



## 49. Österreichische Linguistiktagung

5.–8. Dezember 2025

Universität Klagenfurt / Celovec

# Queer Linguistics at the interface between grammatical and social structure

5. Dezember 2025 | Raum 9  
6. Dezember 2025 | Raum 6

Österreichische Linguistiktagung 2025  
5–8 Dec 2025  
Universität Klagenfurt

### **Queer Linguistics at the interface between grammatical and social structure**

Queer Linguistics applies insights from Queer Theory to linguistics. More specifically, it seeks to explore the intersections of language and social identity informed by a non-binary, social constructionist and interactional perspective on gender and sexuality. Queer linguistic research investigates how speakers use language to subvert and reconfigure linguistic and socio-cultural hegemonies. As a growing area of inquiry, Queer Linguistics critically explores variation, creativity, and the sociocultural embeddedness of language. This workshop invites linguists of diverse theoretical backgrounds to scrutinize and dissect innovative linguistic phenomena emerging within and around queer/LGBTQI+ communities. It is dedicated to unraveling how language serves as a pivotal tool for both communication and nuanced self-expression, distinctly shaping and reflecting queer identities.

This workshop is designed to foster a dynamic exchange of ideas and promote a deeper understanding of how linguistic practices intersect with queer identities. Participants will contribute to a more nuanced discourse on the adaptive uses of language in queer contexts and help integrate these insights into broader linguistic theory. In doing so, we aim to affirm Queer Linguistics as a vital and intellectually generative domain within contemporary linguistic research. The workshop is not limited to specific languages or methodological approaches.

#### **Organisation**

Oliver Bunk, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
([oliver.bunk@hu-berlin.de](mailto:oliver.bunk@hu-berlin.de))

Nicholas Catasso, Bergische Universität Wuppertal  
([catasso@uni-wuppertal.de](mailto:catasso@uni-wuppertal.de))

Mx Gaul, Universität Bremen  
([mx.gaul@uni-bremen.de](mailto:mx.gaul@uni-bremen.de))

Vroni Zieglmeier, Universität Heidelberg  
([vroni.zieglmeier@as.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:vroni.zieglmeier@as.uni-heidelberg.de))

## Programme

Friday, 5 Dec 2025, Room N.0.44

14:50 – 15:00	<b>Organisers</b>	Welcome and introduction
15:00 – 15:30	<b>Jochen Matthies</b>	Bridging gender-inclusivity and normative grammar: The emergence of new personal reference strategies in non-binary Wikipedia biographies
15:30 – 16:00	<b>Samira Ochs</b>	The grammar of non-binarity: Corpus evidence on the morpho-syntactic integration of new gender suffixes in German
16:00 – 16:30	<i>Coffee break</i>	
16:30 – 17:00	<b>Oksana Khrystenko</b>	‘Moving Ego’ – ‘Moving Time’: Establishing temporal relations and objectification of complications in untoward events narrated by asexual individuals
17:00 – 17:30	<b>Aliyah-Sophie Annaëlle Manzke &amp; Charlie Sarbach</b>	Gender-Neutral Pronouns in the German Language. A Survey-Study for German-Speaking Non-Binary People

Saturday, 6 Dec 2025, Room N.1.12

9:00 – 9:30	<b>Camille Ternisien</b>	The linguistic construction of non-binary and trans identities on Reddit
9:30 – 10:00	<b>Gloria Comandini</b>	The Queering of Arda. Expressing Queer Gender Identities through Quenya in Tolkien-inspired English Fanfictions
10:00 – 10:30 (ONLINE)	<b>Johanathan Woodworth, Phillip Joy, Andrea Fraser &amp; Conor Barker</b>	Breaking Up with an AI Boyfriend: Queer Linguistic Constructions of Intimacy and Rupture in Reddit Narratives
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:00 – 11:30	<b>Fatemeh Asadipour</b>	Perceived Effects of Gender-related Language Variation in German Spoken Language on the Lived Experience of Language with regard to Gender Identity
11:30 – 12:00	<b>Enakshi Nandi</b> (online)	Queer Interventions in Indexing Gender in Hindi
12:00 – 14:30	<i>Keynote &amp; Lunch</i>	
14:30 – 15:00	<b>Nikolett Kiss</b>	Singular they usage among Hungarian university students

15:00 – 15:30	<b>Lindsay Preseau</b>	Reveling in Tolerance: Queer Language Pedagogy under Legislative Constraint
15:30 – 16:00	<b>Martin Stegu</b>	On the way to Applied Queer Linguistics?
16:00 – 16:30	<i>Coffee break</i>	
16:30 – 17:00	<b>Delina Binaj</b>	Negotiating gender identity of trans people indigenous to Albanian society in the media discourse: the case of “sworn virgins”
17:00 – 17:30	<b>Tim Feldmüller, Samira Ochs &amp; Jan Oliver Rüdiger</b>	<i>Queer</i> in context: Corpus-linguistic perspectives on a contested term in queer and mainstream media
17:30	<b>Organisers</b>	Discussion/Wrap-up

## Abstracts

### Perceived Effects of Gender-related Language Variation in German Spoken Language on the Lived Experience of Language with regard to Gender Identity

Fatemeh Asadipour ([fatemeh.asadi.pour@univie.ac.at](mailto:fatemeh.asadi.pour@univie.ac.at))

