THE POLITICS OF NEOPRONOUNS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRONOUN USE AMONGST NONBINARY LANGUAGE USERS IN PENINSULAR SPANISH AND BRITISH ENGLISH

by

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ABSTRACT:

Nonbinary language users of Peninsular Spanish and British English, amongst other languages, consistently confront the difficulty of expressing their identities and advocating for their inclusion in two languages that either lack or invalidate ways to refer to genders other than male and female. In response to their politically and linguistically marginalised position, nonbinary language users are making use of a variety of innovative linguistic forms to communicate their identities and advocate for their inclusion in both language and society. This thesis will explore a key element of this linguistic innovation: the use of (neo)pronouns.

In this thesis I ask: how are nonbinary language users of Peninsular Spanish and British English using pronouns for themselves and for other nonbinary people? And, most importantly, how is this use of pronouns impacted by the national-linguistic context – that is to say, the combination of linguistic and sociopolitical factors present in a particular nation state and its national language(s) – of Britain and Spain? I propose that these contexts diverge significantly in their relationships to language, gender, and trans and nonbinary existence and that this impacts the ways that nonbinary people use pronouns to navigate their existences and the sociopolitical contexts that surround them.

For every trans and nonbinary person, in Britain, Spain, and beyond. We'll be alright, revolution lovers.

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Table of Acronyms

AGAB	Assigned Gender At Birth
AP	Associated Press
EA	Equality Act
GNP	Gender Neutral Pronoun
GRA	Gender Recognition Act
LGBT(Q+)	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans (Queer, and other marginalised genders and sexualities)
LND	*Lenguaje No binario Directo* (Direct Nonbinary Language)
LNI	*Lenguaje No binario Indirecto* (Indirect Nonbinary Language)
PC	Politically Correct
PSOE	*Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party)
RAE	*Real Academia Española* (Spanish Royal Academy)
TERF	Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist
TRHC	Transition-Related Healthcare

The Politics of Neopronouns: A Comparative Study of Pronoun Use Amongst Nonbinary Language Users in Peninsular Spanish and British English

Chapter 1: Introduction

Nonbinary language users of Peninsular Spanish and British English, amongst other languages, consistently confront the difficulty of expressing their identities and advocating for their inclusion in two languages that either lack or invalidate ways to refer to genders other than male and female. To quote Spanish nonbinary activist and scholar Mel Constain (2020:3):

> *"Las personas no binarias suponemos la otredad, lo que cuestiona lo incuestionable y natural de la hegemonía [...] no encajamos ni aquí ni allí, rompemos la dicotomía."*
>
> 'Nonbinary people represent the Other, who questions the unquestionable and natural elements of hegemony [...] we fit in neither here nor there. We break the dichotomy.'[1]

In response to their politically and linguistically marginalised position, nonbinary language users make use of a variety of innovative linguistic forms to communicate their identities and advocate for their inclusion in both language and society. This thesis will explore a key element of this linguistic innovation: the use of (neo)pronouns.

In this thesis I ask: how are nonbinary language users of Peninsular Spanish and British English using pronouns for themselves and for other nonbinary people? And how is this use of pronouns impacted by the national-linguistic contexts – that is to say, the combination of linguistic and sociopolitical factors present in a particular nation state and its national language(s) – of Britain and Spain? I propose that these contexts diverge significantly in their relationships to language, gender, and trans and nonbinary existence and that this impacts the ways that nonbinary people use language, specifically pronouns, to navigate their identities and existences.

Zimman (2020:13-14) suggests that nonbinary people "are well-poised to answer questions about linguistic innovation, agency, and cognition" given their role in creating new linguistic practices. Examples of nonbinary language use include: the innovation of new labels, from *achillean*[2] to *xenogender*[3]; grammatical innovations such as the introduction of the *-x*

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, translations from Spanish are my own.

[2] "Achillean, also known as men-loving men (MLM), apollian, chaeronean, or wildean refers to a man or man-aligned person who is attracted to other men or man-aligned people. One may or may not be attracted to other genders as well." ('Achillean', 2021)

[3] "Xenogender is an umbrella term for non-binary gender identities that cannot be fully described through their relation to concepts typically used to describe gender such as masculinity, femininity, androgyny, [etc.]. Instead, xenogenders can best be described through how they relate to things, beings, or concepts that most people don't think of as having to do with gender, such as animals, plants, things, or concepts." ('Xenogender', 2021)

and *-e* morphemes to denote nonbinary referents in Spanish, e.g. *amigx/amige,* 'friend-ALT.N.'[4]; new scopes for old pronouns, such as the transformation of singular *they*[5] from its use for non-specific or gender-unknown referents to denoting specific referents of known nonbinary gender; and new interactional practices such as introducing oneself with one's chosen pronouns.[6]

However, such linguistic forms do not exist outside of the sociopolitical contexts in which each language is used; rather, they are both influenced by and in turn influence such contexts, which are often antagonistic, sceptical, or violent towards nonbinary people. This thesis therefore explores the sociopolitical milieus inhabited by nonbinary language users within the national contexts of Britain and Spain. This includes the roles of actors such as political parties, media outlets, religious bodies, and the general public, and environments such as the workplace, educational settings, and online spaces. A key factor in this analysis is determining the ways in which such contexts affect the use of pronouns by nonbinary people in each country, and how nonbinary people respond to these contexts through their language use.

In this introduction, I will do the following:

- Explain my reasoning in choosing Peninsular Spanish and British English as my areas of study.
- Define the key terms used throughout this thesis in relation to nonbinary language use.
- Identify my research questions, theoretical framework, methodology, and positionality as a researcher.
- Outline the chapters of the thesis.

This will allow me to clearly define the terms on which this thesis approaches its subject matter, in order to enter into discussion of the subject on the same page as my readers.

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[4] In this thesis, gender neutral (i.e. not grammatically exclusively masculine or feminine) forms which do not correspond to standard Spanish will be glossed as ALT.N., while gender neutral forms which correspond to standard Spanish will be glossed as N.

[5] The choice to italicise pronoun sets and any non-English content is for ease of understanding for readers; it is not intended to convey any sense of falsity or otherness to any pronoun set or language.

[6] The use of the term 'chosen pronouns' to refer to the pronouns which best reflect an individual's understanding of their own gender is a deliberate one. Many trans and nonbinary people reject the term 'preferred pronouns', seeing the notion of 'preference' as implying that such pronouns are an optional courtesy rather than basic decency (Orson, 2021). 'Correct pronouns', on the other hand, has connotations with prescriptivist language ideologies which claim the authority to label certain language use as 'correct' or 'incorrect'. The term 'chosen pronouns' reflects the liberation inherent to self-determination of one's innate sense of gender, as opposed to implying that such a sense of gender is itself a choice.

1.1 Peninsular Spanish and British English

The choice to explore and compare Peninsular Spanish and British English as contexts of nonbinary pronoun use has both linguistic and sociopolitical dimensions. Firstly, the two languages differ greatly in terms of the role that gender plays in their respective grammars. Stahlberg et. al. (2007:164) identify Spanish as a "grammatical gender language", meaning that "gender is coded as a grammatical category" which surfaces in pronouns, adjectives, and nouns, most often using the masculine-coded suffix *-o*, and the feminine-coded suffix *-a*, e.g. *amigo, amiga* 'friend-M., friend-F.'. While there are limited grammatically neutral – or perhaps more accurately bigendered – forms, such as *estudiante* 'student-N.', there are no widely recognised singular or plural third-person gender-neutral pronouns (GNP), articles, or adjectival/nominal suffixes. This means that nonbinary Spanish language users must employ a significant amount of linguistic innovation in areas including but far from limited to third-person singular pronouns.

A common argument used by linguistic prescriptivists in Peninsular Spanish contexts, in particular the Real Academia Española (RAE)[7], is that grammatical gender (a "linguistic" category) is fully distinct from social gender (a "natural" category) (Bengoechea et. al., 2009; Vilella, 2012). While this argument may hold water when referring to the gendering of inanimate objects[8], it is clearly untrue that there is no inherent link between grammatically gendered pronouns and social gender, when both of these gender systems reflect and invest in a binary division of language users into discrete categories of 'male' and 'female'. As Merkhofer (2013:15-16) explains from a corpus linguistics perspective, "the encoding of relations [such as gender and hierarchy] into pronouns is inherently social, contingent upon practical knowledge of the world and society". Similarly, Conrod (2019:25) defines gender as "a social relationship which pronouns happen to grammaticalize in English [and in Spanish] in the third person". Here, the relationship between social gender and pronouns is still arbitrary on a formal linguistic basis, but the social implications of this grammaticalization are brought to the fore.

