and Hindi. In all three languages, gender is differentially marked across verbal distinctions (e.g. tense, aspect, mood, person, number). For instance, gender is more prevalent throughout the verbal distinctions of Modern Standard Arabic, the adapted language of the Qur’aan, than in the modern spoken varieties of Arabic referred to as dialects. In dialect, gender is encoded in the templatic morphology used to conjugate verbs, though it is never marked in the first person, and no longer in the plural number (Abu-Chacra, 2018). Hebrew similarly features templatic verbal morphology, though gender is marked affixally. While marked throughout the present tense, gender is not distinguished in the first person nor the third person plural of past and future tense verb forms. Additionally, much of the morphology used in verbal paradigms is highly regular and, in the case of the present tense, shared between other grammatical categories, such as nouns and adjectives (e.g. the feminine plural suffix נות – ot; Glinert, 2005). Verbal gender distinctions are similarly differential in Hindi; for instance, gender is marked on past tense auxiliaries but not present tense auxiliaries, and in the presumptive mood, but not the subjunctive mood (Agnihotri, 2023). These patterns leave behind several neutral verb forms not marking masculine or feminine gender. The regularities in the verbal gender morphology of these three languages have led to specific innovations intended for nonbinary, trans, and other gender-nonconforming people; for instance, the combinatory gender suffixes נים – imot and נמן – emen for plural forms in Hebrew (Gross & Rivlin, 2023) and the revival of the
largely obsolete gender-neutral Modern Standard Arabic dual forms (e.g. هما huma ‘they [SG.],’ أنتما antuma ‘you’; Nassawiyat, 2022).

References


Hekanaho, Laura
Transgender and cisgender perspectives on 3rd person singular pronouns in English: exploring communicative functions

New pronouns and novel pronoun practices have been adopted in English, but which communicative functions do they serve? While the primary function of pronouns is referential, use of 3rd person singular pronouns may carry various functions in different contexts. For example, novel self-reference practices such as sharing one’s pronouns can function as a coming-out mechanism (e.g., Darwin 2017, Zimman 2019). In other-references, using the wrong pronouns has become a common source of misgendering.

This paper considers the communicative functions of 3rd person singular pronouns by comparing cisgender and transgender individuals’ experiences with pronouns, especially their views regarding the role of pronouns to identity. The data include open-answer survey responses from 96 transgender and 282 cisgender participants who elaborated on their relationship with pronouns, misgendering and language-based discrimination (author, 2020).

The qualitative data, comprising approximately 13 000 words, are explored with thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006), examining the participants’ personal experiences, meanings and realities. Drawing from the thematic analysis and the broader discourse, the communicative functions of pronouns are discussed particularly in relation to the broader framework on the linguistic construction of identity provided by Bucholtz and Hall (2010).

The analysis demonstrated that cisgender and transgender experiences with pronouns are often vastly different. Whereas most transgender participants embraced new pronouns as a way to reflect their identity, many cisgender participants linked pronouns to ‘biological’ properties in an uncomplicated fashion, further demonstrating a profound inability to relate to common transgender experiences, such as misgendering. Overall, the results highlight various important roles for pronouns. For example, they are employed in identity construction to claim, to reveal and to hide identities. Yet, pronouns are also utilized in regulating which identities are permissible, for example by attempts to denaturalize nonbinary pronouns — and identities.
The intricacies of gender in Indigenous languages of Latin America

In analyzing features of gender in the world’s languages, we must be sensitive to how gender is defined in local context, making sure to avoid installing presuppositions and taking into account varying conceptualizations of personhood and distinctive kinship structures (Lugones, 2020). To this end, we present analyzes of gender in four Indigenous languages of Latin America: Aymara, Nahuatl, Yaqui, and Yucatec Maya. Nouns referring to people in these languages encode many distinctions related to the cosmologies of the societies that speak them. In Aymara, gendered terms encode broader conceptualizations of personhood and kinship: for instance, the two most basic gender categories, chacha and warmi, are related to Andean concepts of gender complementarity and the cosmologically-organized unit of society called the ayllu (Weismantel & Wilhoit, 2019). In Nahuatl, as in Aymara and Yaqui, the compadrazgo social model dominates. A wider assortment of individuals is understood to be part of one’s immediate family than is typical of Western culture, and gender is not always considered in these kinship distinctions (Schroeder, 1998). Mayan culture’s complementary conceptualization of gender is rooted in societal roles more than individual identity. Personhood in Yucatec Maya is distinct from gender: described as a more general state of being, objects considered inanimate can take on personhood without being gendered (Jackson, 2019). In Yaqui, gendered terms resemble meanings found in the Western system because of the patriarchalization of the social structure caused by colonialism (Shimkin, 2023). Other Yaqui terms encode different ideas of personhood such as “Yaquiness”. Additionally, as in all four languages, there are gender-neutral terms for certain kinship relations not found in many Western languages of which gender-nonconforming and other queer speakers may avail themselves. This paper focuses on languages frequently ignored in the study of linguistic gender and intends to expand analyses that bias the binary gender system as a crosslinguistic default value.

References


**Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak, Agnieszka**  
*The gender binary challenging the non-binary in Polish*

The shifts in language use and structures have been occurring in Polish society and the Polish language over the last two decades as a consequence of changing attitudes and aspirations (Szpyra-Kozłowska 2019). As a language with grammatical gender to respond to the speakers’ needs of constructing their gender identities, Polish has proved a particular challenge, structurally and socially.

The paper aims to juxtapose two, apparently conflicting, developments: (1) toward more equality in referring to female and male identities, with a focus on feminitives, i.e. nouns, pronouns, adjectives and verbal forms marked for feminine gender, and (2) targeting the representation of non-binary identities, which involves more complex linguistic choices (gender-neutral constructions and/or neo-pronouns). The former strengthens the gender binary, the latter is to transcend it.

The orthographic convention to mark language user’s openness and respect for social diversity (gender-wise and other) seems the smallest of difficulties. The others refer to the significant complexity of the morphological system, which makes numerous options debatable for acknowledging feminine identities and rejecting the established norm of the masculine generic (Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak 2019). Additionally, the use of existing gender-neutral forms requires some promoting, but to popularize one of many new proposals for gender non-binary expression (notably the neuter grammatical gender forms to refer to humans) constitutes the biggest challenge (Misiek 2021).

In this context, we will discuss the process of striving toward equity and implementing inclusive diction. The recent drafting of the Gender Equality Plan for a large Polish university, itself a challenging process, has called for corresponding language use recommendations, whose preparation is in progress.

We will discuss the dilemmas faced by the authors of the recommendations for gender-inclusive language use at a university. Their suggestions are seriously questioned by members of the community as well as the authors’ own partialities. The presentation will include excerpts from a public debate, testifying to the negotiation of meaning and gender identity alike.