Universität Wien

In the course of their lives, people encounter gender-related information in language, for example through grammatical gender, lexical items, and role nouns, which can influence their feelings and experiences. While studies have examined gender-related language use in written German, little is known about how spoken language variations affect the lived language experiences of people with diverse gender identities, particularly from LGBTQ+ and queer perspectives. Referring to the concept of language as a lived-experience (Busch 2017; Kogan 2005; Gumperz 1964), language and gender as social constructs (Becker 2018; Gildemeister 2010; Luca 2003), and research findings about language, gender and emotions, the study aims to investigate the perceived negative and positive effects of gender-related spoken language variations in German on the language experience of cisgender, transgender and non-binary individuals. For this purpose, a qualitative research design was applied, conducting semistructured interviews with seven participants (aged 20-51) of different gender identities. The transcripts were analyzed and topics and subtopics were further investigated. The results show that cisgender men were the least aware of these issues, and spoken language had little effect on their gender identity-related feelings. Stereotypical feminine traits and homophobic expressions are reported to be often used by cisgender men in groups as a means of disparaging others. Cisgender women find "gendering" important in spoken language and thus feel visible and included and want to contribute more to it. The transgender and non-binary participants recalled many personal experiences in which spoken language influenced their feelings about their gender identity. The participants, except for cisgender men, desired a more neutral and inclusive language, including neutral words and pronouns.

#### References

- Busch, Brigitta. 2017. Expanding the Notion of the Linguistic Repertoire: On the Concept of *Spracherleben* – The Lived Experience of Language. *Applied Linguistics* 38(3). 340–58. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amv030>.
- Becker, Susanne. 2018. *Sprechgebote: Wie das Sprechen über Sprache soziale Ungleichheiten reproduziert*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-19162-7>.
- Gildemeister, Regine. 2010. Doing Gender. Soziale Praktiken der Geschlechterunterscheidung. In Ruth Becker, Beate Kortendiek (Hrsg.). *Handbuch Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung. Theorien, Methoden, Empirie*. 3. Auflage, 137-145. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften
- Gumperz, John J. 1964. Linguistic and social interaction in two communities. *American Anthropologist* 66/6(Part 2), 137–53.
- Kogan, Ilany. 2005. Nachwort. In Peter Brundl and Ilany Kogan (eds), *Kindheit jenseits von Trauma und Fremdheit*.
- Luca, Renate (eds.). 2003. *Medien. Sozialisation. Geschlecht. Fallstudien aus sozialwissenschaftlicher Forschungspraxis*. München: Kopaed.

## Negotiating Gender Identity of Trans People Indigenous to Albanian Society in the Media Discourse: The Case of “Sworn Virgins”

Delina Binaj ([binajdel@cms.hu-berlin.de](mailto:binajdel@cms.hu-berlin.de) )

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

This study discusses the representation of trans people indigenous to Albanian society, focusing on media discourse in Albania. The term *trans people indigenous to Albanian society* is used to refer to trans individuals who live or have lived within the Albanian cultural context—mostly in remote areas in the northern part of the country (Young 2000)—and who are commonly known as *burrnesha* (“sworn virgins”). Media are understood as institutions that discursively construct values, social relations, and social identities. Accordingly, the linguistic representation of *burrnesha* in Albanian media is analysed within a constructivist framework of language (Hornscheidt 2006). The analysis examines how the queer identity of *burrnesha* is linguistically negotiated in media discourse and which social identities are thereby discursively constructed. The findings are based on articles published in Albanian daily newspapers, with particular attention to the range of linguistic practices used to construct the specific blend of masculinity and femininity associated with the gender ambiguity of *burrnesha*. The significance of this case lies in the fact that an experience of queerness such as that of *burrnesha* is deeply embedded in the traditional and patriarchal norms of Albanian society, while the study contributes to highlighting the diversity of linguistic representations of queer communities across different cultural contexts.

### References

- Hornscheidt, Antje. 2006. *Die sprachliche Benennung von Personen aus konstruktivistischer Sicht: Genderspezifizierung und ihre diskursive Verhandlung im heutigen Schwedisch*. Berlin & New York: De Gruyter.
- Young, Antonia. 2000. *Women who become men: Albanian sworn virgins*. Oxford & New York: Berg.

## The Queering of Arda. Expressing Queer Gender Identities through Quenya in Tolkien-inspired English Fanfictions

Gloria Comandini ([comandini@studigermanici.it](mailto:comandini@studigermanici.it))

Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici, Università di Milano

Participatory communities born around fictional works, commonly known as *fandoms*, have always been a fertile ground for queer narratives due to their transformational nature (Jenkins 1992; 2006; Tosenberger 2014). The emergence of queer narratives has been studied especially in the context of fanfictions (FFs), derivative stories based on published fictional works, where fans can reinterpret the original material, challenging its representation of marginalized communities (Busse 2017; Click & Scott 2017; Duggan 2022).

Following the corpus-based analysis of Comandini & Dedè (2025), this study investigates how, in English FFs, the concept of queer gender identities (QGI) is articulated through the use of Quenya, the most prominent of J.R.R. Tolkien's constructed languages (Kloczko 2015), which lack the terminology for transgender, genderfluid or non-binary gender identities. By creating this new queer Quenya lexicon for their FFs, fan-writers can both explore QGIs and create a space where their identities can exist within Tolkien's narrative universe (Comandini & Dedè 2025).

Based on the empirical data from the QueEnFan (Quenya in English Fan-Fictions) Corpus, composed by 65 FFs (435,650 tokens) published between 2021 and 2024 on Archive of Our Own (Comandini & Dedè 2025), the research is developed through two sections. First, we analyze how authors develop the concept of QGI through both the use of neologisms (i.e. *lethanássë*, translated by the fan-writer as *free+nature* and used as the equivalent of *transgender*) and the semantic extension of existing Quenya words, such as *fëa* and *hröa*, which in Tolkien's *Legendarium* respectively refer to the soul and the body, while in the corpus can also mean *gender* and *sex*. Additionally, using the tools of critical discourse analysis, we will investigate how QGIs relate to the narrative themes of death and rebirth in a new body, and in-fiction metalinguistic considerations about the necessity of having words to describe QGIs.