English, on the other hand, is categorised by Stahlberg et. al. (2007:165) as a "natural gender language", meaning that while "there is no grammatical marking of sex", third-person singular pronouns and some nouns, such as actor and actress, "have variable forms which reflect the sex of human beings". I disagree with certain elements of Stahlberg et. al.'s definition; firstly, I reject their use of the word "sex" to refer to the distinction between socially-constructed groups of individuals that is more accurately called 'gender'[9]. Secondly, I oppose

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[7] Spain's official royal institution with a mission to *"limpiar, fijar, y dar esplendor"* ("clean, fix, and give splendour") to the Spanish language (Zentella, 2017).

[8] Though there are linguists who argue that social gender impacts these grammatical gender forms as well (e.g. Boroditsky and Schmidt, 2000).

[9] After all, when a shop assistant calls me *he* or *she*, they are not doing so solely based on the visibility of my primary or secondary sex characteristics. They are doing so based on an infinite combination of

the idea that linguistic variables which differ when referring to gender are "natural" – these distinctions are socially constructed, and their codification within language reflects the hegemony of particular social structures within a given context (Koyama, 2003; Zimman, 2014). I will therefore instead follow Bassetti (2010) and Teso (2010) in categorising English as a "semantic gender language", given that the last vestiges of grammatical gender in English refer solely to lexicosemantic gendered categories. For this reason, nonbinary English language users often centre their linguistic innovations around third-person singular pronouns. What's more, the English pronoun *they*, most commonly used as the gender-neutral third-person plural, also has a long and wide-reaching history of use as a third-person singular GNP, usually when referring to individuals of unknown or unspecified gender (Bodine, 1975). While this use of the pronoun has been sanctioned by centuries of androcentric linguistic prescriptivism (ibid.), singular *they* nevertheless represents a pre-existing third-person singular GNP available to nonbinary language users of British English.

As well as the purely linguistic elements of the Peninsular Spanish and British English contexts, the sociopolitical aspects surrounding nonbinary language use and nonbinary identity more generally within each of these countries also provide insightful points of comparison, as will be elaborated in Ch.2. Spain is a country that has only very recently begun to acknowledge nonbinary people within any sort of public discourse, but where longstanding discourses around *lenguaje inclusivo* 'inclusive language' have cemented the issue of linguistic innovation regarding grammatical gender as a key political battleground (Bengoechea et. al., 2009). Britain, on the other hand, had not experienced a significant amount of controversy surrounding gender-neutral language since the feminist anti-sexist language interventions of the 1970s and 80s (ibid.); however, in the last five to ten years, the country has become, in the words of journalist Michelle Snow (2021), "a world-renowned transphobia hot-bed", leading to increasingly prominent and vitriolic discussion of nonbinary identities and language use, particularly within the media and political spheres. These two countries therefore present distinct sociopolitical realities for nonbinary people living within them, with lack of understanding paired with increased investment in linguistic prescriptivism within the Spanish context, compared to greater recognition leading to increased hostility within the British context.

1.2 Definitions

In order to discuss this issue clearly, it is important that certain key terms are defined. As Fisher (2019:29) observes: "The diffusion of transgender terminology in the last twenty or so

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factors which have influenced their perception and designation of me as belonging to a given gendered category.

years is a wonderful thing, but it means that even those within the transgender community may not be talking about the same thing." These definitions are therefore accurate to the terms' uses within this thesis, but may not be accurate to their uses in other contexts.

1.2.1 Trans and nonbinary

I follow Zimman (2014:18) in using the shortened form 'trans' as opposed to 'transgender' or 'transsexual' given that "in contemporary usage, the line between [them] is blurred" and in many regards unrelated to the core themes of this thesis. In general, 'transgender' is widely defined as a person whose gender does not wholly match that which they were assigned at birth (Barnes, 2020a:4)[10]. Melanen (2019:3-4) defines gender as "the psycho-social, changeable and innate part of a person's identity that can be named demiboy, woman, agender, genderflux, trans man, etc." However, they also make the important caveat that "unless otherwise specified, when I discuss "gender", "the gender binary" and related matters in this thesis, I am referring to a Western construction of gender." (ibid.) This construction should not be considered universal across different cultures and locations. 'Nonbinary' refers to a spectrum of genders or lack thereof that are not exclusively male or female. Melanen (2019:3) notes that nonbinary functions as both "an umbrella term that encompasses a multitude of distinct genders, and a gender unto itself".

I view trans as movement rather than a medical or social condition. This recognises "the potentiality and actuality of changes to theory, subjectivity, embodiment, space and time taking place through continual creation, fluidity and world-building", meaning transness is never fixed nor fixable (Pearce, 2018:9). My use of the term trans necessarily encompasses any and all individuals whose gender does not wholly match that which they were assigned at birth, which automatically includes nonbinary people. However, as legal scholar Ido Katri (2017:55) explains, "the term "transgender" has been criticized for erasing the differences in experiences and struggles of different groups", including "people who transgress gender" but "do not identify with this term at all and use a variety of other words to describe themselves and their experiences". There are many reasons why certain nonbinary people may not identify as trans, including the fact that "transgender identity is not a universal concept but rather rooted in particular times and places" (Zimman, 2020:3).

For these reasons, I will use the term 'nonbinary' to refer to all people whose gender does not fit solely into the binary gender model of male and female, and 'trans and nonbinary' to refer to all people whose gender does not wholly match their AGAB. While this is not necessarily a perfect solution, it is an effort to avoid what Feraday (2014:84) terms "coercive

[10] 'Assigned gender at birth' (AGAB) is the terminology many trans people choose to use to describe the ways in which certain societies enforce binary gendered identities onto individuals based largely on their primary sexual characteristics at birth. The term aims to be inclusive of intersex people, whose assigned gender at birth may not be based on their primary sexual characteristics.

labelling" – that is, labelling someone's identity without their consent – which "suggests the person being labelled doesn't 'know themselves' and needs to be told who they are".

1.2.2 Cis

Cis, on the other hand – short for cisgender – describes a person whose gender identity matches their AGAB, and who is therefore not trans or nonbinary. However, Pearce (2018:43) notes "the risks of creating a trans/cis binary that precludes the possibility of figurative, narrative and social movement both past and present, between and within these categories." It should therefore not be assumed that cis identities are any more clearly defined and hegemonic than trans and nonbinary identities.

1.2.3 Transphobia, nonbinary-phobia, misgendering, cisnormativity

Transphobia can be defined as "any negative attitudes [...] harboured towards trans people on the basis of our enactments of gender" (Bettcher, 2007:46). However, "this can intersect complexly with other forms of prejudicial attitude and behaviour, including homophobia, racism and sexism".

Katri (2017:70) suggests that discrimination against trans people is best described as a form of "intrasectionality" because "theoretically and practically it is almost impossible to distinguish whether discrimination is a result of one's perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, or perhaps a combination". Moreover, "what constitutes the modes by which one is prescribed to belong to a specific sex, gender, or sexual orientation cannot be read separately from one's race, class, ability, or any other social force that shapes one's life chances." This intrasectional approach should not be used to avoid labelling transphobia where and when it occurs, but rather to avoid "obscur[ing] the ways in which hierarchies of race, class, and sexuality situate and constitute such acts," (ibid.) along with other factors such as migrant status and participation in sex work (Lamble, 2008).

I follow trans researcher Fisher (2019:61-62) in using nonbinary-phobia to describe "the discrimination that non-binary folks face for being non-binary". This discrimination "ranges from the belief that everyone is either a man or a woman, to the idea that someone only identifies as non-binary because they haven't gained confidence in their identity as a man or a woman, to the idea that non-binary people only identify as non-binary because they are attention-seeking". It is interconnected with many other forms of transphobia and transmisogyny[11], but also takes on distinct forms specific to anti-nonbinary rhetoric and behaviour.

[11] Transmisogyny refers to "the negative attitudes, expressed through cultural hate, individual and state violence, and discrimination directed toward trans women and trans and gender non-conforming people on the feminine end of the gender spectrum" who were assigned male at birth (Kacere, 2014).

Transphobic and nonbinary-phobic violence is understood in this thesis to be any form of behaviour which creates 'unliveable' lives for trans and nonbinary people (Fisher, 2019:54). This includes physical, institutional, and epistemic violence, defined by Garbe (2013, trans. Brunner, 2015) as "a forced delegitimation, sanctioning and repression [...] of certain possibilities of knowing, going hand in hand with an attempted enforcement [...] of other possibilities of knowing." In the case of trans- and nonbinary-phobia, this may manifest as: denial or scepticism towards trans and nonbinary existences; the subordination of trans and nonbinary existences to cisnormative, binary-enforcing ways of knowing and being; and the scapegoating of societal ills onto the trans and/or nonbinary Other. As Norman (1999:353) explains, this encompasses many acts that "would not ordinarily be thought of as violence [...] It is violence all the same, and deserves to be seen for what it is."

Epistemic violence against trans and nonbinary people often reinforces cisnormativity, which refers to "the idea that cisgender identities are "normal", "natural", and "factual", while transgender identities are "abnormal", "unnatural", and "fictional"" (Zimman, 2019:176). This may involve misgendering, which refers to "the microaggression of using incorrect pronouns or personal nouns" for an individual, thereby invalidating their gender identity (Melanen, 2019).