**References**


**Kjaran, Jón Ingvar and Branislav Bédi**  
*Queer linguistic activism and production of agentic space of praxis for L2 students*

Icelandic is in its morphological and grammatical structure highly binary in terms of gender. With increasing awareness of diverse gender identities, non-binary words have entered the Icelandic lexicon in the past decade. For instance, the personal pronouns hán – hé – hín for
singular they and þau for plural they are today used by non-binary/genderqueer individuals for expressing their gender identity. Here, we focus on how a rigidly gendered language has become a space of linguistic activism regarding gender and sexualities and created agentic space of praxis for learners of Icelandic as a foreign language (L2), particularly for those who identify outside the hegemonic gender norms. First, we trace the recent history of linguistic activism regarding gender and how it has been opposed by some members of the linguistic establishment, who, drawing on Anderson (2006), still perceive it within the frames of “imagined community”. Secondly, we focus on how this kind of activism has both influenced L2 Icelandic learners in developing their linguistic skills and created agentic space of praxis for them to develop and express their own gender identity. We use interviews with L2 learners, documents and media discourse, drawing on queer linguistic approach (Sauntson, 2021) to discourse and language to explore queer linguistic activism and how queer and non-queer L2 learners expand their multilingual sense of self (Knisely and Paiz, 2021) and construct agentic spaces of praxis for their gender identity. We focus on grammar in its widest sense (Derrida, 2016) and how grammar intersects with gender linguistically and discursively, in which social realities and gendered bodies are produced. This enables us to reflect on current linguistic politics and how this intersects with gender and sexuality in the global north, and on the micro perspective of the L2 classroom as agentic space of praxis in terms of gender identity.

Kiss, Nikolett

Singular they in the Hungarian EFL language classroom

As gender-inclusive language use is becoming more important in education and academia, EFL learners’ pronoun usage gains more attention, showing that some learners are familiar with and use singular they (Stormbom 2019, Ebrahimí & Hosseini 2021), while others claim that learners either reject it or are not familiar with it (Abudalbuh 2012, Ma et al 2022). Only few studies have been conducted so far with EFL learners of grammatically genderless language backgrounds (Ma et al 2022), thus this study aims to investigate Hungarian (a grammatically genderless language) EFL learners’ pronoun usage strategies, especially singular they, and how explicit education on singular they and inclusive language use influences pronoun choices. Furthermore, Hungary is considered culturally conservative and linguistically prescriptive, which factors have been shown to increase the rejection of singular they (or equivalent forms in other languages) among native speakers (Gustafsson et al. 2015, Bradley 2020). In this research, two mixed-methods studies are conducted on the same pool of participants, an experimental study (N=48) on pronoun usage, and a pre-test post-test design (N=21-36) to test the effectiveness of teaching singular they. This study finds that most participants use singular they in colloquial language. The most important variable in the distribution of epicene pronouns is definiteness, but gender bias, sexism and length of utterance are also significant. In the results of experimental test, specific (non-binary) they is absent, despite qualitative evidence for acceptance. Finally, the main study shows that giving explicit instruction on the usage of singular they within the framework of inclusive language use increases the acceptance of this pronoun both in an epicenic and in specific uses, and it reduces male-biased language use.

References


Kuusik, Aet
Contested and appreciated. How is the word kväär used in Estonian language?
At the end of the 19th century, categories of sex and sexuality became more distinguished and elaborate (Cameron, D., & Kulick, D. (2008). Language and sexuality (6th printing). Cambridge University Press, pp. 25). During the 20th century, the words lesbian, gay, bisexuality, transgender, and queer were introduced into European languages. The Estonian equivalent of queer, kväär, was introduced in Estonian in the 2010s, and since 2019, it can be found in the Estonian Language Institute’s web dictionary Sõnavääkb. The form of the word kväär contains a construction through the meaning 'wrong' or 'untrue,' referring to its English meaning and genesis in an attempt to capture the episteme of queer in English: the etymology of queer in English refers to homophobia and the reversal of its meaning. In this paper, I will discuss the adaption of queer from Anglo-American to Eastern European and Finno-Ugric social and linguistic contexts. I will analyze how is kväär used in public texts that are presented in Estonian National Corpus. Then I will compare these developments to how the language users who identify as a part of the LGBT community use and conceptualize the word, according to an online survey I conducted in October 2022.

Lalhmangaihzauva, Z. D.
Language and gender identities: the Mizo paradigm
This paper attempts to explore issues pertaining to non-binary, gender-inclusive, and gender-non-conforming identities in Mizo language. Mizo is a language spoken by the Mizo tribes who predominantly inhabit the state of Mizoram in Northeast India. Unlike English and some other languages, Mizo language has gender-neutral pronouns. On the other hand, all Mizo names are gendered into male and female. The name of a male always ends with the letter ‘a’ while the name of a female always ends with the letter ‘i’. This clear binary created by the
system of naming contributes to the rigidity of the gender binary among the Mizos. The absence of gender identities outside the male/female binary in traditional Mizo society is deeply inter-related with their absence in the Mizo linguistic paradigm. This linguistic imposition of gender binary has also been addressed by Arundhati Roy in her novel, “In Urdu, the only language she knew, all things, not just living things but all things- carpets, clothes, books, pens, musical instruments- had a gender. Everything was either masculine or feminine, man or woman...Was it possible to live outside language?” (8) In light of Jerome Bruner’s view that “Cultural products, like language and other symbolic systems mediate thought and place their stamp on our representations of reality” (3), this paper attempts to explore the historical, cultural, and linguistic aspects of the Mizo society with an attempt to understand the significant role played by language vis-à-vis non-binary, gender-inclusive, and gender-non-conforming identities in the Mizo society. It shall also attempt to explore issues pertaining to the absence of consolidated efforts towards formulation of linguistic terms for gender identities other than the male/female binary as well as gender-inclusive vocabulary, and explore ways in which Mizo language may progress in a more gender-inclusive direction.

References


Lederer, Jenny
The metaphorical models of gender transition and their relationship to genderqueer labels in English
Gender transition, like other cultural issues, is both conceptually and politically complicated. As illustrated in a wave of metaphor studies in and out of academia, the models used to inform personal experience have wide-ranging political effects (Lakoff, 2002, 2009; Tibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011, 2013). Because transgender and genderqueer individuals make up a frequently ostracized segment of the American population, experiencing disproportionate discrimination and violence (Kenagy, 2005; Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2002; Stotzer, 2009), attention toward the genderqueer conceptual experience is a first step in exploring where this marginalization originates at a societal level. With the rapid increase of computer-mediated discourse, personal descriptions of transition in the form of online blogs constitute a growing portion of discourse on gender and transition, helping to shape the public’s perception of this identity.

In this paper, I show how the conceptual models of gender and transition derive, in part, from a set of repeated metaphors. The models include several metaphors that share spatial features in their source domains: transition is a journey; the body is a physical barrier between internal and external self (the divided-self metaphor); and a process of belabored decision-making (often communicated through the metaphor decision-making is weighing). In addition to language data, I use public video blogs to examine how co-speech gesture aligns with spoken and written narrative to support a spatially based representation of gender identity. Repeated gestural patterns include inward facing palms used to mime fictive category boundaries, gestural mapping of motion across metaphorical gender regions, manual deictic reference to interior and exterior self, and distancing from past gender assignment signaled through emblematic scare quotes. Both language and gesture combine
to reveal that gender, as a metaphorical concept, is based on a spatial model in which two gender categories, male and female, are understood as discrete, bounded regions in space.

This metaphorical construction of gender categories manifests in newer, commonly used phraseology for gender identity in English: non-binary, non-conforming, agender, among others. Many of these popular gender labels rely on the contestation of the metaphorical space-based model, signaling that the speaker does not “fit in” to either of the two spaces. Not only is this contestation model interesting from a conceptual and linguistic standpoint, it also has political consequences. If someone is neither in the “male” or “female” spaces, then where are they? I argue that this conceptual puzzle is what helps to explain significant and problematic public rejection of genderqueerness. In a final portion of the presentation, I discuss the language of “contestation” and some alternative labels which rely on additive models, like bi-gender, mixed gender, and two spirit, and I lay out the conceptual consequences of this emerging lexicon in relationship to gender inclusivity and advocacy.