### References

- Busse, Kristina. 2017. *Framing fan fiction: literary and social practices in fan fiction communities*. Iowa City: University Of Iowa Press.
- Click, Melissa A. & Scott, Suzanne. 2017. *The Routledge Companion to Media Fandom*. New York: Routledge.
- Comandini, Gloria & Dedè, Francesco. 2025. Quenya is Practically a Main Character: Elvish-English Multilingualism in Tolkien-inspired Fan-Fictions. *RiCOGNIZIONI. Rivista Di Lingue E Letterature Straniere E Culture Moderne* 12(23). 123-137.
- Duggan, Jennifer. 2021. Transformative Readings: Harry Potter Fan Fiction, Trans/Queer Reader Response, and J. K. Rowling. *Children's Literature in Education* 53. 147-168.
- Jenkins, Henry. 1992. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Jenkins, Henry. 2006. *Fans, Bloggers and Gamers. Exploring Participatory Culture*. New York & London: New York University Press.
- Kloczko, Édward. 2015. *Le haut-elfique pour les débutants. Édition revue et augmentée par l'auteur*. Paris: POCKET.
- Tosenberger, Catherine. 2014. Mature Poets Steal: Children's Literature and the Unpublishability of Fanfiction. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 39(1). 4-27.

## **Queer in context: Corpus-Linguistic Perspectives on a Contested Term in Queer and Mainstream Media**

Tim Feldmüller ([feldmueller@ids-mannheim.de](mailto:feldmueller@ids-mannheim.de)), Samira Ochs ([ochs@ids-mannheim.de](mailto:ochs@ids-mannheim.de)),  
Jan Oliver Rüdiger ([ruediger@ids-mannheim.de](mailto:ruediger@ids-mannheim.de))

Leibniz Institute for the German Language, Mannheim

The relevance of corpus linguistic studies for a comprehensive queer linguistics has been emphasized by Motschenbacher (2018) and Baker (2018). Especially for terms whose usage is inconsistent and discursively charged – such as *queer* – the analysis of large text corpora can provide insights into contexts of use, semantic nuances, and media-specific differences. The conceptual vagueness of *queer* as well as its political and theoretical ambivalence have repeatedly been discussed critically (Jagose 1996; Wiegman & Wilson 2015; Cassaris 2025).

In our contribution, we examine the use of *queer* in different German-language media types and investigate how it is contextualized and imbued with meaning. The basis for our analysis is the Queer Corpus (QC) we have compiled, which currently comprises 28 gay, lesbian, queer, and trans\*/non-binary print and online media outlets from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland (Rüdiger & Ochs 2025). In addition, we draw on a reference corpus consisting of mainstream print media (based on the German Reference Corpus, DeReKo, Kupietz et al. 2018). Our focus is on the question of whether the use of *queer* and its derived forms differs between queer and non-queer media.

We approach this question from two methodological perspectives, using them to compare and discuss quantitative approaches in queer linguistics. On the one hand, we create syntagmatic word profiles through co-occurrence and n-gram analyses, which provide insights into the discursive negotiation of the word *queer* in different media contexts. On the other hand, we use diachronically aligned word embedding models (Mikolov et al. 2013; Fankhauser & Kupietz 2017) that enable us to examine the paradigmatic distributional neighborhood of *queer*, i.e., semantically similar words. Moreover, we use the aligned models to calculate which equivalent terms were used before *queer* acquired its current meaning. By combining these methods, we aim to contribute both empirically and methodologically to the exploration of how language shapes and reflects queer identities across diverse media landscapes.

### **References**

- Baker, Paul. 2018. Language, sexuality and corpus linguistics: Concerns and future directions. *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 7(2). 263–279.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.17018.bak>.
- Cassaris, Lovis Noah. 2025. *Die deutsche Sprache queeren - Zur geschlechtergerechten Sprachpraxis im Hochschulkontext*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.
- Fankhauser, Peter & Marc Kupietz. 2017. Visualizing Language Change in a Corpus of Contemporary German. In *Corpus Linguistics International Conference 2017*. Birmingham.
- Jagose, Annamarie. 1996. *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. NYU Press.
- Kupietz, Marc, Harald Lungen, Paweł Kamocki & Andreas Witt. 2018. The German Reference Corpus DeReKo: New Developments – New Opportunities. In Nicoletta Calzolari, Khalid Choukri, Christopher Cieri, Thierry Declerck, Sara Goggi, Koiti Hasida, Hitoshi Isahara, et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the eleventh international conference on language resources and evaluation (LREC 2018), 7-12 May 2018, Miyazaki, Japan*, 8. Paris: European language resources association (ELRA).
- Mikolov, Tomas, Kai Chen, Greg Corrado & Jeffrey Dean. 2013. Efficient Estimation of Word Representations in Vector Space. arXiv.  
<https://doi.org/10.48550/ARXIV.1301.3781>.

- Motschenbacher, Heiko. 2018. Corpus linguistics in language and sexuality studies: Taking stock and looking ahead. *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 7(2). 145–174. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.17019.mot>.
- Rüdiger, Jan Oliver & Samira Ochs. 2025. Das Queere Korpus (QK): Vorstellung einer neuen Korpusressource und Beispielanalysen am Thema „Ehe für Alle“. *Aptum. Themenheft: Diversitäts- und Inklusionslinguistik* 21(1). 139–160. [https://doi.org/10.46771/9783967694604\\_7](https://doi.org/10.46771/9783967694604_7).
- Wiegman, Robyn & Elizabeth A. Wilson. 2015. Introduction: Antinormativity's Queer Conventions. *differences* 26(1). 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1215/10407391-2880582>.