1.2.4 Neopronouns

The term 'neopronouns' is notoriously difficult to define, even within trans linguistics spaces. Melanen (2019:18) defines them as "new gender-indeterminate pronouns", but this leaves the question of what can be defined as "new". For example, *fae/faer* pronouns, coined by Tumblr[12] user Eidolan before 9 November 2013 and considered some of the earliest modern neopronouns ('Faerself', 2021), would almost certainly be considered neopronouns. But what about *per* pronouns, created by John Clark in 1972 and popularised by the 1976 novel Woman on the Edge of Time ('Personself', 2021)? Or *thon* pronouns, coined in 1858 by Charles Crozat Converse, which appeared in the Merriam-Webster Unabridged dictionary from 1934 to 1961 (Merriam-Webster, 2021)?

Feraday (2014:1-2) defines 'neo-identities' as "new or uncommon words used to describe sexual orientation, romantic orientation, and gender identity. These identity labels communicate experiences of gender and attraction that aren't represented in mainstream language." Similarly, neopronouns are new or uncommon pronouns used to refer to individuals whose gender identities are not wholly represented by mainstream pronouns. As is the case with neo-identities, some neopronouns "are highly specific and personal, only used by a handful of people; others [...] are slowly working their way into the mainstream." (ibid.)

[12] Tumblr is a microblogging and social networking website popular among young people and members of the LGBTQ+ community. The peak of its popularity occurred between 2013, when it was purchased by Yahoo! Inc for 1.1 billion USD, and 2019, when it was purchased for 3 million USD. (Statista, 2021)

A key area of contention is whether *they/them* as a pronoun used to refer to a specific, known individual represents a neopronominal use of a pronoun that could in no way be described as 'new'. This will be explored further in Ch.4, however for the time being 'neopronouns' shall be defined as any personal singular pronouns other than *he/him*, *she/her*, or *they/them* in English, or *él* or *ella* in Spanish.

Neopronouns are most commonly associated with trans and nonbinary language users, with Airton (2018:791-792) stating that "it can be assumed that most GNP users do identify somewhere under the transgender umbrella". However, Airton cautions against making a direct correlation between nonbinary identity and use of GNPs, given that Wentling (2015, in ibid.) "found that less than half of respondents who identified outside of the male/female binary reported using a GNP" and also that "it is anecdotally apparent that some men and women – whether transgender or not – use a GNP, for various reasons"[13]. They therefore stress the need for a "de-coupling of pronouns and gender identities".

Spanish neopronouns, or *neopronombres*, have rarely been the subject of academic investigation outside of translation studies discussions of how best to translate English neopronouns into Spanish (e.g. Monserrat Vicent, 2017; López León, 2020; Bailach Adsuara, 2021). This work aims to bring a linguistic and sociopolitical analysis of neopronouns to the study of Peninsular Spanish nonbinary pronoun use. Since the canonised Peninsular Spanish pronominal system does not have any form of third person singular GNP that is used for people (therefore excluding *ello*, a third person singular pronoun which is gender-neutral but which corresponds to British English *it* and is rarely used as a chosen pronoun), all innovative Peninsular Spanish GNPs would be considered *neopronouns* – most commonly *elle* but also *elu*, *ellx,* and *ol* amongst others[14].

1.3 Overview of the thesis

1.3.1 Research questions

This thesis asks:

- What are the linguistic and sociopolitical contexts surrounding nonbinary pronoun use in Peninsular Spanish and British English?
- How do these contexts affect the use of pronouns by nonbinary language users in both languages?

[13] As a trans man who uses *he/him*, *fae/faer*, or *xe/xyr* pronouns, I am one of these people.

[14] For examples of these pronouns in use, see Peña (2021), Zephyr (2016), and @EmmerWeiss (2021).

- How can we promote nonbinary pronoun use and resist linguistic trans- and nonbinary-phobia within these two contexts?

In answering these questions, I am looking to locate sources of conflict and possibilities for intervention in the use of nonbinary pronouns, learning from and contributing to current discourses and practices within nonbinary communities in Britain and Spain.

1.3.2 Theoretical framework

To quote health researcher Ruth Pearce (2018:6), "This [thesis] is not concerned with establishing what gender 'is' (or, for that matter, what sex 'is'), or how this relates to trans identities [...] However, this work is based on an acknowledgement that trans people are real, valid and deserving of affirmation".[15] As Sarah Ahmed (2016:29) explains, "An existence can be nullified by the requirement that an existence be evidenced." There is therefore no requirement for trans and nonbinary existences to prove themselves as valid within this work.

A vital component of this work is that it draws directly from trans knowledges: "discourses of trans possibility constructed in and through trans people's communities, activisms and academic work" (Pearce, 2018:160-161). I aim to counter the weight of nonbinary people's language use being talked *about*, and to instead let nonbinary people produce their own knowledges about themselves and their communities. Following Feraday (2014:46), I try to "acknowledge many 'ways of knowing,' the many places critical analysis can come from: activists, academics, writers, artists, bloggers". This is particularly pertinent given the limited access many trans and nonbinary people have to academic spaces and the limited access that academic spaces have to trans and nonbinary people and our up-to-date language use. It is for this reason that I draw on sources including Wikis, YouTube videos, and social media posts created by trans and nonbinary people.

Centring the knowledges of nonbinary participants is of particular importance due to both the severe lack of linguistic studies into trans and nonbinary communities until very recently and also the problematic history of linguistic researchers' behaviours towards trans people as objects of study. Examples of this include delegitimising their identities and labelling them as 'linguistic deviants' according to the norms of language authorities and cisgender language users (Hall, 2003; Edelman, 2014; Zimman, 2020).

In direct opposition to such academic precedents, this thesis is embedded in both a theory and a methodology of trans linguistics, a discipline which "centres trans practices and subjectivities, not as rare exceptions, but as central to any understanding of gender" and

[15] For a comprehensive overview of sexed and gendered identities through a nonbinary framework, see Constain (2020).

gendered language (Zimman, forthcoming, in Leap, 2021:8). Of particular importance to this study is the idea that "[trans linguistics] regards transformation, fluidity, and movement as central aspects of both identity and language" (Zimman, 2020:15). I am therefore in agreement with Fisher (2019:25) that:

> "There will be transgressive ways of coming to and doing gender that this thesis and this author could never begin to imagine. This is welcomed."

In other words, part of me hopes that this research will be out of date in ten years' time, given the constant transformation, fluidity, and movement of nonbinary identities and languages. My aim is therefore to provide a snapshot of nonbinary pronoun use in Peninsular Spanish and British English at this particular moment in time, so as to provide a reference point for current and future academics, activists, and language users.

This thesis is also rooted in an intersectional analysis of sociopolitical factors impacting on individual language users' experiences. I understand intersectionality as "describing the reality faced by people whose identities and experiences reflect more than one category" so as to avoid exclusively analysing harm through only one lens, which "creates an inadequate understating of causes and solutions" (Katri, 2017:68). The systems considered within this analysis include capitalism, white supremacy, nationalism, cisheteropatriarchy, ableism, and neocolonialism, all of which are hegemonic within Britain and Spain. I define these systems as the practical and epistemic ways in which these societies function to centre power in the hands of the capitalist class, white people, national citizens, cisgender people, heterosexuals, men, non-disabled people, and (the descendants of) colonisers, and to disempower those who do not fit into these categories in various and often interlinked ways. An intersectional analysis also "means making a commitment to thinking carefully about placing the experiences and perspectives of people with the least social, economic and political power front and centre throughout the research process" (Morris and Bunjun, 2007:23). To achieve this, I have both centred nonbinary experiences throughout my analysis and also endeavoured to highlight the experiences of multiply marginalised nonbinary individuals.

It is clear that transphobia and nonbinary-phobia are inextricably tied to misogyny, and that therefore trans and nonbinary liberation should be a key factor in feminist political goals, since "our existence is seen as problematic only when there is a rigid gender hierarchy." (Koyama, 2003:257) This thesis therefore takes a transfeminist approach which "extends and advances feminism as a whole through our own liberation and coalition work with all others" (ibid.:245). This involves standing both alongside and within cis-dominated feminist movements, challenging cis feminists to question their cissexist and transphobic biases, and championing the core messages and ideologies of gender liberation and personal expression which should be key to feminist ideology.

Binaohan (2014:3) makes clear that "it is impossible to talk about the history of transgender with no explicit mention of colonialism or race" given that transmisogyny and the gender binary as institutions emerged from encounters between white colonisers and global indigenous gender formations (cf. Oyewumi, 1997; Lugones, 2007). Binaohan's work explores the myriad ways in which all people of colour, but especially those who are trans and nonbinary, experience trans/gender differently to white trans and nonbinary people. Examples of this are the heightened double-edged desexualisation and hyper-sexualisation of Black transfeminine people, with roots in anti-Black caricatures such as the Mammy and the Jezebel (Trudy, 2014; Olaleye, 2020), and the culturally-specific genders outside of 'man' and 'woman' that are embodied by many people of colour worldwide (Lugones, 2007). We must therefore understand the experiences of white nonbinary people as being racialised through their whiteness, and that they are likely to not be universally applicable to nonbinary people of colour.