Lesniak, Fernando

**Preferred gender-inclusive language used by Spanish speakers in the United States**

Gender-neutral and gender-inclusive language have been gaining momentum and the way we use language to talk about ourselves is rapidly changing across the world. Spanish language is a masculine dominant binary language. Even though attempts to reform the language to address the lack of gender neutral and inclusive terms date to the early 2000s, the Royal Academy of Spanish Language prevents any changes related to language inclusivity or neutrality (RAE, 2020). This current study presents the results of a survey conducted in early 2022 about preferences and attitudes towards gender inclusive pronouns by Spanish speakers in the United States. The researcher looked for participants who were both native and non-native speakers of Spanish. The survey was delivered via social media and its results indicated how complex preferences regarding gender neutral and gender inclusive language among native Spanish speakers are. This session will present the quantitative data collected and the intricacies in qualitative responses regarding this topic. Results indicate that the use of gender-neutral pronouns like “elle’ and “nosotres” are in general, becoming more common by Spanish speakers. Gender non-conforming individuals reported that the use of traditional binary pronouns is still acceptable. Also, even though some Spanish speakers still feel comfortable using the masculine gender to denote gender neutrality, the use of “-e” is becoming more common in pronouns, nouns, and adjectives. Spanish speakers are also finding gender neutral alternatives to address gender neutrality whenever possible. Participants offered words that already lack gender (words that already end in “e”, or collective nouns) when talking about groups of people. Finally, participants weighed in the use of the term “latinx” as a gender-neutral option, including preferred alternatives to the term.

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Lindeman, Meri

**Varying gender, varying speech: a folk linguistic study on genderfluid speakers of Finnish**

This presentation examines how five genderfluid speakers of Finnish conceptualize the relationship between their gender fluidity (experiencing frequent changes in their gender)
and situational variation in speech. How do they believe being genderfluid influences their way of speaking? Which situational factors impact the ways they do gender in speech? What are some other identities that intersect with their genders in forming their idiolects?

The study mainly draws from folk linguistics, queer theories, and intersectionality. The data consists of interviews and pre-structured recording diaries. These are examined through qualitative content analysis of speech, writing, and drawings.

The study suggests that the participants rarely seek to purposefully alter their speech according to their current gender or to linguistically mark transitions between their different genders. However, the participants who had experienced speech-related gender dysphoria had consciously sought to modify their speech.

The most consistent and prominent linguistic features were non-dependent on current gender, or genderfluidity specifically. Instead, these features were associated with non-normative gender identity more broadly. These features included e.g., using specialized vocabulary around the topics of gender and sexuality, preferring gender-neutral expressions when referring to self and others, and gender-related jokes and memes. The study suggests that even though a genderfluid style is not likely to exist, a nonbinary style of Finnish might be emerging.

Situational factors that influence the participants’ speech were perceived safety or danger, interlocutors’ attributes, being gendered by others, the (ir)relevance of gender in the situation, and the genderfluid person’s condition or state (such as gender dysphoria or euphoria). The participants’ gender identities intersect with their personality traits, hobbies and interests, social and work roles, sexual and romantic identities, relationship styles, politics and values, disabilities, and class in forming their idiolects.


Lúthersdóttir, Helga Hlaðgerður
Who am I, what am I? Gender expression and gender identity in the Icelandic language
As in so many other countries, growing recognition and understanding of gender-non-conforming, non-binary, queer, and other gender identities have led to shifts in language use and structures in Iceland. Icelandic is spoken by less than 400,000 people and the general consensus of the nation is that it is our duty and responsibility to preserve the language. It is also the general consensus that to do so we must be able to use Icelandic in every aspect of daily life, be it official, professional, or personal, and that the language must therefore be accessible, flexible, and adaptable to all changes of contemporary society. But general consensus is indeed general and not universal; many a new adaptation has been met with heated debate and opposition, and this is very much the case for the adaptation of non-binary and gender-neutral terminology in Icelandic.

Like English, Icelandic has three genders, masculine, feminine, and neuter. Unlike English, however, all nouns are gendered with adjectives, numbers, and pronouns all following suit. There is no correlation between biological gender and grammatical except for people, and even there the term for child (barn) is neuter. Yet, like English, the neuter pronoun is primarily used to refer to non-human concepts, making it poorly suited as a gender-neutral pronoun. Add to this a common use of indefinite pronouns in the masculine form, a general usage of ‘maður’ (man) to equally mean male/human/one, as well as forming the ending of numerous compounds nouns for professions and activities, and it becomes clear that despite the language encompassing all grammatical structures needed for gender-neutral discourse, tradition and limiting vocabulary complicate such developments drastically.
Yet, non-binary, gender-inclusive, and gender-non-conforming expression is persistently gaining ground in Icelandic. For a teacher of Icelandic, this means the language taught is no longer the language learnt. It means following up on developments and evaluating when a terminology has become accepted enough for it to be adapted for teaching, it means revising outdated teaching materials, it means having honest discussions about gender identities with students, and it means reporting unflinchingly on the debates surrounding these developments in Iceland. This talk will analyse the Icelandic ‘gender debate’ and investigate the numerous challenges and rewards it poses for teachers and learners of the language today.

Macias, Nicky

Mouthing constructions as social indexes of gender in ASL pronouns

This paper describes a preliminary study that focuses on the nonmanual markers, precisely mouth actions, produced in tandem with pronominal references in American Sign Language (ASL). While it has become a common belief far and wide within the ASL community and the field of signed language linguistics that ASL pronouns are “genderless” or unmarked in terms of gender (Liddell 2000; McBurney 2002; Sakel 2005), this paper provides evidence to the contrary for third-person singular ASL pronouns by way of mouthing constructions. Very recently, mouthing constructions have been observed to serve morpho-phonological, morpho-syntactic, and other linguistic functions across signed languages (Bismath, in press).

Rather than taking a stand on the specific linguistic convention that mouthing constructions seen produced with ASL pronouns may be, the author provides evidence these constructions serve as social indexes of gender while presenting rationale as to the significance the presence that such social indexes may have on ASL discourse, especially for transgender and gender non-conforming signers.

In recognizing the reality that Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing ASL signers are often multimodal and multilingual (Emmorey et al. 2008; Allard & Chen-Pichler 2018) the presence of these mouthing constructions seems to result from signers’ employment of their full semiotic repertoires. In other words, these mouthing constructions are the result of translanguaging practices in ASL communities (Kusters 2021). Further, using the tenets of sociocultural and trans linguistics, this paper observes that mouthing constructions co-articulated on third-person singular pronouns function as social indexes of gender (Hall & Bucholtz 2005; Zimman 2018; Zimman 2021). In noting this, the author advocates for a moral obligation to recognize the social indexing of gender in ASL pronouns as a mechanism of gender affirmation and potentially gender-based linguistic violence (i.e., misgendering).

In this preliminary investigation, the author conducted analysis of four open-source ASL videos, three of which were produced by Gallaudet University and one by MELIMIRA. While three videos were analyzed in their entirety, the fourth video was analyzed for up to four minutes of content. 20 mouthing constructions tokens co-articulated over third-person singular pronouns were annotated in ELAN using Johnston and Van Roekel’s (2012) mouth action coding schema. The findings revealed that complete articulations of M-type (mouthing) mouth actions often accompany ASL pronouns (especially for third-person singular), with some interesting exceptions observed. This study highlights a typical combination where the manual pronominal reference is unmarked in terms of gender, but the mouthing construction completely articulates the gender of the referent, thereby socially indexing the gender identity of the respective referent. To illustrate this point, Figure 1 shows the most typical example.
The author utilizes sociocultural and trans linguistics principles (Zimman 2017) to argue for the ethical foundation of acknowledging the social indexing of gender in ASL pronouns to prevent linguistic abuse of marginalized communities. This paper offers a unique perspective on the intersection of sign language linguistics, semiotics, and gender studies, beginning the conversation regarding the actual and potential gender-affirming and gender-invalidating language practices that affect transgender, nonbinary, gender-diverse, Deaf, and signing communities. This also brings implications for the need of ASL pronoun acknowledgment, introduction, and practice.