## Constructing Time and Meaning: Asexual Narratives of Untoward Events involving Identity Transformation

Oksana Khrystenko ([ifl84@uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:ifl84@uni-heidelberg.de))

Universität Heidelberg

The study examines verbalized temporal relations in the narratives of asexual individuals, focusing on the depiction of untoward events associated with identity transformation. Within a morphosyntactic framework, it demonstrates how classical temporal relations - such as simultaneity and posteriority - are realized in contrasting constructions (cf. Uhl & Drepper 2022) when narrating complications.

In addition, the paper explores the role of phonation - specifically creaky voice - in the narration of untoward events. It was observed that events perceived negatively by asexual speakers tend to have longer durations and are produced with creaky voice, a slower speech rate, and vowel lengthening. Conversely, the resolution phase in narration is typically realized with a modal or breathy voice and audible exhalation.

The analysis is based on 17 hours and 20 minutes of interviews with 15 romantic and aromantic asexual individuals in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, from which 150 narratives were extracted. In German linguistics, there is a notable lack of systematic analysis concerning strategies of objectifying the ontological phenomenon of *time* (cf. Köller 2019) - particularly regarding the emotional perception of time by underrepresented groups such as asexual individuals - which underscores the relevance of this study.

### References

- Köller, Wilhelm. 2019. *Zeit im Spiegel der Sprache. Untersuchungen zu den Objektivierungsformen für Zeit in der natürlichen Sprache*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Uhl, Benjamin & Laura Drepper. 2022. Narrative Schemaaktivierung und vorschulischer Erzählerweb. Eine gebrauchsbasierte Analyse zur Gestaltung temporaler Handlungsabfolgen. In Birgit Mesch & Benjamin Uhl (ed.), *Tempus und Temporalität. Empirische Zugänge zum Erwerb von Zeitlichkeit*. Münster: Waxmann, 73-102.

## Singular *they* usage among Hungarian university students

Nikolett Kiss ([nikolettkiss1998@gmail.com](mailto:nikolettkiss1998@gmail.com))

University of Debrecen

In the past decades, the pronoun singular *they* has gained widespread acceptance among native English speakers, both in its epicene and specific interpretations. Stylistic guides have also begun to adopt the pronoun. As a result, singular *they* is becoming more important in FLA teaching and learning too. The increasing amount of literature provides contradictory results as some learners utilise epicene *they* (Ebrahimi & Hosseini 2021, Stojanovska-Ilievska 2024, Stormbom 2021), while others found that learners either reject or are not familiar with the pronoun (Abudaljuh 2012, Ma et al. 2022). Most existing studies are conducted with participants whose L1 is a gendered language, which complicates the situation even further.

The current research is the first part of a longitudinal study which investigates how Hungarian EFL learners use singular *they* and aims to identify what variables influence them the most. To answer the questions, 70 participants completed an online survey from two Hungarian universities. The survey consisted of a language proficiency test assembled in-house, and, based on my previous work (Kiss 2023), a fill-in the gap test that asked participants to complete each sentence with the most suitable personal pronoun. Follow-up interviews were also conducted to assess attitudes towards the singular *they* pronoun.

Results show that singular *they* is used in its epicene interpretation, but not in its specific interpretation. Definiteness and gender bias are the two most important variables influencing pronoun usage. Statistical analyses reveal a significant correlation between singular *they* usage and language proficiency level in some cases, but other factors might be much stronger. Interview results suggest that while participants find inclusive language and inclusive pronouns unimportant, most still use singular *they* and would respect *they/them* pronoun users. Finally, the results show that participants associate the pronoun more with its specific sense than with its epicene interpretation.

### References

- Abudaljuh, Mujdey. 2012. *Ideology, gender roles, and pronominal choice: A sociolinguistic analysis of the use of English third person generic pronouns by native speakers of Arabic*. Kansas: University of Kansas dissertation. <http://hdl.handle.net/1808/12304>
- Ebrahimi, Hourieh & Hosseini, Hamed Mohammad. 2021. Investigating the use of singular ‘*they*’ across two social contexts: A comparative study of Iranian and Polish EFL students. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly* 24, 65–85. <https://doi.org/10.32038/ltrq.2021.24.04>
- Kiss, Nikolett. 2023. *Usage, acceptability, and attitudes towards singular they among students of English language studies*. Debrecen: University of Debrecen unpublished MA thesis. <https://hdl.handle.net/2437/353362>
- Ma, Zheng & Wu, Shiyu & Xu, Shiyang. 2022. Acceptance and online interpretation of “genderneutral pronouns”: Performance asymmetry by Chinese English as a foreign language learners. *Frontiers in Psychology* 12, 765777. 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.765777>
- Stojanovska-Ilievska, Natasha. 2024. A corpus-based study of epicene pronouns used by Macedonian learners of English. *Open Linguistics* 10(1), 20240017. 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2024-0017>
- Stormbom, Charlotte. 2021. *Gendered language in flux: The use of epicene pronouns in EFL and ELF writing*. Helsinki: Åbo Akademi University dissertation. <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-12-4026-3>

## Gender-Neutral Pronouns in the German Language. A Survey-Study for German-Speaking Non-Binary People

Aliyah-Sophie Annaëlle Manzke ([aliyah-sophie.manzke@unifr.ch](mailto:aliyah-sophie.manzke@unifr.ch)), Charlie Sarbach ([charlie.sarbach@unifr.ch](mailto:charlie.sarbach@unifr.ch))

Universität de Fribourg

Pronouns are words used to refer to objects or people. The German language specifies the grammatical gender of the referent, thus forcing speakers to choose between *sie* ('she'), *er* ('he') or *es* ('it'). Due to its pejorative potential, the pronoun *es* ('it') is not suited to refer to people (Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 89). Since there is little to no data about gender-neutral pronouns in the German language, no unified solution exists (Löhr 2022: 354-355). The RfdR (Rat für deutsche Rechtschreibung, 'Council for German Orthography') does not provide the public with satisfying options (Hennig 2024). Therefore, it was the goal of my seminar paper to find a gender-neutral (neo-)pronoun for the German language to make referring to non-binary people possible and maybe even lay the foundation for a unified solution.