It is also crucial to understand the role of disability within trans and nonbinary communities, with 40-55% of such communities self-identifying as disabled in previous studies (Zeluf et. al., 2016; Baril, Sansfaçon, and Gelly, 2020). This has been linked to "vulnerabilities that are unique for trans people in addition to other well-known health determinants" (Zeluf et. al.). It may also be related to trans and nonbinary people's greater tendency to be involved in sociopolitical spaces that encourage the recognition and self-identification of disabilities, including those that are often left out of mainstream understandings of disability, such as neurodivergence[16] and mental illness. Baril, Sansfaçon, and Gelly (2020) highlight that "for trans youth, disability has implications at all levels in their lived experience and cannot be separated from their trans identity". The experiences of disabled nonbinary people must therefore be understood through the intersections of transphobia, nonbinary-phobia, and ableism.

Finally, I firmly support the power of language use as a tool in transforming inequitable sociopolitical power structures. Koyama (2003:250) defines trans liberation as "taking back the right to define ourselves from medical, religious, and political authorities", and nonbinary pronoun use does just that: remoulding and recreating language so as to reflect and enact authentic, positive forms of nonbinary existence. Anarchist linguistics scholar Acosta Matos (2018) refers to nonbinary language use as a form of "prefigurative politics" which allows the ideals of a future gender-inclusive society to be enacted in the present. This ties to Allen and Lester's (1995:147) analysis of "discursive strategies for social change" – that is, linguistic forms used by marginalised speakers in order to attempt to "shift power arrangements to

[16] Neurodivergence is an umbrella term for "people whose brains function differently in one or more ways than is considered standard or typical" (Resnick, 2021). This includes autism, ADHD, and dyslexia. The adjectival form is neurodivergent, while a person who is not neurodivergent is called neurotypical.

benefit those previously lacking [power]." The authors highlight the use of new pronoun constructions as a mode of linguistic resistance to sociopolitical inequality.

Airton (2018:793) suggests an alternative theory of GNPs, which "do[es] not ascribe any tacit radical potential to GNPs", as they do not "assign any tacit badness to the normative or tacit goodness to the non- or anti-normative". While it is true that non-normative behaviour is not inherently a positive or even radical pursuit, I do believe there is a "tacit radical potential" to changing pronoun systems in many gendered languages, with Peninsular Spanish and British English serving as two pertinent case studies, given how intrinsically tied to gender ideologies these pronouns are. As Fisher (2014:65) explains, "Neo-identities are not necessarily more profound, enlightened, or progressive than established gender identities, but the existence of neo-identities as a whole makes persistent cultural norms about gender easier to challenge and unpack".

While it is possible for any resistance to disciplinary order to be absorbed by networks of power, such scepticism towards new articulations of identity removes the power of self-identification from those who are directly impacted by the violence of such networks. Said (1983:246–247) critiqued the all-encompassing nature of Foucault's theory of power, arguing that "there is always something beyond the reach of dominating systems, no matter how deeply they saturate society, and this is obviously what makes change possible". Therefore, it must be possible to invest in new identity and language forms without falling prey to neoliberal recuperation of radical resistance. O'Laughlin (2019:6) reminds us that: "While conversations about gender pronouns cannot necessarily change the physical violence that trans people face, wider discussion of trans people can enact the ontological shift that frames transgender subjugation as less of individual dysphoria and more of a structural disavowal." Discussions of trans and nonbinary pronoun use can help to shift the weight of epistemic violence off of marginalised language users and reframe our language use in terms of a sociopolitical tool for achieving liberation.

1.3.3 Methodology

As Leap (2021:6) explains:

> "Because the focus of queer inquiry is not neatly ordered or self-evident, such an inquiry itself proceeds with "a certain disloyalty to disciplinary methods" (Plummer 2005: 366) and often with a preference for a "scavenger methodology" (Halberstam 1998:13; Leap 2020:48–52) drawing data, modes of analysis, and linkages to theory from multiple sources, as appropriate to the particular research needs."

This research project makes use of a similar "scavenger methodology": Ch.3 uses critical discourse analysis to review the treatment of nonbinary pronoun use within journalistic articles across a range of news media publications in both Spain and Britain; Ch.4, on the other hand, analyses the responses of nonbinary users of Peninsular Spanish or British English to an in-depth questionnaire, video interviews, and a focus group.

This first methodological contribution is crucial for understanding the sociopolitical contexts in which nonbinary language users of Peninsular Spanish and British English find themselves. As Foucault (1978, in Pearce, 2018:8) elucidated, "Discourses do not simply describe the world: they also work to reproduce how the world is seen and experienced". This means that journalistic discourses necessarily shape the lives of nonbinary individuals. Because the majority of the discourses analysed in Ch.3 are constructed from outside of nonbinary spaces and worldviews, they offer a clear image of how cisnormative society discursively constructs nonbinary identity and nonbinary language use, which can be critically analysed to better understand the experiences of nonbinary participants. Ch.3 is largely concerned with language ideologies regarding nonbinary language use. Language ideologies are individual or collective schools of thought regarding language use, based on one's sociopolitical position and the legitimation, questioning, or rejection of power structures (Woolard, 1992). Language ideologies concerning nonbinary language use are therefore intimately tied to the structures of trans- and nonbinary-phobia.

On the other hand, the use of ethnographic research through questionnaires, video interviews, and focus groups directly corresponds to Eckert's (2014:533) advice to linguistics researchers that: "If we are interested in getting around either [the gender or sexuality] binary, we are not likely to do so entirely on the basis of large corpora, but through a variety of targeted ethnographic or, in some cases targeted survey, studies." Nonbinary identities and experiences are hugely varied, and while small-scale qualitative research cannot claim to substantiate broad assertions about nonbinary people as a whole, it can offer fascinating and detailed insights into a significantly under-researched population.

Another key factor throughout my methodology was caring for my own emotional wellbeing as a trans researcher during this process of analysis. Given that my daily life and wellbeing is directly impacted by these discourses, I had to consistently reckon with what Bradley and Myerscough (2015) call the "constant state of anticipation" that transphobia will occur or be discussed in detail, resulting in its "inevitability" regardless of the actual contents of each newspaper article or video interview. Costa, Lázaro Gutiérrez, and Rausch (2020) argue that self-care is an ethical responsibility for researchers, while Pahor de Maiti and Fišer (2021) explain that "despite the remoteness, online data can be highly burdening." In order to protect and care for myself, I employed many of the techniques recommended by fellow researchers at the BAAL *Dealing with Distressing Data* conference: acknowledging the "atrociousness" of

specific data points and "free[ing] [myself] from the myth of 'researcher neutrality'" (Rüdiger and Dayter, 2021); "openly sharing [my] reactions to the data and personal limits" with my supervisors (Krendel et. al., 2021); and engaging with informal support in the form of trans peer groups (Pahor de Maiti and Fišer, 2021).

Finally, following fellow queer academic Feraday's (2014:45-46) position that "the form of our writing, of our work, should be directly related to the audience we're trying to reach", I have made stylistic accessibility a core element of my methodology, so that this thesis may be hopefully accessed by non-academic nonbinary language users of English. This includes use of plain English and explanations of key terms, as well as the use of Atkinson Hyperlegible Font, which is designed to improve accessibility for people with low vision. In the near future, I will be translating the content of this thesis into Spanish so as to increase the number of relevant individuals and communities who are able to access it.

1.3.4 Positionality and ethical considerations

I wish to acknowledge the following identities which I embody, and which impact my positionality as a researcher: I am a white, middle-class, non-disabled, queer, binary trans man who is an L1 user of British English. I acknowledge my own positionality and subjectivity within this work, and, as Feraday (2014:42-43) explains, "Rather than trying to resist this inevitability, I'd like to embrace it, by continually examining the ways my identity influences my research."

Given my positionality as a trans person, I find it impossible to take on the role of an outsider when engaging with my research participants – we are both well aware that we share a community and therefore likely share common experiences. My position as an 'insider-outsider' conveys many advantages to my research; for example, my participants are more likely to trust that I have the best interests of our shared community at the heart of my research and may therefore be more open with me about experiences and opinions they would feel uncomfortable sharing with cis researchers. This is particularly important given "both the problematic history of trans research and the marginalised status of trans communities worldwide" (Vincent, 2017:102). Many trans people are suspicious, tired, or traumatised by cis researchers who wish to use them as "data points" without improving the material conditions of trans existence (tagonist, 2009).

Nonbinary academic Ben Vincent presents numerous recommendations for ethical recruitment and collaboration of trans participants, which formed the basis of my own ethical considerations and methodology. Even as a trans person myself, my sociopolitical position as a white, middle-class, non-disabled man places me in a position of privilege in relation to many of my participants, and my position within academia is one that has traditionally created a

hierarchy between the 'researcher' and the 'researched'. I wished to learn from these histories and positionalities in order to carry out a more ethical manner of participatory research.