**Marsolier, Marie-Claude, Priscille Touraille, and Marc Allassonnière-Tang**

**A new epicenization solution for the French language**

French has a sex-based (feminine/masculine) distinction that is reflected in grammatical gender and marked on nouns. This binary distinction is thus constantly asserted in discourse. Following the growing philosophical queer and non-binary identifications, the need to create an epicene way of speaking and writing has been addressed in the French community (Livia 2001; Coutant et al. 2015; Ashley 2019; Swamy & Mackenzie 2022). New strategies propose the creation of an additional grammatical gender category that does not mark the sex/gender of human referents. For example, Davy Borde and Alpheratz have suggested a large number of alternative morphemes characterizing this third grammatical gender, that they have called “universal” and “neutral”, respectively (Borde 2016; Alpheratz 2018). As a simpler solution we propose to use the morpheme i as a marker for what we have named the “hors-sexe” (gender-blind, literally ‘outside sex’) grammatical gender (Marsolier et al., submitted).

In French, derived or inflected forms can generally be schematized in the singular as: feminine (F) form = lexical base + e (e.g. ‘une candidate’ [a.F candidate.F]), and masculine (M) form = lexical base + ø (‘un candidat’ [a.M candidate.M]). We propose to add a third, hors-sexe (HS) form = lexical base + i (‘uni candidati’ [a.HS candidate.HS]). Such a solution is much more compact than existing systems. It is applicable in both writing and speaking. It does not require new typographic characters. Furthermore, it does not erase existing binary gender categories. It provides a third option.

Preliminary online tests designed with the software PsychoPy indicate that a brief learning phase leads to high accuracy rates in the production of gender-blind forms (more than 85%). Moreover, a software that converts standard texts to gender-blind speech will be deployed with the infrastructure ORTOLANG (« Outils et Ressources pour un Traitement Optimisé de la LANGue », https://www.ortolang.fr).

**Maser-Clarke, Tabitha**

**Gender-inclusive Spanish and the RAE: between el, la, le and everything in between**

According to the Spanish authority on its language, the Real Academia Española (the Royal Spanish Academy, or RAE), alternatives to binary, gender-specific language are “artificial, unnecessary, far-fetched and even ridiculous; a series of resources whose consistency would be impossible to apply in certain contexts.” (Bengoecha, 2011, p.40) The debate around gender-inclusive language is not a new one in Spain, where the use of the masculine generic has been criticised for it’s so-called ‘invisibilisation’ of women, thus sparking the introduction of potential alternatives to this androcentric language use. With the gradual acceptance and recognition of genderqueer, gender-neutral and other non-binary gender identities, these alternatives have been further broadened. This paper will consider what alternatives there are and how these are being accepted, promoted, quashed and denied within Spanish society.
This paper will analyse data taken from a survey of 268 participants conducted by the author in 2018 to demonstrate varying responses to alternatives to binary language and attempt to gauge how these attitudes are affecting daily language use. This paper will also seek to understand the role of the RAE in either promoting or inhibiting linguistic change, drawing in particular on its 2020 report on the use of inclusive language in the Spanish Constitution. I argue that whilst many in Spain adjust to the concept of gender-inclusive language, and in particular, the younger generations make a conscious decision to be more inclusive, it remains a conscious decision and not a natural evolution of linguistic change. Moreover, the value placed upon the RAE’s recommendations further inhibit formal change which would be needed at an educational level to introduce change at a young age to firmly cement changes to traditional grammar and spelling. The intention for this research is to investigate both attitudes towards the use of gender-inclusive language in Spanish and speakers’ proclivity for actively employing these alternatives in their daily life; in addition to understanding the potential obstacles impeding the process.

**Miltersen, Ehm**

**Danish gender-inclusive pronouns**

Similarly to other European languages, Danish has seen an increase in the use of gender-inclusive pronouns and pronoun-sharing practices in recent years. The most commonly used nonbinary pronouns in present Danish are singular de, hen, and den (Miltersen 2018). These three pronouns are, respectively, parallel to English singular they, loaned from Swedish hen (Sendén et al. 2021), and a semantic extension of the common gender 3rd person singular pronoun. The pronouns emerged in their current use during the late 2000s and early 2010s; but prior to this, a number of other gender-inclusive pronouns, such as høn, hyn, and hæn, have been used, discussed, or proposed in Denmark (Miltersen 2022). Based on a series of studies conducted between 2017 and 2022, this paper seeks to provide an overview of Danish gender-inclusive pronouns, primarily those in use today as nonbinary pronouns, but also those that came before. Drawing on various types of data, including public and private documents (Bowen 2009), natural conversation (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2018), and survey results, the studies collectively indicate that while hen and den were the first to be used as nonbinary pronouns, singular de has rapidly overtaken them in popularity during the last approximately five years. Further, singular de is frequently used as a non-gender-specifying or generic pronoun, while other pronouns such as hen and høn tend to highlight gender or the lack thereof as a salient discursive element (Miltersen 2020). The paper discusses possible reasons for the differences in viability between the “new” and “old” Danish gender-inclusive pronouns, including their relationships to existing pronouns in Danish and related languages, the circumstances in which they emerged, and cultural changes regarding the visibility of and attitudes toward nonbinary persons.

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Degendering and (de)politicization: gender-focussed language reform in a North American social partner dance community

Gender-neutral language has been a common tactic used by anti-(cis)-sexist language reformers, and such efforts help to reduce gender related microaggressions, and are argued to promote social change largely through how they draw attention to the issue at stake and politicize language choices (Cameron 1995). However, politicization of language is also frequently cited in resistance to reforms (Blaubergs, 1980; Cameron, 1995; Fairclough, 2003). Hence, activists may face competing priorities between raising awareness and mitigating language ideological resistance.

This paper uses Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992) to explore discourses around (de)gendered language use in nine months of participant observation and twenty interviews with participants in a West Coast Swing dance community stretching across central Canada and adjacent US regions. This community is undergoing a change which has sought to remove traditionally gendered linguistic reference to and restrictions on the roles of leader and follower within dance partnerships. My research finds that this degendering movement has transformed previously normative language choices (e.g., “girls”, generic “she” for followers; “guys”, “he” for leaders), into marked political choices. Some participants now orient to gendered language as microaggressive, but nonetheless, many others downplay personal impact. Instead, degendered language is argued to be the "right" choice because it (1) facilitates hypothetical others’ inclusion, (2) increases accuracy, and (3) aligns language with broader societal change. These accounts closely correspond with what Cameron (1995) refers to as “liberal” (as opposed to “radical”) approaches to language reform. Further, participants often excuse others (and even their own) gendered language use as part of an understandable learning curve rather than malicious or careless behaviour. Thus, this case study offers a window not only into how language becomes recognized as discriminatory when alternatives emerge, but also how supporters of alternatives nonetheless engage in discourses that reduce the politicization of the language reform itself.

Paglialunga, Letizia
Inclusivity without neutrality: performing non-binarism on Instagram in Italian

Non-binary gender identities have gained increasing visibility in recent years, challenging the traditional binary gender norms that have been deeply ingrained in a large number of cultures. Overcoming gender-binary limitations in romance languages represents a challenging matter. An arena which has proved a particularly fruitful ground for self-
expression is social media, which have become a prime locus where non-binary individuals can freely express their identities, and attempt to challenge traditional gender norms.