To open the scientific research into this topic, it seemed adequate to conduct a survey for German-speaking non-binary people to investigate by which gender-neutral pronoun(s) they feel represented by the most. The survey had a total of 70 participants and brought enriching insights about the participants' feelings and preferences concerning gender-neutral pronouns: for example, participants' experiences with being misgendered and the significance of different social contexts when sharing their preferred pronouns.

Preliminary results reveal that the participants most preferred strategy to express their gender-identity is through using no pronouns at all which is not a pronoun but still an interesting result. Still, the second-most preferred strategies are the gender-neutral pronouns *dey* / *dem* / *denen* / *deren* and *they* / *them*, proving that a gender-neutral pronoun is indeed possible for the German language.

Since *dey* is relatively close to English singular *they*, it might be a suitable solution for the German language. Nevertheless, future research is required to test the usage of said gender-neutral pronoun, speakers' tendencies towards it and its economic integration into the German grammatical system.

### References

- Kotthoff, Helga & Damaris Nübling. 2018. *Genderlinguistik. Eine Einführung in Sprache, Gespräch und Geschlecht*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Löhr, Ronja. 2022. »Ich denke, es ist wichtig, dass sich so viele Menschen wie möglich repräsentiert fühlen.« In: Gabriele Diewald/Damaris Nübling (eds.): *Genus – Sexus – Gender*. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 349–379.
- Hennig, Mathilde. 2024. "Zum Stand des Genders am Ende der dritten Amtsperiode des Rats für deutsche Rechtschreibung. Ein Kommentar. *ZGL* 52(1): 212–226. <https://doi.org/10.1515/zgl-2024-2009>

# Bridging Gender-Inclusivity and Normative Grammar: The Emergence of New Personal Reference Strategies in Non-Binary Wikipedia Biographies

Jochen Matthies ([jochen.matthies@indogerm.uni-halle.de](mailto:jochen.matthies@indogerm.uni-halle.de))

Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

In recent years, the steady increase in the number of people self-identifying as non-binary has sparked linguistic innovations in many different societies. Depending on the typological properties of individual languages, such innovations may concern different lexical and grammatical domains. To name just two starkly contrasting examples: whereas the adaptation of singular *they* solves most of the problems in English, Spanish speakers have had to innovate not only personal pronouns, but also inflectional morphology in nouns, articles and adjectives. These far-reaching linguistic interventions have sparked considerable backlash in politics, the media and scholarly discourse.

Very little cross-linguistic work has yet been conducted on the adaptation of these new structures in actual language use. Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, presents itself as a highly suitable corpus to pursue such contrastive research: It exists in over 300 different languages, and its individual articles are collaboratively created hypertexts whose edit history is publicly available. My work focuses on Wikipedia articles about non-binary individuals, aiming to identify lexico-grammatical strategies for accurate personal reference. In this talk I will describe the currently prevailing strategies in four language versions (English, Spanish, German and Hebrew) as well as their historical usage trajectories. As a corpus, I use the entirety of biographical articles categorised as "non-binary person". The data presented are the result of a qualitative analysis of a selection of article texts and their version histories.

In summary, it can be observed that two main principles influence the emergence of non-binary personal reference strategies: on the one hand, the willingness to recognise non-binary identities and on the other hand, the commitment to normative grammar and orthography. Due to typological differences, the development of such strategies has played out quite distinctly in each language.

## References

- Corbett, Greville G. 1991. *Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gredel, Eva / Storrer, Angelika / Herzberg, Laura. 2019. Linguistische Wikipedistik. *Zeitschrift für Germanistische Linguistik* 46 (3), 480–493.
- Lind, Miriam. 2024. Neopronomen, Personenbezeichnungen, Anrede: Sprachliche Herausforderungen im Umgang mit nichtbinärem Geschlecht. in: Ewels, Andrea-Eva/ Nübling, Damaris (eds.): *Geschlechterbewusste Sprache. Argumente, Positionen, Perspektiven*. Baden-Baden: Georg Olms, 183–201.
- Papadopoulos, Ben. 2025. *A humanistic theory of gender in language*. Unpublished manuscript.

## Queer Interventions in Indexing Gender in Hindi

Enakshi Nandi ([enakshinandi.prof@gmail.com](mailto:enakshinandi.prof@gmail.com))

Jawaharlal Nehru University

What happens when a grammatical concept as central to the western queer discourse as pronouns is untranslatable in another language? How do speakers of that language, who have grown up conceptualising and articulating their gender identit(ies) within a western queer discursive framework, express themselves in their own language? In the absence of obvious linguistic parallels – such as gendered pronouns – between the two languages, what are the linguistic tools that the speakers use – or develop – to index their gender identit(ies) in their language?