I took on board Patricia Hill Collins' (2002, in Vincent, 2013) concept of an "ethic of caring", where "my values are vital in assessing the meaning my work has". As Vincent explains, "there is a moral imperative to pursue research agendas which contribute towards resisting and dismantling inequalities" and specifically in this research to contribute towards nonbinary liberation. I expressed in the Participant Information Sheet and in the Recruitment Advertisements (cf. Appendices I-II) that the aim of my research was to impact nonbinary communities meaningfully and positively, and I gave participants opportunities throughout the process to discuss what these impacts might look like. As Ochoa (2008:156) emphasises regarding her work with Venezuelan *transformistas*:

> "For those of us who, coming from another place, happen upon these realities and want to intervene, the task is not to bring "light" or "voice" somehow, presuming there was none before; it is to use the social mobility of our bodies and our language to transform relations, to treat people as legitimate subjects of rights, to mobilize the resources necessary for an intervention that makes sense to the people directly involved."

My role as a researcher was therefore to take on board the opinions and suggestions of my participants and to use these insights to create this thesis as an epistemic intervention with the aim of uplifting nonbinary communities more broadly.

Per Vincent's contributions, I consider my participants to be co-producers of knowledge and experts on their lived experiences. I engaged in co-production of research questions by inviting participants to read over my draft questionnaires and provide feedback on them. While I was unfortunately unable to fund compensation for my participants, I was upfront about my hopes for the project and what it might achieve, and I remained open to feedback throughout the process.

Swamy and Mackenzie (2019:1) raise the issue of the uncertainty felt by faculty of the Department of French and Francophone Studies at Vassar College upon being asked by their students to allow them to use neopronouns in their French classes. The issue was not the use of neopronouns themselves, but rather that of "our own authority to change French, for that language is, quite simply, our object of study". As a student of Spanish, I have encountered similar doubts about my role in advocating for change in a language that is not my L1, especially when moving in the spaces of Latinx Spanish and other varieties that are marginalised on a global, anglocentric, neo-colonial scale. However, I take the view expressed by Florence Ashley (in Swamy and Mackenzie, 2019:5) that the role of linguists is to "collaborate with non-binary communities", taking their input on how they are changing their languages as the basis for linguistic advocacy. I therefore do not attempt to speak *for*

Peninsular Spanish language users, the same way I do not speak for nonbinary British English users. Rather, I intend to act as a conduit for marginalised language users who have long been asserting their authority to innovate the languages they live within.

1.3.5 Chapter Outline

This thesis is organised as follows:

Ch.2 introduces the various elements that inform the context of being a nonbinary language user in Britain and Spain today, providing an overview of the legal, political, social, and cultural arenas. This demonstrates that the growing anti-trans movement in both Britain and Spain has had a significant impact on the lives of trans and nonbinary people, and that trans- and nonbinary-phobic discourses frequently refer to language use, in particular the use of singular *they* and neopronouns in English, and the use of *lenguaje inclusivo* in Spanish.

Ch.3 analyses news media discourses concerning nonbinary pronoun use, introducing the various sources' editorial stances towards trans and nonbinary liberation and comparing and contrasting the content of each outlet's articles with regards to how they discuss nonbinary pronoun use. This demonstrates that the English language newspapers have a much greater and more antagonistic focus on sociopolitical issues regarding trans and nonbinary people, while the Spanish newspapers centre their coverage on the controversies of language innovation.

Ch.4 presents nonbinary language users in their own words, analysing participants' contributions to questionnaires, video interviews, and focus groups. This demonstrates that while there is a significant degree of overlap regarding the experiences of nonbinary language users of Peninsular Spanish and British English regarding cisnormativity and nonbinary-phobia and its impacts on their use of pronouns, the specifics of their experiences with regards to sociopolitical and linguistic ideologies are dependent on national-linguistic context.

Ch.5 provides concluding remarks and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Being nonbinary in Britain and in Spain

In order to understand how the sociopolitical and linguistic contexts of Britain and Spain affect nonbinary people's use of pronouns, we must first examine these contexts in their own right. This chapter will explore the current situation for nonbinary people in these countries, focusing on their access to what Binaohan (2014:26) calls "social goods", such as anti-discrimination laws, access to healthcare and human rights, as well as public discourses surrounding trans and nonbinary existence. I will also draw attention to the state of gender-neutral language in each national-linguistic context, both in the sense of what language exists and how it is discussed.

2.1 Britain

At first glance, Britain may seem like a world leader in the fight for trans people's rights. Trans men and women in Britain have the right to legally change their gender without the need for surgery; gender identity is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (EA) 2010 anti-discrimination law; and there is a free and relatively simple process for those over the age of 18 to change their name(s)[17]. The NHS is able to offer free transition-related healthcare (TRHC), setting Britain apart from nations such as the US where the cost of surgery can be prohibitively expensive for many trans and nonbinary people (Leal, 2015).

However, one only needs to scratch the surface to see that this trans-affirming exterior is stretched thin over a nation which institutionalises, normalises, and rewards transphobia and nonbinary-phobia, and which punishes trans and nonbinary people for our very existence. Even the rights currently extended to trans people as the result of decades of trans activism fall apart upon close inspection: it is not possible to legally be a nonbinary gender in Britain; until 2020, it was unclear whether nonbinary people were protected by the EA (Duffy, 2020a); and waiting times to access NHS TRHC are so long that they constitute "persistent and long-standing breaches of the law" (Wareham, 2020)[18]. Meanwhile, the "toxic media coverage" of trans issues in Britain has been condemned by numerous human rights organisations (Human Rights Watch, 2020). It is this context which makes Britain a particularly interesting and important national context regarding nonbinary language use. First, however, it is important to locate where this current wave of transphobia emerged from and to identify its key arguments.

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[17] However, changing name(s), gender markers, and titles on documentation requires numerous other costs, in particular for those under 16 years old and for non-British nationals (see Barnes, 2021).

[18] What's more, not all forms of TRHC are available on the NHS, for example facial feminisation surgery, breast augmentation for people assigned male at birth, and certain hormones that are common in other parts of the world, such as progesterone. Private healthcare is available, but it is prohibitively expensive for many trans people.

Modern transphobia in Britain ultimately derives from centuries of homo- and transphobic legislation and social prejudice, with numerous commentators describing transphobia as "the new homophobia" due to its analogies with homophobic narratives of previous decades[19] (Jones, 2021; Knechtel, 2021). However, as trans visibility has grown in Britain in the last decade following the (Western, largely anglophone) 'Transgender Tipping Point' of 2014 (Steinmetz, 2014), transphobia has grown analogously. This has created various 'moral panics', defined by Cameron (1995:83) as "when some social phenomenon or problem is suddenly foregrounded in public discourse and discussed in an obsessive, moralistic and alarmist manner". In this instance, the trans-exclusionary currents that had been bubbling within certain feminist circles have risen to the surface of public discourses and have combined with more generalised transphobia and the consolidation of c/Conservative political power and cultural influences in the nation[20]. As is so often the case, this panic has been constructed by targeted media attention, as will be further explored in Ch3.

The issue of transphobic feminism is particularly heightened within Britain, with a 2019 New York Times opinion piece titled "How British Feminism Became Anti-Trans" (Lewis, 2019) becoming a viral sensation and the jokingly named 'TERF island' becoming a popular meme amongst trans and nonbinary Twitter users when referring to Britain. 'TERF' is an acronym of Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist(s), originally coined in the late 2000s by some cis women "to explicitly distinguish their own radical feminism from trans-exclusionary approaches" (Pearce, Erikainen, and Vincent, 2020:683). It is now most widely used by trans and nonbinary people to describe forms of feminist thought and practice that seek to exclude trans people, particularly trans women, from women's rights and the feminist movement. Pearce et. al. (2020) identify Janice Raymond's 1979 book *The Transsexual Empire*, which "positioned trans women as violent male subjects infiltrating women's spaces and appropriating women's bodies", as a key instigation of trans exclusion within Western feminist movements, though they highlight that trans-inclusive feminism also has a rich history within Britain.

The acronym 'TERF' is contentious for numerous reasons. Firstly, many transphobic feminists or those who are sympathetic to their cause reject TERF as a term they associate with attempts to silence their free speech, with some describing it as a misogynistic slur. Pearce et. al. (2020:683) object to this description, explaining that while the acronym may be "used in angry commentaries online by both cis and trans feminists" it does not constitute a

[19] It must be noted that these homophobic laws and attitudes absolutely impacted trans and nonbinary people too; however, given the lack of awareness of trans identities both outside of and within LGBQ+ communities at the time, trans and nonbinary people were less likely to be publicly acknowledged as targets.