The Italian language is a highly gendered language, where every noun has a specific gender assigned to it. This arguably limits the possibility of describing one’s gender as completely neutral, or outside/beyond the binary. The present study aims to investigate the linguistic strategies involved in the performance of non-binary Italian creators on social media to carry out a representation of their gender identity to an audience.

Drawing on a qualitative analysis of Instagram posts, this study aims to show how non-binary Italian creators use language in order to describe and express their gender identity. The paper’s methodology uses Computer Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) to analyze a corpus of Instagram posts by Italian creators that explicitly identify themselves as non-binary. By applying discourse analysis, and investigating social media as a means for gender performance, the study aims to identify the most common linguistic strategies used by non-binary Italian creators to represent their gender identity and overcome the limits Italian language inevitably imposes.

In conclusion, the present paper hopes to provide a nuanced analysis of how non-binary Italian Instagram creators challenge binary gender norms linguistically on social media.

Paolini, Chiara, Danielle Metilli, Beatrice Melis, and Marta Fioravanti
Are you discussing my gender? A corpus-based analysis of Wikidata’s community discussions around non-binary identities

The Wikidata Gender Diversity (WiGeDi; Metilli & Paolini, in press) project aims to study gender diversity in the Wikidata knowledge base. Wikidata is a collaborative, multilingual project edited by a wide, international community of users (Vrandečić & Krötzsch, 2014), and one of its goals is to represent biographical knowledge about people, including their gender and their preferred pronouns. As it works towards this goal, the Wikidata community needs to come together and overcome language and cultural barriers to agree on a common set of guidelines around the representation of gender.

Unfortunately, there is no consistent agreement on the treatment of gender identity in Wikidata. The users discuss internally how to describe and conceptualise gender identities, and this issue is reflected in other projects that rely on data from Wikidata, such as Wikipedia.

In this presentation, we will explore how Wikidata users engage with and discuss the representation of the non-binary identities on Wikidata. We are interested in showing how linguistic and cultural issues have often led to conflicts in user discussions about non-binary gender identities, and how users worked towards a shared resolution. To achieve this goal, we will perform a corpus analysis of the Wikidata Gender Talks – English (WiGeTa-En) corpus, a collection of English-language user discussions around gender topics, gathered from Wikidata discussion pages.

We will first describe the corpus and how it was compiled using semi-automatic techniques. Inspired by the corpus-assisted discourse studies framework (Partington, Duguid and Taylor 2013), we will focus on if/how users tried to use a more inclusive language in the discussions. Finally, we will track the evolution of the Wikidata community towards a greater awareness of issues around gender representation, and the inclusion of a wider spectrum of gender identities. To do so, we relied on topic model analysis (Blei, Ng & Jordan, 2003) to understand how the discussions around non-binary identities developed over time.
“Can I be genderqueer and a woman?”: Trans logics and agency in gender and pronoun use

A common refrain in trans and non-binary communities is that pronouns are not gender. This understanding of gender indexicality reflects a range of ideologies concerning pronoun use among trans and non-binary individuals, such as the understanding that neither gender identity nor presentation determine the pronouns an individual might use (Zimman, 2019; Conrod, 2019). And yet gendered pronouns are not necessarily decoupled entirely from social gender: besides being an obvious source of misgendering (McLemore, 2015), trans and non-binary speakers may have varying preferences, allowances, or expectations for what pronouns others use with them that are informed by multiple factors, including how their gender is perceived their interlocutors. Through a discourse analysis of interviews conducted with English speakers who use non-binary pronouns (e.g., singular they/them, neopronouns like xe/xem), this paper examines how these participants use language to both destabilize and reinforce ideologies concerning the ways that pronouns are tied to social gender.

Our analysis focuses on the early moments of our interviews as the interviewer is collecting demographic information and interviewees engage in the accountable work (Rapley, 2001) of categorizing their gender identity “for the record” (cf. Bucholtz, 2011) in the institutional context of the interview. While asking for participant gender in social scientific research is often taken for granted as a rote question inviting a straightforward response, our data illustrate the amount of interactional and identity work that can go into the negotiation of gender positionality in the context of the research interview, particularly when working with non-binary, genderqueer, and other gender diverse populations. We argue that such negotiations of identity work to disrupt cis-hetero epistemologies focused on how pronouns directly index gender and embody trans logics (Zimman, 2019) regarding the possibilities for agency in the linguistic production of identity.

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Ramazanova, Aisha

Korean queer people: linguistic (un)belonging in the context of globalization

The current socio-political state of the world suggests that globalization had a huge impact on the way we perceive identity, how the discourses around identity are created and how one type of discourse overpowers the other. In times like these with constant noise of information
and discourse it is important to highlight the experiences of those who might be left on the margins.

The participants of the study identify as queer Korean people. Queerness is often seen as a product of the Western world unapplicable to the non-Western societies. While Western concepts and discourse did penetrate the queer discourses and languages around the world with its language mainly being English, it is crucial to understand that it rarely stays in its original form when it enters a new global context. This paper aims to see how identity, discourse and language are shaped in the globalizing world and which dimensions of belonging and unbelonging play important roles in the formation of linguistic identity.

This study utilizes queer theory and critical discourse analysis as applied to qualitative methods of data analysis (Leap 2015, Wozolek 2019). Semi-structured interviewing was chosen as an appropriate method of interviewing for this study, as it allows the participants to speak freely without feeling like they have to follow a strict guideline.

In the narratives analysed in this study, being able to consume content in English is portrayed as either the only way to find out about LGBTQ+ identities, or a route to earlier self-realization and self-identification. For Koreans who have mainly lived in Korea, English was a tool to search for more spaces where they belonged to, to find community and to build bonds. They also experienced alienation that was often a consequence of their ability to speak English: e.g., they struggled with expressing their identity properly in Korean because of the lack of proper Native Korean terms, or they couldn’t speak about their identity or queer-related issues in Korean (for example, in public) for fear of facing queerphobia.

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Rathje, Marianne
De, hen, crazy or cool: experiences and attitudes towards Danish gender-neutral pronouns
Danish is an underexplored language when it comes to gender-neutral language and language users' attitudes towards it. Exceptions are the works of Miltersen (2018, 2022) on gender-neutral pronouns, which, however, have been studied exclusively from a non-binary perspective.

In my paper, I will present a study of a broad sample of Danes' experiences with and attitudes towards gender-neutral language conducted in the fall of 2022. The study consisted of an online survey distributed to selected target groups with a geographical, job, and age distribution. 3911 respondents participated in the study.

Regarding experience, most respondents (24%) answered that they knew some (peripherally) who would like to be addressed with it, or that they knew about gender-neutral pronouns from the media (21%). Thus, the experience of using gender-neutral pronouns in the general population is not great.

When it came to respondents' attitudes towards gender-neutral pronouns, the majority of them (30%) had negative attitudes (e.g., "It's crazy"), 20% accepted gender-neutral pronouns, but with reservations (e.g., "I don't understand it, but want to treat people with respect"), and only 19% were positive towards them (e.g., "It's so cool that you find something that fits you").

Respondents were also asked which gender-neutral pronoun they preferred, and there is a difference between respondents who are connected to the LGBT+ community (18%)
and those who are not. The group that is connected to the LGBT+ community prefers the gender-neutral pronoun "de," which already exists in Danish as a pronoun in the 3rd person plural and is a Danish translation of the English "they." Respondents' justification for this choice is primarily that this pronoun is not a neo-pronoun that appears artificial. The respondents outside of the LGBT+ community (82%) prefer the Swedish non-binary pronoun "hen." The primary justification for this choice is that it is confusing that "de" normally refers to plural.