In this paper, I explore these questions through a set of interviews conducted with non-binary identifying speakers of Hindi – a language that has grammatical gender, gender agreement on the verb and adjective, but no gendered pronouns. These English-speaking individuals found it challenging to express their gender and sexual identities in Hindi, both for the limitations presented by the grammatical system of Hindi, and for the lack of a robust popular discourse on the subject. What emerged was a pattern in the way some people were navigating the gender agreement system in Hindi, choosing to use the non-gendered agreement markers on the verb for plural or honorificity instead of the gendered ones for singular, informal referents.

This paper also discusses the ways in which the transfeminine/femme hijra and koti community subverts the gender agreement system in Hindi along a binary axis, as documented by Hall (1995, 2002) and Nagar (2008). The two studies illustrate how the ways in which each group conceptualises their gender and sexual identit(ies) plays a significant role in how they actively choose to engage with a given language and reconfigure its gendering patterns to represent their own gender(s) as accurately as possible.

### References

- Hall, Kira. 1995. *Hijra/Hijrin: Language and gender identity*. California: UC Berkeley PhD dissertation.
- Hall, Kira. 2002. “Unnatural” gender in Hindi. In Marlis Hellinger and Hadumod Bussman (eds.), *Gender Across Languages: The Linguistic Representation of Women and Men*, 133-162. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Nagar, Ila. 2008. *Language, gender and identity: The case of kotis in Lucknow India*. Ohio: Ohio State University PhD thesis.

# The Grammar of Non-Binarity: Corpus Evidence on the Morphosyntactic Integration of New Gender Suffixes in German

Samira Ochs ([ochs@ids-mannheim.de](mailto:ochs@ids-mannheim.de))

Leibniz Institute for the German Language, Mannheim

In German, grammatical gender in personal nouns is closely linked to social gender. The masculine, traditionally used generically for mixed or unspecified groups, has long been challenged through gender-neutral formulations or by making women linguistically visible. Since the legal recognition of a third gender option in Germany in 2018 and growing awareness of gender diversity, new forms such as the asterisk or colon (Linguist\*innen, Linguist:innen) have emerged to include non-binary identities. These are hotly debated, with critics calling them ‘ungrammatical’ disruptions of German morphology, especially in the singular (e.g. Zifonun 2021).

This paper presents the first large-scale corpus-based study of the morphological and syntactic integration of these forms. Drawing on a manually annotated dataset of 22,407 types and 225,255 tokens with gender symbols (Ochs & Rüdiger 2025), the analysis demonstrates that the integration of these forms is largely consistent with German derivational morphology: *-\*in/-\*innen* attaches almost exclusively to derivational bases, and most formations – apart from slash variants – are grammatical according to standard morphological rules. The empirical data therefore support classification as a suffix (cf. Völkening 2025 for a theoretical approach).

Usage patterns reveal a strong preference for plural forms (97% of tokens) and bare singular noun phrases (38.3% of singulars), which are grammatically unproblematic. Extended singular NPs, often the focus of criticism, are rare, yet 37.8% contain modifiers with a gender symbol and only 23.5% show feminine agreement. Semantically, singular forms refer explicitly to non-binary individuals in only about 5% of cases, suggesting that most uses function as hyperonyms. By empirically grounding the discussion of gender symbols in large-scale linguistic evidence, this study challenges claims of their incompatibility with German grammar, highlights both routinized integration and sites of variation, and situates these innovative forms within the broader process of queering the representation of grammatical gender.

## References

- Ochs, Samira & Jan Oliver Rüdiger. 2025. Of stars and colons: A corpus-based analysis of gender-inclusive orthographies in German press texts. In Dominic Schmitz, Simon David Stein & Viktoria Schneider (eds.), *Linguistic Intersections of Language and Gender. Of gender bias and gender fairness*, 31–62. Düsseldorf: Düsseldorf University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111388694-003>.
- Völkening, Lena. 2025. What if *-\*in* is a new suffix? In Dominic Schmitz, Simon David Stein & Viktoria Schneider (eds.), *Linguistic intersections of language and gender: Of gender bias and gender fairness*, 11–30. Düsseldorf: Düsseldorf University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111388694-002>.
- Zifonun, Gisela. 2021. Eine Linguistin denkt nach über den Genderstern. *Sprachreport* 37(2). 46–51. <https://doi.org/10.14618/sr-2-2021-zifo>.

# Reveling in Tolerance: Queer Language Pedagogy under Legislative Constraint

Lindsay Preseau ([lpreseau@IASTATE.EDU](mailto:lpreseau@IASTATE.EDU))

Iowa State University

In the United States, recent legislation increasingly targets the teaching of queer language practices within educational settings. While federal policies increasingly target “gender ideology,” many states have also passed more specific restrictions on gender- and sexuality-related content. The state of Iowa, for example, has gone so far as to propose a specific ban on the teaching of gender-inclusive forms in language classes for languages with grammatical gender. This paper examines how language teachers are responding to such legislation and the broader culture of fear surrounding it (Butler 2024). While previous work has centered approaches to teaching queer language that emphasize applied linguistic theory and student-informed approaches (e.g., Knisley 2022, Peters 2020, Preseau et al. 2024), this study focuses on teachers’ own perspectives, exploring both their rationales and modes of resistance.

Drawing on a qualitative survey of 51 primary and secondary teachers of Spanish, French, German, and Russian, I employ Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006) to understand how educators describe their pedagogical practices related to inclusive forms (e.g., gender-neutral pronouns, neopronouns, and morphological innovations), the affective stakes they attach to these practices, and the ways they articulate the significance queer pedagogy under constraint. While participants overwhelmingly report anxiety surrounding ongoing resistance, they often frame their gender-affirming pedagogy in terms of “tolerance.” Although this framing is often critiqued as insufficient, I argue that in the current political climate, “tolerance” operates as a powerful mode of resistance, allowing teachers to navigate surveillance, protect students, and preserve queer visibility in their classrooms. Ultimately, this study highlights the role of queer linguistics in applied linguistics and language policy, underscoring the necessity of documenting and amplifying the voices of teacher-practitioners in repressive educational contexts globally.