[20] The right-wing Conservative party has won the last four national general elections in Britain; political conservativism has coalesced around Brexit (van Leeuwen, 2021); and young people are more right-wing and authoritarian in their views than previous generations (Cockburn, 2017).

slur because the group it describes "is defined by chosen ideology rather than an intrinsic property" and because "the act of denigration does not function to subordinate within some structure of power relations". Some transphobic feminists prefer to refer to themselves and their movement as "gender critical". Sarah Ahmed (2016:30) takes aim at this self-description, saying: "To be so-called gender critical while leaving traditional biology intact tightens rather than loosens the hold of a gender system on our bodies." Much as I would not acquiesce a racist's request to be referred to as a 'patriot', I believe it is important not to disguise the truth of violent ideologies through deliberately defanged labels.

Secondly, there is the issue raised within the trans and nonbinary community of inaccurate use of the term TERF in contexts where it does not appear to apply, for example "to refer to transphobia or transphobic individuals in general, losing sight of its original meaning (trans-exclusionary *radical feminism*)." (Pearce et. al., 2020:684) Nevertheless, the authors of *TERF Wars* defend their use of the acronym in order to explore the issue of trans-exclusionary feminism, explaining that "We have not sought out the TERF wars; rather, the TERF wars have found us." (ibid.: 678) In this thesis, I will be referring to this ideology and associated phenomena simply as 'transphobic feminism', however I will be including the term TERF where it occurs in my secondary sources and primary data.

The key areas of contention in the 'TERF Wars' – as defined by the anti-trans coalition of self-identified feminists, conservatives, and 'concerned' liberals[21], not by trans and nonbinary people ourselves – are trans people's access to single-sex spaces; under-18s' access to TRHC; and trans people's right to self-define our own genders.

Under the EA, trans people may access single-sex spaces unless the reason for disallowing them access is "a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim" or "for the purpose of preventing or compensating for a disadvantage linked to the protected characteristic"[22]. In practice, this means that trans people are legally able to access gender-segregated spaces such as changing rooms and domestic violence shelters, though not, of course, without fear of harassment and discrimination (Parsons, 2020d). However, recent moral panic regarding transfeminine people accessing women's spaces has revolved around the image of the "male predator in women's bathrooms"[23] (Contrapoints, 2021), leading to the

[21] For an analysis of how the notion of 'concerns' can be used to construct a transphobic public, see Philosophy Tube (2019).

[22] The exact specifications of the Act and associated case law and statutory codes of practice regarding trans people's access to single-sex spaces are incredibly complicated, as explored by Giles (2020).

[23] "Male" in this case can just as often mean transfeminine, as transphobic rhetoric considers trans women to be male. As philosopher Natalie Wynn explains (Contrapoints, 2021), "transphobia against trans men is very different to transphobia against trans women". While transmasculine individuals often experience infantilism and scepticism towards their genders, transfeminine people are "simultaneously

rise of transphobic feminist organisations such as Fair Play for Women and LGB Alliance. As a result, 48% of trans people say that they do not feel comfortable using public toilets due to fear of discrimination or harassment (Parsons, 2020d). This is particularly true for nonbinary people, who often do not have the option to use gender-neutral spaces and must instead opt for a binary option where their comfort and safety may be compromised.

Publicly funded TRHC in Britain functions based on a medical model of transness where one must be diagnosed with 'gender dysphoria'[24] by proving one's transness to various doctors. Ellis, Bailey and McNeil (2015:1) found that doctors "tend to be poorly informed about trans issues", leading to a severe lack of bodily autonomy amongst trans people who wish to access TRHC. While waiting lists to access adult TRHC stand at 30 months on average at time of writing (Genderkit, 2021), the focus of transphobic criticism has been the provision of TRHC to young people. The only medical care available to under-16s on the NHS is psychological support, and, "for children who meet very strict criteria", hormone blockers, which have the effect of offsetting puberty (NHS, 2020). Nevertheless, moral panic has arisen around any sort of gender-affirming model for trans and nonbinary children in fear that they are actually "gender non-conforming cisgender children who are being misled into gender transition" (Serano, 2016). Particular controversy surrounds the use of puberty blockers, which are frequently described as "experimental" medicine despite their long-term use for treating cis young people (Mia Mulder, 2021). This has led to the recent Bell v. Tavistock case, where the High Court stated that "it was highly unlikely that a child aged 13 or under would be competent to give consent to the administration of puberty blockers."[25] (Judiciary of England and Wales, 2021)

Finally, trans and nonbinary people's right to self-define our genders has also proven a site of major controversy. In 2016, the Women and Equalities Committee released a report recommending a reform of the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) to allow for a self-declaration system (Wells, 2021). This was enough to begin waves of media backlash against such a system (Snow, 2021). At the time, the GRA allowed binary trans adults to obtain new copies of their birth certificates with their correct gender markers; the process cost £140 and required proof of a gender dysphoria diagnosis and having "lived fully in one's acquired gender" for two years. Trans and nonbinary activists were instead pushing for a free, depathologised system. In 2018, a public consultation on what changes should be made to the GRA was held, which resulted in

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treated as a pornographic female fetish object and as a dangerous male predator." It is for this reason that transfeminine people are the targets of transphobic rhetoric about "bathroom predators".

[24] Gender dysphoria is defined by the NHS (2020) as "a sense of unease that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity".

[25] This ruling was overturned during the late stages of writing this thesis, representing a monumental sigh of relief for trans and nonbinary people in Britain. However, as Gendered Intelligence (2021) have warned, "trans-related healthcare for young people has been highly politicised, and this is unlikely to stop as a result of the Court of Appeal's decision".

"daily" publications of transphobic content in British media (Snow, 2021). Once again, the backlash against gender self-identification was driven by the sensationalised image of "male predators choosing to identify as women to access women's spaces". By 2020, Minister for Women and Equalities Liz Truss was promising to "protect single-sex spaces" and ensure "proper checks and balances" for trans people; when the results of the GRA consultation were published in September, it was announced that reform would consist only of a reduction in cost and the ability to apply online, despite the fact that the response was overwhelmingly in favour of self-identification and transgender equality across the board (Snow, 2021).

Each of these areas is haunted by the spectre of language, and in particular of pronouns. While other areas of British English have also proved contentious in the ongoing conflict between those who are pro- and anti-trans liberation[26], it is pronouns which have come to the fore as a key linguistic battleground. This makes sense given that third-person singular pronouns represent the last vestige of grammatical gender in English and are therefore seen as key markers of gendered identity (Conrod, 2019). When those identities are subject to threats or scepticism, it is logical that their associated pronouns will be subject to the same. Binary trans people's identities are delegitimised through misgendering, with certain transphobic feminists describing trans women's pronouns as "rohypnol" (Contrapoints, 2021) – however it is singular *they* and neopronouns that have become particular sites of controversy, usually centred around arguments that they are grammatically or politically illegitimate (Robertson, 2016).

Overall, these sociopolitical and linguistic factors have culminated in a national context that is openly hostile towards trans and nonbinary people (Snow, 2021). It is therefore highly likely that this context impacts the ways in which nonbinary users of British English use language, and particularly pronouns.

2.2 Spain

We now turn our attention to the sociopolitical and linguistic context of nonbinary identity in Spain, which offers interesting comparisons to that of Britain.

Platero (2011) highlights that Spanish trans and nonbinary people have been fighting for their rights and liberation since the early days of the current democratic era, finding allies and adversaries in the gay rights, feminist, and democratic movements. Key battlegrounds for

[26] For example, the recent controversy over Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals encouraging staff members to use the word "chestfeeding" as well as "breastfeeding", which was misrepresented by media outlets such as The Times as a "replacement of gendered terminology" rather than an addition to it (Baska, 2021a).

Spanish trans activists have been the right to change the names and gender markers on their identity cards, gaining access to TRHC under the public health system, and the depathologisation of trans rights. Kollman and Waites (2009:6) argue that Spain's LGBTQ+ rights politics "are part of the country's attempts to come to terms with its fascist past" and have "been influenced by the transnational LGBT rights movement and the increasing willingness of the EU and the ECHR to recognize the rights of LGBT people as human rights".

As the result of the Ley Trans ("Trans Law") passed on 29th June 2021, binary trans people in Spain now have the right to self-determine their genders without providing evidence of a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria, effectively depathologising legal transition in the country. However, not only has the law been a site of fierce conflict between pro- and anti-trans activists both in and outside of Spanish politics over the past year, but the finalised bill is also considered by many trans and nonbinary activists to have not gone far enough. This is because it does not explicitly mention nonbinary genders and excludes trans and nonbinary people who are under the age of 14 or who are not Spanish citizens from self-identifying as their genders (Las Provincias, 2021).