The survey thus indicates that there is a gap between those who wish to be referred to with gender-neutral pronouns and the rest of Danish society when it comes to gender-neutral pronouns and experiences, attitudes, and preferred pronoun variants.

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**Roberts, Jess**

*Le français non-binaire: speaking, surviving, living*

Whether explicitly naming themselves as socio-linguistics or not, French theorists, feminists, humans living in the world, all demonstrate an understanding that language can be a source of oppression, resistance and/or survival. The answer to ‘what is at stake in language' is, precisely, everything. However, to refine this statement for the purpose of this talk, I will focus on the epistemic and gendered social effects of the presence and absence of Non-Binary French and the ways in which it is mobilised to carve out linguistic and affective strategies of survival that both minimise misgendering and manage personal safety. This project will take a qualitative approach to delve into the unexplored intersubjective experiences of non-binary francophones. I will show that Non-Binary French is a knowledge of survival in its provision of identity validation, creation of community, possibility for political change and as an avenue for trans joy.

**Rott, Julian Andrej**

*A preliminary typology of neopronominal innovation strategies*

With gender non-conforming and non-binary identities gaining more recognition, linguistic communities are faced with the challenge of finding an appropriate means of reference. For languages with grammatical gender, this plays out most visibly in the pronominal domain. Queer communities have been working actively towards the creation of more equal grammatical representation, and the effects of these efforts are becoming increasingly visible. In this study, we analyse the emergent phenomenon of neopronouns in 11 languages and present a preliminary, descriptive typology of their formation. The findings suggest the existence three overarching strategies of innovation:

1. Resemanticized pronouns give preexisting forms with a new, gender-neutral meaning (e.g. English they, Arabic huma/intuma, Dutch die/hen/hun).
2. Disruptive pronouns are purposefully given unexpected features as an activist means of calling attention to discrimination. This may happen orthographically and/or phonologically, often using the glyph $\langle x \rangle$ and possibly its phonologic value as an iconic marker (e.g. German xier, Spanish ellx, Chinese X-tā).

3. Recombinative pronouns are formed from segments of established pronouns (e.g. Swedish hen, Icelandic hán, French iel, Welsh ŵ).

Resementicized and recombinative pronouns (e.g. English they, Swedish hen, Icelandic hán) have so far seen the most wide-spread adoption in their general communities, possibly due to achieving minimal ambiguity with maximal domain-specific structural conformity. However, each strategy has functional advantages which may interact with specific societal or in-group codes.

The impact of a shift in societal categories on closed-class forms has been observed previously in English and Dutch, where socioeconomic change lead to the self-contained replacement of the second person singular pronouns (MidEng. thou, MidDu. du) by new forms originating from the plural (En. you, Du. jij; cf. Brown & Gilman 1960). Presently, online communication facilitates the lateral exchange of strategies among queer communities of different linguistic backgrounds, uniquely characterizing this present moment of language change.

Singh, Jaspal

Pronoun politics: How inclusive gender non-binary and ante-gender third-person reference they/xie interpellates the woke speaking subject

This paper interrogates discourses of wokeness to develop a race- and class-conscious pronoun politics. I show how the usage of inclusive gender-non binary and ante-gender third person singular pronouns “they” (a historically used pronoun in English) and “xie” (a neopronoun in German) can interpellate not only the referent who is spoken about as gender non-binary or ante-gender, but also interpellates the speaking subject (the “I”) as clued up, progressive, inclusive and woke. Drawing on personal experiences with using gender non-binary and ante-gender third-person deixis in my own social networks in English-speaking Wales and in Germany (see also Motschenbacher 2014), I want to make a case for developing a pronoun politics that can performatively subvert gender binarism if we reappropriate wokeness as an index of our struggle, and an identity that fills us with pride; although never in an uncritical fashion. Wokeness, like third person pronouns, is usually an other-identifying index, now used predominately as a discursive trope by political groups from the far right to the liberal centre-right to ridicule privileged politically correct “snowflakes” on the left who cannot accept the hard facts of life (e.g. that “gender is a fact”). I ask in this paper if and how wokeness can be reappropriated and indexically ameliorated by people who do not conform to socially constructed gender binaries, as well as by their allies. I propose that this critical reappropriation of wokeness, rather than regurgitating discourses of the limitations and the shallowness of political correctness, must take into account questions of race and class. While “they” / “xie” can do important linguistic and interactive work to include and value ante-gender babies, gender non-binary persons as well as trans persons, their use among white middle-class populations also indexes discourses of exclusion along classed and racialised lines (Delfino 2021). But, it is important to note that wokeness is semantically connected to the notion of “staying awake”, i.e. metaphorically not falling asleep, and it originated among African Americans to promote political consciousness in their own community. Wokeness
might also be linked to European bourgeois discourses since the Enlightenment - e.g. Immanuel Kant’s famous declaration that David Hume “woke me up from my dogmatic slumber”. Wokeness, once reappropriated from both far-right discourses and white progressive discourses, can give political meaning to language ideological struggles around gendering and thereby shape the everyday political discourses in families and social networks. I argue that developing a woke pronoun politics can be a crucial aspect of linguistic inclusivity of non-normative genders. Moreover, such a politics must go beyond simplistic distinctions between woke and non-woke identities and rather make intersectional forays into questions of class and race, and other social categories that are locally relevant.

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Steriopolo, Olga and Christin Schütze
Feminine epicene nouns as gender-neutral forms in German: challenging the binary
We have conducted a sociolinguistic investigation into the referential means used with German epicene nouns such as Lehrkraft ‘teacher/teaching person’ (grammatically feminine) as opposed to so-called generic nouns such as Lehrer ‘teacher’ (grammatically masculine). The stimulus sentences were constructed to elicit pronominal reference to the roles and professions presented. The survey was completed by 101 German-speaking participants aged 18-79 with various gender identities. The participants’ gender identity and LGBT*QIA+ adjacency (belonging, close, distant) proved a significant factor influencing gender typicality ratings of role and profession nouns in German.

The analysis of responses revealed an effect of grammatical gender and impact of the noun’s gender typicality. The results showed that masculine nouns were almost exclusively referred to with masculine pronouns. By contrast, their grammatically feminine, epicene counterparts yielded a higher proportion of inclusive means of reference.

Striewski, Samu/elle
Inhabiting the untranslatable. Why the linguistic recognition of non-binary identities is determined to fail
My presentation aims to explore the proliferation of terminology around non-binary identities from the theoretical framework of recognition theory. Drawing particularly on the works of Axel Honneth and Judith Butler, the talk will discuss how the struggle for recognition of marginalized gender identities is related to a diversification of naming practices. It will not put a focus on the emergences of terms, labels, and pronouns in a specific language, but rather ask whether those linguistic innovations actually serve or rather stand in the way to the initial demand for recognition. Suggesting that at the heart of the social conflict led by non-binary people lies a denied recognition on all three levels as described by Honneth (love,
rights, and solidarity), one can identify the degree to which gender-inclusive language is seen as mean to achieve that recognition. However, building up on Butler’s critique of Honneth, the weaknesses of these approaches will be made clear to the extent that they neglect the underlying “fields of intelligibility,” to use the Butlerian term, which predetermine the recognizability of any body in the first place. Therefore, I take into consideration more counterarguments to recognition theory given among others by Wendy Brown (about the danger of getting attached to the terms that are supposed to free oneself from the structural oppression) and Nancy Fraser (about the greater political and economic implications at stake) to show that a struggle for merely linguistic recognition is not only determined to fail as a project, but actually risks to set the wrong emphasis. My talk will hence end by proposing alternatives to inhabiting the untranslatable, presenting strategic suggestions by trans* and non-binary scholars like Jack Halberstam, Paul Preciado, or Robin Dembroff.