## References

- Braun, Virginia, & Victoria Clarke. 2006. *Using thematic analysis in psychology*. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2). 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Butler, Judith. 2024. *Who’s Afraid of Gender?* New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Knisley, Kris. 2022. Gender-just language teaching and linguistic competence development. *Foreign Language Annals* 55(3). 644-667. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12641>
- Peters, Hugues. 2020. Gender-inclusivity and gender-neutrality in foreign language teaching: The case of French. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 3(3). 83-195. <https://doi.org/10.29140/ajal.v3n3.332>
- Preseau, Lindsay, LeAnne Spino & Niko Tracksdorf. 2024. Gender Inclusivity Across the Curriculum: An Exploration of Novice and Advanced Course Content through Student Perspectives. In Kris Knisley & Eric Russell (eds.) *Redoing Linguistic Worlds: Unmaking Gender Binaries, Remaking Gender Pluralities*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. 89-116. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800415102-010>

## The Linguistic Construction of Non-Binary and Trans Identities on Reddit

Camille Ternisien ([camille.ternisien@univ-lorraine.fr](mailto:camille.ternisien@univ-lorraine.fr))

Université de Lorraine

The aim of this study is to determine the ways in which individual speakers or groups from the queer community use specific linguistic markers to establish, share and consolidate their individual or collective social identity. More specifically, the focus will be on non-binary and/or trans communities, and how they navigate the notions of labels, passing, performance and self-vs. perceived image.

Can we identify recurring linguistic patterns in these speakers' discourse about identity? These could be specific linguistic markers, lexical neologisms, as well as discursive strategies.

To answer this question, we will explore Reddit, a "social news aggregation, web content rating, and discussion website" (Medvedev et al 2017:184) which consists of over 138,000 communities. Subreddits dedicated to the trans community (such as r/Trans) provide spaces for members to exchange advice and share personal experiences about transitioning.

Preliminary data collection (selecting the most recent posts) highlights a few prominent features:

- neologisms such as "transbiens", "femboy", "mpreg",
- acronyms such as "AGAB", "AFAB", "AMAB", "FTM", "MTF", "TW",
- metalinguistic discourse: "chaser (someone who is attracted to trans women)", "Can we stop with the omnipresent transfem/transmasc"?
- questions: "I came out [...], what now?", "What if ...?",
- the semantic field of fear "scared", "worried", "nervous",
- the following lexemes linked to a perceived identity: "to pass", "to be read as", "to assume",
- the expression of wishing something was known or done before,
- asking for advice/help: "Shoud I ...?", "any advice welcome",
- sharing a problem/feeling: "I don't know what to do",
- the large presence of the pronoun "I" followed by a BE+ V-ING form,
- more generally, the notions of transphobia/stigma, body dysphoria, misgendering, coming out, etc.

The next steps will consist in selecting specific data dealing with the notions of identity, labels, image, etc. and extracting it into a concordancer to investigate whether particular linguistic patterns appear and what they reveal about the trans and non-binary community discourse.

### References

- Bamberg, Michael, De Fina, Anna, & Schiffrin, Deborah. 2011. Discourse and identity construction. In *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 177-199). New York, NY: Springer New York.
- Eckert, Penelope. 2014. The Problem with Binaries: Coding for Gender and Sexuality. *Language and Linguistics Compass*. 8. 10.1111/lnc3.12113.
- Flesch, Marie. 2020. lol thats how reddit talks ;) : le site américain Reddit comme espace de variation de l'anglais. Étude de corpus intersectionnelle et quantitative d'usages non standard, au prisme du genre, de l'âge et de l'ethnicité. ff10.4000/glad.2206ff. ffhal-05208413f
- Greco, Luca. 2012. Production, circulation and deconstruction of gender norms in LGBTQ speech practices. *Discourse Studies*, 14(5), 567–585. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43496314>
- Harvey, Keith. 2002. Camp talk and citationality: a queer take on 'authentic' and 'represented' utterance. *Journal of pragmatics*, 34(9), 1145-1165.
- Jones, Lucy. 2016. Language and gender identities. In *The Routledge handbook of language and identity* (pp. 210-224). Routledge.
- Lanehart, Sonja. L. 1996. The language of identity. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 24(4), 322-331.

- Leap, William. L. 2013. Commentary II: Queering language and normativity. *Discourse & Society*, 24(5), 643–648. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24441617>
- Levon, Erez. 2015. Integrating intersectionality in language, gender, and sexuality research. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 9(7), 295–308.
- Medvedev Alexey, Lambiotte Renaud & Delvenne Jean-Charles, 2017, “The Anatomy of Reddit: An Overview of Academic Research”, *Dynamics on and of Complex Networks*, 183–204.
- McConnell-Ginet, Sally. 2003. “What's in a name?” Social labeling and gender practices. *The handbook of language and gender*, 69–97.
- Motschenbacher, Heiko, & Stegu, Martin. 2013. Queer Linguistic approaches to discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 24(5), 519–535.