The issue of trans and nonbinary young people accessing rights such as legal gender change has long been controversial in Spain, traditionally taking the form of a lengthy and complex process (Ravetllat Ballesté et. al., 2020). In 2019, it was ruled by the Spanish Constitutional High Court that those under the age of 18 who are "significantly mature" and in a "stable situation of transsexuality" may ask for their gender to be changed in the Civil Registry. While this represented an improvement in trans young people's access to rights, "*no se supera la visión patologizante y medicalizada de la realidad trans**" ("it does not overcome the pathologising and medicalising view of transness") and "*continúa percibiendo mayoritariamente a los niños, niñas y adolescentes como unos seres inmaduros e incompletes*" ("it continues to mostly view boys, girls, and adolescents as immature and incomplete beings") who cannot affirm for themselves what their gender is (ibid.). Similarly, the Ley Trans continues to place age barriers preventing trans and nonbinary children's access to their rights.

In 2016, Platero and Ortega-Arjonilla (2016:47) argued that it is "possible for trans women in Spain today to be part of the feminist movement with little resistance", citing the "active presence of trans women and trans issues in Spanish feminism", "a widespread presence of "transfeminism"", and "a strong alliance" between feminist and trans activists. They linked Spain's trans-inclusive feminism to "the particular political context of Spain and the formation of the feminist movement", representing a "break with the traditional Anglo narrative (and also the Latin American one) of [feminism and trans rights] being two different and opposing movements" (ibid:61-62). However, in recent years this alliance between the two movements has become increasingly strained, and in many places it has fallen apart

completely. This is evidenced by the emergence of transphobic feminist organisations such as Against the Elimination of Women and Feminist Convergence Movement who claim that gender self-identification “eliminates” the experiences of women (Álvarez, 2021). Their views are supported by former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Equality Carmen Calvo, who has repeatedly criticised the Ley Trans as being too ‘lenient’ in its provision of gender self-determination (Hernández, 2021).

This rise in transphobic feminist rhetoric has been explained by journalist Ana Requena Aguilar (2021) as a reaction to the rise of feminism in Spain since 2018, making it a coveted political asset. The desire to capitalise on this cultural and political moment led to the feminist movement's split over trans rights, which became a "*batalla [...] de ideas, pero también generacional y, de alguna manera, identitaria*" ("battle [...] over ideas, but also a generational and, to a certain degree, identitarian one"). The key battleground for this clash has been the content of the Ley Trans, in ways that are revealingly analogous to the controversies surrounding the GRA in Britain.

Outside of legislative frameworks, Fernández-Rouco, Carcedo, and Yeadon-Lee’s (2018) study of first-hand accounts of Spanish trans people argues that "socially entrenched norms of binary gender and heterosexuality [...] remain problematic, causing many trans people to continue to face discrimination and social exclusion". Their participants dealt with "unsupportive and intolerant" family environments where they "were unable to live as their desired gender until much later in life" from family members. Their experiences at school and work were impacted by "stigma and discrimination", and all of them experienced "a high degree of psychological distress” due to social and psychological pressures and victimisation. Nevertheless, they found that the resources intended to support them suffered from “a heteronormative ideology” and were “often inefficient, even negligent."

Worthen, Lingiardi, and Caristo (2016:246-248) found that while the Catholic Church remains influential in Spain, church attendance and biblical literalism does not significantly correlate to Spaniards' attitudes towards trans people. Rather, it is conservative political beliefs that are more likely to correlate with anti-trans attitudes. This is worrying for trans and nonbinary Spaniards, given that “the results of the 2019 national and regional elections revealed new threats”, such as the rise of right-wing party VOX, which “is visibly working towards dismantling the newly achieved rights for women, migrants, LGBTI+ people, children, people with disabilities, and refugees, among others." (Platero, 2020:253)

Concerning linguistic forms, the move for gender-neutral language in Peninsular Spanish has been an ongoing battle since the 1970s, when feminist activist movements began questioning and protesting the use of linguistic androcentrism (Kauffman and Bohner, 2014; Bengoechea, 2015; Iglesias, 2018), meaning language practices that originate from and support the hegemony of societal sexism. One key example of Spanish linguistic

androcentrism is the masculine generic: the use of the masculine form of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives "in reference to mixed groups and to people whose sex is unknown or irrelevant" (Stahlberg et al., 2007). Most early inclusive language reform suggestions focused on reinforcing feminine forms alongside masculine ones, as in the doubled *o/a* form (e.g. *los y las alumnos y alumnas*, the male and female pupils), or on the use of the morpheme -@ (e.g. *l@s alumn@s*, the-M./F. pupils-M./F.), which first appeared among feminist circles in the 1970s (Acosta Matos, 2018). This anti-sexist language also includes what López (2019) defines as *Lenguaje no binario indirecto* (Indirect Nonbinary Language – LNI). LNI consists of modifying a phrase to avoid any gendered elements, such as by using gender neutral words (e.g. *el alumnado*, "the student body", instead of *los y las estudiantes*, "the-M+F.PL students") or changing the grammar, e.g. *¿ya te has inscrito?* ("have you already signed up?") instead of *¿ya estás inscrito?* ("are you already signed up-M?"). *Lenguaje no binario directo* (Direct Nonbinary Language – LND), on the other hand, uses explicitly nonbinary language forms such as the *-e* or *-x* morphemes or pronouns such as *elle/s*. López highlights that LNI and LND convey different messages to their nonbinary readers: *"el primero podría incluirnos o podría ser un accidente, pero el segundo entra de lleno en la inclusion"* ("the first could include us or could be an accident, but the second dives headlong into inclusion"). However, LNI has received far less positive attention than LND (Barnes, 2020a).

One major barrier to the widespread use of gender-neutral language in Spanish has been its consistent rejection by the RAE. Despite Spain's Ley Orgánica 3/2007, which aims to encourage "*la implantación de un lenguaje no sexista en el ámbito administrativo y su fomento en la totalidad de las relaciones sociales, culturales y artísticas*" ("the implementation of non-sexist language in the administrative field and its promotion in all social, cultural, and artistic relationships") (Bengoechea, 2009), the country's official language protectors have a history of opposing inclusive language forms (Vilella, 2012; Zentella, 2017; Matos, 2018). This "symbolic violence" (Zentella, 2017) of denying nonbinary people language which accurately reflects their identities has also served to encourage wider opposition to nonbinary language use, including but not limited to pronoun use.[27]

In conclusion, it is clear that the Spanish national-linguistic context presents similar hostility towards trans and nonbinary people, with the rise in transphobic rhetoric in Spanish politics, media, and culture coming hot on the heels of a parallel increase in Britain. However, the linguistic factors involved in this context extend further than just the realm of pronouns and are tied up in long-standing 'culture wars' regarding gender and the Spanish language. Again, this is likely to impact the ways in which nonbinary users of Peninsular Spanish use pronouns.

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[27] See, for example, the controversy surrounding the use of the noun/adjective *Latinx,* Latin American-ALT.N (Galvan, 2017; Guidotti-Hernández, 2017; Hernandez, 2017; Marquéz, 2018; Torres, 2018).

Chapter 3: Discourse analysis

3.1 Methodology

I chose to analyse online news media sources in order to provide insight into the wider sociopolitical discourses surrounding nonbinary pronoun use and identity in the Peninsular Spanish and British English contexts. The choice to analyse journalistic sources in particular was inspired by the high levels of antagonism between trans and nonbinary people and the media in Britain at the time of writing (Miller, 2018), and also the wide reach which news media has in influencing popular opinion. When exploring issues of language use in a context of sociolinguistic justice, Craft et. al. (2020:395-396) highlight that the media is "a central institutional force of [linguistic] discrimination", while Fairclough (1989:51-54) asserts that "media discourse is able to exercise a pervasive and powerful influence in social reproduction". Given that the media "is overwhelmingly in favour of existing power-holders" (ibid.), it is therefore likely to reproduce and justify institutional trans- and nonbinary-phobia. This makes media discourse analysis a key starting point in understanding broader attitudes towards nonbinary language use.

For each national-linguistic context, I chose three mainstream broadsheet news media outlets as my sources: one that is broadly recognised as politically left-leaning; one that is broadly recognised as politically centrist/neutral; and one that is broadly recognised as politically right-leaning[28]. For the British English context these were The Guardian, BBC News, and The Times respectively – henceforth referred to as the 'English publications'; for the Peninsular Spanish context these were El Mundo, El País, and elDiario respectively – henceforth referred to as the 'Spanish publications'.

I chose to use the online platforms of each of these outlets, as they were the most accessible to me. On each outlet's website, I manually searched the word "pronoun" or *"pronombre"*, with results sorted according to each site's search algorithm, which generally prioritised relevance and recency. While the first outlet I explored, BBC News, had 29 pages of results, I found that by the time I had gone through 20 pages, the number of articles already felt overwhelming given the time and space constraints of this thesis. I therefore decided that for the other British publications I would analyse a maximum of 10 pages of results. For the Spanish publications this was reduced to 6 pages of results, as this was the maximum number of results available from El Mundo. In hindsight, it would have been more methodologically thorough to analyse a consistent number of articles across these publications. However, for the sake of expediency given the time constraints of this research, this was not the case. In future research of this type, greater consistency should be prioritised.