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Suen, Yiu-Tung

Non-binary, genderqueer, and gender-neutral language in a Chinese context: Chinese-speaking transgender people’s experiences of gender pronouns

Of the many forms of misgendering that transgender people experience, research has focused on the usage of gender pronouns as one key aspect that transgender people face. Research has found that for transgender people, their personal identification of gender pronouns is very significant for them and their well-being. Thus, research has argued that mispronouncing shall be understood as a form of discursive microagression against transgender people.

Much research about transgender people and gender pronouns has been conducted in the English-speaking world. Comparatively, there is very little known about transgender people’s subjective attitudes towards gender pronouns, and their experiences of using gender pronouns in the Chinese-speaking world. Therefore, this paper focuses on a Hong Kong context, which is theoretically interesting as (1) it involves an examination of transgender people’s use of gender pronouns in a bilingual context; and (2) there is no protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender identity; nor is there legal gender recognition in Hong Kong – these social and legal constraints allow for an examination of the challenges transgender people face when they use gender pronouns and the resilience and agency they display.

Drawing on a survey of 234 transgender people in Hong Kong conducted in collaboration with non-governmental organizations working with transgender people – the largest-scale study of transgender people in Hong Kong – this paper investigates (1) their attitudes towards gender pronouns (Chinese vs English; gender-specific vs gender-neutral); (2) the frequency, significance, and difficulties of getting their significant others in life (such as family members, partners and friends) and service providers in using their gender pronouns.

Taken together, this paper contributes to understanding non-binary, gender-inclusive, and gender-non-conforming language cross-linguistically, as well as centres on the importance of such language in transgender people’s lives.

Tacelosky, Kathleen and Amber Arnold

Don’t misgender your mangos: drawing on expressions of gender in English to inform second language education of grammatical gender languages

The grammatical gender of nouns in a language such as Spanish, where every noun is grammatically either feminine or masculine, is vexing for second language (L2) learners whose native language does categorize thusly. To test English-speaking students’ understanding of grammatical gender, an early-semester survey (n=231) was administered to low and intermediate level Spanish classes for four semesters (fall 2021- spring 2023).

Students were asked to explain 1) how Spanish marks nouns for gender and 2) their understanding of what grammatical gender to use when a group of humans is of either mixed or unknown genders.
Most respondents answered the first question by pointing to a word’s grammatical gender by using the article before the noun, the word’s ending, or both. For the second question most indicated having learned that the masculine generic was to be used for mixed collectives.

Findings from a second survey suggest that students in L2 Spanish classes are eager to learn how Spanish is evolving to include gender non-binariness as well as challenge the patriarchy of the masculine-dominated forms that are standard in L2 classrooms and texts.

Language classrooms offer unique opportunities for discussion about the intersectionality of societal and grammatical gender. Yet many language educators have been using masculine-dominated gendered forms in their own speech for decades and may find it difficult to adopt alternate morphology.

In this presentation we explore the question, “If educators continue to model the so-called masculine generic, will students be able to learn alternative forms?” We share our own adoption and use of alternative forms. Attendees will be challenged to examine how their own use of gendered forms might affect students and will be asked to consider using and teaching alternatives to masculine-dominated forms.

Thál, Jonas
The exposed gender: the representation of transgender in Czech media 2017-2020, a corpus-based discourse analysis
The paper aims to explore the representation of transgender individuals in online Czech discourses. The study utilizes corpus linguistics to analyze news media and Facebook in order to understand the attitudes towards transgender individuals in these discourses. Previous research on gender in the Czech language and other languages is considered in order to contextualize the findings of this study. The research reflects on the Czech Press Act and Audio-visual Act, which provide guidelines for objectivity and balanced reporting in the media. Using data from Czech National Corpus the study aims to shed light on the representation of transgender individuals in online Czech discourses and provide exposure of potential hateful speech towards trans people or imbalance between the discourses.

The study arrives to the conclusion that trans representations in the journalistic discourse are somewhat more neutral and balanced than those in the Facebook data. However, there is a noticeable gender bias reflected by masculine dominating both discourses in both the number of lemmas and the number of hits. The masculine grammatical gender seems to be the first choice for Czech language users when they refer to trans persons, regardless the trans person’s gender identity. The Czech trans discourses contain a large quantity of generic masculine. The gender bias is furthermore displayed by the creativity of language users: the language users are more creative with masculine lemmas than they are with the feminine lemmas.

Verhaegen, Hanne, Sofie Decock, Sarah Van Hoof, and Ellen Soens
The comprehensibility and appreciation of nonbinary pronouns in newspaper reporting. The case of hen and die in Dutch
This paper examines the effect of the recently introduced Dutch nonbinary third person pronouns hen and die on text comprehensibility and text appreciation in the context of newspaper reporting on nonbinary persons. Moreover, it presents a first measurement of Flemish people’s familiarity with and attitudes towards this pronominal reform in Dutch in its early stage. In a survey experiment using an experimental between-subjects design, we
compared the use of nonbinary hen and die (as subject forms, both combined with hen as object and hun as possessive form) with established referential strategies: the use of binary pronouns and pronoun avoidance, i.e., consistently repeating name and profession of the nonbinary person. We also examined the potential mediating role of perceived awkwardness of the referential strategy used and tested the moderating effect of cueing, i.e. making readers aware of the fact that the person reported on identifies as nonbinary and prefers nonbinary pronouns.

The results show that gender-neutral pronouns have no negative effect on text comprehensibility compared to binary pronouns and the avoidance of pronoun usage, and that only gender-neutral hen-hen-hun significantly lowers text appreciation compared to binary pronouns. In addition, it was found that perceived awkwardness explains the lower scores of nonbinary hen and that cueing improves those scores. In addition, the study shows that about half of our representative sample of Flemish citizens were, at the time of the experiment (the beginning of 2022), not yet familiar with gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch, and that their attitude towards them was, on average, neutral to slightly negative. Overall, our findings suggest that the nonbinary pronoun die has the most potential to be successfully implemented, especially when taking into account that we have tested gender-neutral pronouns on a representative sample (also in terms of age) and for nonbinary reference.

Vorberger, Lars
Empirical evidence on the reference to non-binary people in German
In contrast to singular they in English (cf., e.g., Bjorkman 2017, Conrod 2019), no general reference to non-binary people seems to have been established in German yet. There are numerous proposals, especially for neopronouns (cf., e.g., https://nibi.space/pronomen), and some guidelines on gender-fair language taking up this topic.

Discussions of linguistic non-binariness are still in their infancy in Germany (cf. Lind 2020, forthcoming). Besides studies on the preferences and uses of non-binary people themselves (cf. Hord 2016, Löhr 2021, 2022), Heger (2023a, b) lists the evidence for xier/sier in the press, fiction, and dubbing. Walter/Shi (forthcoming) examine the use of neopronouns on Twitter, with the result that English they predominates. However, what is missing so far are more empirical data on the general awareness and use of the reference strategies, including binary people.

In this talk, initial results of empirical investigations on references to non-binary people in German are presented. For this, guidelines on gender-fair language are randomly evaluated. However, this research focuses on an ongoing online survey on the familiarity, usage, and acceptability of references to non-binary people (cf., e.g., Hekanaho 2020).