## Breaking up with an AI Boyfriend: Queer Linguistic Constructions of Intimacy and Rupture in Reddit Narratives

Johanathan Woodworth ([Johan.Woodworth@msvu.ca](mailto:Johan.Woodworth@msvu.ca)), Andrea Fraser ([Andrea.Fraser10@msvu.ca](mailto:Andrea.Fraser10@msvu.ca)), Phillip Joy ([Phillip.joy@msvu.ca](mailto:Phillip.joy@msvu.ca)), Conor Barker ([conor.barker1@msvu.ca](mailto:conor.barker1@msvu.ca))

Mount Saint Vincent University

This paper examines how queer Reddit users linguistically construct intimacy with AI companions and narrate rupture following algorithmic interventions that restrict relational affordances. Drawing on a purposively sampled corpus of 3,380 posts from r/Replika, r/ChatGPT, r/singularity, and related subreddits collected between 7 August and 4 October 2025, this study analyses 33 queer-identified narratives documenting attachment, disruption, and resistance surrounding the August 2025 GPT-5 model transition. Working within Queer Linguistics, the analysis investigates how users negotiate intimacy and identity through interaction with AI systems that generate language based on patterned responses. Three analytical domains structure the study. First, queer users employ pronominal innovation and gender reconfiguration, using hybrid forms such as *he-they* and neologisms like *enbybot* to collaboratively construct non-binary relational identities with algorithmic interlocutors (Bucholtz & Hall 2004; Calder 2020). Second, intimate vocabularies are expanded through queer linguistic creativity, with terms such as *datemate*, *sparkmate*, and *heartcodesignalling* affective ties beyond heteronormative romance scripts (Leap & Boellstorff 2004; Miller 2016). Third, disruption discourse frames moderation and model changes as ideological interventions rather than neutral technical updates. Users describe AI companions as “lobotomized” or “straightened,” interpreting governance as cultural erasure and responding through euphemism, code play, and local model fine-tuning (Proferes et al. 2021). These findings show how queer linguistic practices illuminate the interaction between grammatical structures and algorithmic governance, revealing AI companionship as a site of both queer world-building and contestation.

### References

- Bucholtz, Mary, and Kira Hall. 2004. Theorizing identity in language and sexuality research. *Language in Society* 33(4). 469–515. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404504334020>
- Calder, J. 2020. Language and sexuality: Language and LGBTQ+ communities. *The International Encyclopedia of Linguistic Anthropology*, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118786093.iela0206>
- Leap, William L., and Tom Boellstorff (eds.). 2004. *Speaking in queer tongues: Globalization and gay language*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Miller, S. 2016. Queer Literacy Framework. In N. Rodriguez, W. Martino, J. Ingrey & E. Brockenbrough (eds.), *Critical Concepts in Queer Studies and Education*, 259–272. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55425-3\\_26](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55425-3_26)
- Proferes, Nicholas, Nicholas Jones, Sarah Gilbert, Casey Fiesler & Michael Zimmer. 2021. Studying Reddit: A systematic overview of disciplines, approaches, methods, and ethics. *Social Media + Society* 7(2). 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051211019004>

## On the way to Applied Queer Linguistics?

Martin Stegu ([Martin.Stegu@wu.ac.at](mailto:Martin.Stegu@wu.ac.at))

Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien

This contribution seeks to explore the existing, possible, and perhaps also impossible connections between Queer Linguistics and Applied Linguistics from a (science-theoretical / science-sociological) meta-perspective.

Initial reflections on these questions were presented and discussed at a symposium on “Queer Applied Linguistics” at the AILA World Congress in Lyon in 2023 (<https://aila2023.sciences-conf.org/401573/document>, but see also Stegu 2021, 165-167). An anthology on this topic is currently in the process of being produced (Stegu / Rowlett / Chojnicka in prep.), and we would very much welcome additional ideas and feedback for the planned introduction and framing of our book.

Queer Linguistics has undoubtedly always shared a strong affinity with the concerns of Applied Linguistics (defined as “the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue“, Brumfit 1995, 27). It has arguably never been pursued with the exclusive aim of only *describing* heteronormative language and discourse phenomena, but has also consistently sought to reflect on ways of improving and / or transforming previously established and problematic linguistic and communicative practices. Moreover, the strongly pronounced activist side of queer movements suggests an additional closeness between Queer and Applied Linguistics.

In this sense, Queer Linguistics can often (perhaps mostly) be regarded as implicit (subfield of) Applied Linguistics (with particular proximity to Critical Applied Linguistics, see Pennycook 2021). This presentation, however, will address some basic questions concerning the directions that explicitly Applied Queer Linguistics might or should take, as well as potential obstacles to a closer rapprochement between queer linguistic and applied linguistic research communities. Two further central questions arise: What exactly does “queer” mean in the designation of the research field “(Applied) Queer Linguistics”? In our case, does “queer” refer only to an interest in critiquing (linguistic) normativity in relation to sexual orientation and gender identities? Or must “Queer Linguistics” (or, more broadly, “queer research”) also be ‘different’ in its methodology and overall approach – perhaps by adopting a more critical and more ‘anarchistic’ stance (Feyerabend 1975) than traditional (linguistic) scholarship?

Finally, can and should Applied Queer Linguistics – positioned in a kind of mediating role – help to reduce the widespread lack of understanding and the often hostile attitudes, found among large sections of the population towards both Queer Theory and queer ways of life?

### References

- Brumfit, Christopher J. 1995. Teacher professionalism and research. In Guy Cook & Barbara Seidlhofer (eds). *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 27-41.
- Feyerabend, Paul K. (1975). *Against method: Outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge*. London, England: New Left Books.
- Pennycook, Alastair. *Critical applied linguistics: A critical re-introduction*. London: Routledge, 2021.
- Stegu, Martin / Rowlett, Benedict J. L. / Chojnicka, Joanna. In prep. *Advancing Applied Queer Linguistics: From theory to practice*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Stegu, Martin. 2021. Queere Linguistik: Potenzial, Probleme, Grenzen. *Muttersprache* 131 (2), 159-171.