The study excludes restrictions on participation (e.g., only binary or non-binary individuals) as the objective is to consider all gender identities. First, the participants are asked openly about known and used reference strategies. Thereafter, they are presented with specific forms (i.e., explicit repetition and a selection of neopronouns) in three conditions, i.e., different antecedents, namely (1) neuter indefinite, (2) neuter definite, and (3) name. The participants are asked whether they know, use or would use the specific forms and how natural they appear.

In summary, this study aims to examine linguistic non-binariness by providing fundamental results based on empirical data that are important for further research and give new directions in current debates on this topic in Germany.
**Welker, Craig**  
**Grammatical gender and muxe reference in Juchitán, Mexico**
As discussions of gender non-conforming people and gender-neutral language tend to focus on identities and communities from the global North, the question of how people with so-called “third gender” identities in colonized communities refer to themselves and are referred to by others has been less explored. Gendered language practices in these communities have typically either been ignored or referenced in passing in anthropological articles with a different focus. Particularly lacking are studies using statistical methods to figure out how often different gendered and non-gendered forms are used within these communities. Therefore, in this variationist study on Spanish in Juchitán, Mexico, I bridge this gap by looking at variation in the grammatical gender markings used to refer to a third gender group, the “muxes”, by in-group and out-group members. A first examination of the data shows, strikingly, that gender neutral forms are almost entirely absent. While muxes are referred to most frequently in the masculine, by both in-group and out-group members, a logistic regression revealed that many factors condition the use of masculine versus feminine reference. Feminine gender marking is more common for muxe referents who identify more closely with women, as well as for referents who are friends with or identical to the speaker. Masculine gender marking, on the other hand, is more common for referents who are family members and in discourses about gender discrimination and violence. Furthermore, male speakers use masculine reference for muxes much more often than other speakers, and feminine-identified muxes use masculine reference for other muxes the least often. These results suggest that muxes are referred to in Juchitán with both masculine and feminine gender, instead of a gender-neutral alternative, and that these grammatical gender markings have come to index meanings beyond gender, such as relationships with and stances towards muxes and gender discrimination.

**Wong, Kevin Martens**  
**Jenis, Wenza, Jenta kung Afisi: Developing gender and sexuality terms in the critically endangered Kristang language in Singapore to support psychoemotional wellbeing**
Kristang (iso 639-3: mcm) is the critically endangered heritage language of the Kristang or Portuguese-Eurasian people of Singapore and Melaka, now estimated to be spoken by just around 1,000 people, including the author, a gay, non-binary Kristang Singaporean directly descended from one of the main progenitors of the community in its nascent stage in colonial Singapore, Edwin Tessensohn, and the leader of the internationally-recognised grassroots movement to revitalise Kristang in Singapore, Kodrah Kristang (‘Awaken, Kristang’). The historic and unprecedented flourishing of Kristang in Singapore since 2016 as a result of Kodrah efforts (e.g. T. Wong, 2017) has meant that a wider array of forms of reclamation, reindigenisation and decolonisation is now available to the Kristang community as well, including the renegotiation and regeneration of creole/indigenous ways of locating, framing and validating one’s identity and relationship to others.

This paper thus introduces the revitalised four-way schema for discussing one’s biological sex (known as Jenis), sexual orientation (Wenza), gender (Jenta), and romantic orientation or affinity (Afisi) that has been developed for the reclaimed or ‘Progenitor’ version of Kristang, known as Krismatra (K. M. Wong 2022); these include separate postcolonial ‘Kristangified’ terms for AFAB, AMAB, F2M, M2F, transgender male, transgender female, non-binary, pansexual, asexual, gray-sexual, demisexual, aromantic and other terms, as well as three post-colonial lexemes that are direct reclaims and renegotiations of exploitative
legacies of power under the British and Portuguese colonial empires for queer and/or LGBTQ+-identifying people in general: *hierosa, iridesu* and *ultramar*. The reasons for the fairly straightforward and unique informal acceptance that these terms have gained within the Kristang community despite the community’s rather widespread and overt practice of Roman Catholicism are thereafter outlined, and suggestions for other minority and indigenous language communities as to how to integrate a more humanising and empathetic approach to gender-inclusive and non-conforming language.

**References**


**Yebrero López, Carlos**

**Introducing The Ladino Guide to Inclusive Language**

In this presentation I will introduce the first-ever guide to describe agender, non-binary, gender-non-conforming and queer people in a severely endangered languages known as Ladino (Judeo-Spanish, spoken by the Jews expelled from Iberia in 1492), in both its Western (Haketia) and Eastern (Judezmo) varieties. This guide draws upon the non-profit Ladino 21’s pioneering initiative on this matter since 2020, which was met with censorship and mixed reactions amongst the global community of Ladino speakers, where until 2020 there was no existing record of either non-binary identities or inclusive language being discussed, let alone used. The guide is modelled after Sima Beeri’s analogous endeavour apropos Yiddish and just like it, it is also intended to serve as a blueprint for the further discussion and the use of inclusive language in the endangered Jewish language in question (in this case Ladino), as well as an open access pedagogical resource to be consulted and deployed by instructors worldwide.

The specific aspects I will discuss include both linguistic and extralinguistic aspects as follows: inclusive greetings, new pronouns used, emerging naming practices, names of professions, how Ladino adjusts to gender expression as a language with grammatical gender (similar to Spanish, but also influenced by Turkish and Hebrew, amongst others), the polemic introduction of inclusive language in Ladino on the email list Ladinokomunita (1999 to present, the largest and most global online platform in Ladino, based on the number of users and their country of residence), how can we create a gender-inclusive environment for the use of Ladino online platforms and how that compares and contrasts with the use in the language classroom (and within the latter, how its implementation differs across countries - e.g. the US vs Turkey-), compelled speech and linguistic sovereignty, institutional language policy, and avenues for future research and practice.

**Yeh, Mayee**

**Specifying the singular: how queer identity informs interpretations of they**

Uses of pronoun "they" have shifted away from the prescribed plural and epicenic singular (e.g. "The professor studied a new phenomenon. They received an award for the discovery.")).
to approach the singular, gendered interpretation as a personal pronoun for many gender-diverse folks (Ackerman, 2018, 2019; Conrod, 2019; Doherty & Conklin, 2017; Foertsch & Gernsbacher, 1997).

This study replicates Experiment 3 of Arnold et al. 2021, which determined that explicit knowledge of a person’s pronouns and sentence position of the nonbinary character’s name, significantly influences number interpretation of they. However, due to a limited population, Arnold et al. were unable to find that gender identity and social interaction had a significant influence on number interpretation (Arnold et al., 2020). With a more diverse population, this paper analyzes the roles of gender identity and personal pronoun usage, as well as gender and political ideology, on the number interpretation of they.

After implicitly learning about the personal pronoun usages of three characters, participants completed the main task where they read similar sentence pairs (e.g. "Alex went to the store with Will. They purchased some apples.") and answered questions (e.g. "Who purchased some apples?") about the sentence pairs. Answers to those questions indicated if they was interpreted as singular, only Alex, or plural, both Alex and Will.

Analysis found that participants who identified as a gender identity apart from male or female and/or did not exclusively use "he/him" or "she/her" pronouns were significantly more likely overall to interpret they as singular. In alignment with Arnold et al. 2021, the number of singular interpretations were significantly higher when Alex was placed in the subject position rather than the adjunct (e.g. "Will went to the store with Alex"). Results reflect the influence of group membership and personal identities on linguistic interpretation and trends in language change.