[28] The political alignments of each of these publications are of course open to subjective opinion and will often appear to shift depending on the journalist writing each article.

The time frame of publication for the articles analysed was also dependent on the extent of archived articles available on each website and the latest date that each website was analysed: October 2020 for the British publications; February 2021 for the Spanish publications.

For each article, I chose to analyse the following aspects: date of publication; overall attitude towards nonbinary pronoun use; and how the content of the article relates to wider sociopolitical or linguistic discourses. These factors provide insight into changes in discourses concerning nonbinary pronoun use over time; editorial and journalistic attitudes towards these discourses; and how these discourses expand beyond the limits of each individual article. In terms of determining the attitude within an article as 'negative', 'positive', 'neutral', or 'two sides of view', I accounted for factors such as the author's opinion, the inclusion of trans and nonbinary voices, whether trans and nonbinary people are misgendered, and whether transphobic individuals or organisations are cited – and if so, with what caveats. For example, any article which misgendered a trans or nonbinary person would be considered 'negative', as this is a direct denial of their identity. A 'positive' article, on the other hand, provided clear support for the overall liberation of trans and nonbinary people and/or the use of language which challenges cisheteronormative language ideologies. While a 'neutral' article might state the facts of an incident of transphobia without providing any indication of the journalist's stance on the issue, a 'two sides of view' article might interview both trans rights organizations and transphobic groups. While this division lacks a degree of nuance, it is useful for providing a broad insight into the general attitudes of each publication with regards to nonbinary identity and language use.

In terms of identifying the key common themes between a newspaper's articles which relate to wider sociopolitical or linguistic discourses, this was determined by the appearance of certain characteristics within a given article. If an article's central focus was the evolving use and recognition of gendered language forms, the theme was 'language change'; whereas if the focus was a given incident or the wider phenomenon of misgendering trans and nonbinary individuals, the theme was determined to be 'misgendering'. There was a fair amount of overlap between the topics of misgendering and free speech. However, articles which explicitly focused on the discursive area of "free speech" were classified under this label. Finally, any article which centred a trans or nonbinary public figure was classified under 'trans and nonbinary celebrities'.

3.2 British newspapers

3.2.1 Overview

The three British news media outlets analysed were BBC News, The Guardian, and The Times. BBC News is the world's largest broadcast news organisation and it is required by its editorial guidelines to report "with due impartiality" (BBC, 2020). However, the organisation has been routinely criticised by trans individuals and organisations for its coverage of trans-related news stories. National transgender youth charity Mermaids has accused the BBC of having "a deep-rooted issue with transphobia amongst a very small and unrepresentative number of editorial staff, who are skewing coverage in favour of anti-trans viewpoints" (Baska, 2021b). Key examples of such transphobic bias are the inclusion of a widely-condemned transphobic essay by author JK Rowling in their Russel Prize list for celebrated journalism (Badham, 2021); the platforming of transphobic hate groups despite condemnation from communications regulator Ofcom (Duffy, 2020b); and banning some staff from publicly commenting on "the trans issue" in order to remain "impartial" (McDonald, 2020).

The Guardian is a left-of-centre newspaper with a reputation for quality, trustworthiness, and investigative journalism (Rawlinson, 2014; Waterson, 2018). Despite the paper's politics, it has also been repeatedly criticised for platforming "unchallenged transphobia" in its reporting (Gleeson, 2018b; Flourish, 2020; Stone, 2021). Its publishing of articles framing trans rights and in particular the GRA consultation (cf.§2.1) as a 'debate' and its uncritical quoting of transphobic hate groups such as Woman's Place UK has resulted in a significant degree of backlash, including from its own staff (Levin, Chalabi, and Siddiqi, 2018; Maurice, 2020a). After The Guardian published an opinion article by Suzanne Moore in which she claimed that women were being "silenced" by the trans rights movement, over 200 feminists co-signed a letter stressing that "Moore's column does not represent the views of the public, nor is it representative of the views of most women" (Parsons, 2020b). This was followed by the resignation of multiple trans members of Guardian staff (Maurice, 2020b) and the eventual resignation of Moore herself.

The Times is a right-of-centre newspaper considered to be a newspaper of record in Britain (BBC News, 2004; Datablog, 2010). The paper has practically become synonymous with transphobic media coverage amongst trans and nonbinary communities in Britain, having published headlines such as: "Trans extremists put equality at risk", "Women are right to have concerns over trans reforms", and "Trans rapists are a danger in women's jails" (Miller, 2018). Snow (2021) identifies the year 2016 as coinciding with The Times' increase in transphobic coverage, which then "never stopped". By 2020, the newspaper was publishing roughly one article a day about 'trans issues' (Ingold, 2021), to the point where trans activist Clare Flourish began documenting transphobic content in The Times every month (Flourish, 2021a; Flourish, 2021b).

The high levels of transphobia within Britain in general, and British media in particular, have been noted by numerous national and international organisations. Mermaids found that mentions of trans children were 23 times as common in 2018-19 compared to 2012 and that trans people were increasingly written about in negative ways, such as being described as "having a propensity to be offended or be involved in conflicts", "being demanding or aggressive", and through references to the "transgender lobby" as being both "unimportant" and "powerful, hegemonic and influential" (Mermaids Press, 2019).[29] This offers comparisons to Umberto Eco's (1995) description of the Ur-Fascist conception of the enemy as "at the same time too strong and too weak", and is comparable to wider trends within reactionary political discourses in Britain which describe progressive movements as easily offended, aggressive, unnecessary, and hegemonic (Ahmed, 2015). Meanwhile, research commissioned by the Independent Press Standards Organisation in 2019 found that: "The tone of stories had evolved to use more "respectful" language", for example not using transphobic slurs, however coverage has "become "heated" and "strident" as it focuses more on the debate to reform the Gender Recognition Act." (Tobitt, 2020b)

Overall, the British media landscape is largely hostile to trans and nonbinary people, in part as a result of the growing transphobic feminist movement of the last few years. This analysis will explore how this context has affected reporting on the specific subject of pronouns and nonbinary language use.

3.2.2 The BBC

The sample of BBC articles consists of 42 articles, approximately half of which (22) present positive views of trans and nonbinary existence and language use, while the other half are either neutral or offer two opposing sides of view. While the BBC (2020) argues that it is "not impartial" on issues of discrimination, it is telling that BBC journalists often treat nonbinary-phobia as a political issue where they should not take a stance. The most common themes covered within these articles are misgendering (17 articles)[30], followed by free speech (10), and trans and nonbinary celebrities (9).

3.2.2.1 Misgendering

The first mention of pronouns as relating to nonbinary gender on the BBC website is in a 2014 article (BBC001) entitled "Canada: Schools axe 'he' and 'she' in favour of 'xe'". For the staff at

[29] The notion that a powerful, well-funded "trans lobby" exists is a popular transphobic talking point (LGBT+ Liberal Democrats, 2021) with links to similar antisemitic tropes (Lorber and Greenesmith, 2021).

[30] Please note that these themes often overlap within articles.

the school, avoiding misgendering pupils by offering them the option of *xe* pronouns – not, as the title suggests, getting rid of *he* and *she* pronouns – is a way of "standing up for kids and making our schools safer and more inclusive". This recognises that identity misclassification, of which misgendering is a key example, is "psychologically disruptive", leading to "negative affect and arousal (e.g., anxiety, depression) and a sense of inauthenticity in social relationships" (McLemore, 2015:2). Alongside being psychologically wounding, Conrod (2019:17) highlights that "the gendering of pronouns can also indicate a person's level of (un)safety, especially since transgender people are often the target of violence based on their identity". Even when misgendering is not "intentional, malicious, wilful, obviously prejudiced", it still reflects an attitude that "trans people aren't "really" their gender identity, it's an affectation" (Conrod, 2018b). By denying trans and nonbinary people their language practices, the misgenderer projects an ideology of languagelessness onto them, "call[ing] into question [their] linguistic competence–and, by extension, [their] legitimate personhood" (Rosa, 2016:163).

A fair number of BBC articles (BBC002; BBC003; BBC004; BBC005; BBC006; BBC007) discuss misgendering from this perspective, hearing from trans and nonbinary people themselves about the discomfort that comes from being misgendered; the ways they would prefer people to ask for, use, and apologise for misusing their pronouns; and the politicisation and weaponization of misgendering in public discourses. Zimman (2013:30) notes that discussions among trans speakers tend to display a high degree of metalinguistic awareness, and this is clear from these articles: trans language users are well aware of the factors of choice, attention, and negotiation involved in pronoun use. The articles also highlight ways in which cis people can demonstrate allyship with trans and nonbinary communities, such as by putting their pronouns in their email signatures or replacing gendered terms in official documents. This exemplifies how "neo-identities are slowly being acknowledged by the mainstream media", as is the language associated with them (Feraday, 2014:6). This represents a potentially momentous shift in the treatment of nonbinary language within media spaces, since, in most cases, "the language of the media is fundamentally normative" (Craft et. al., 2020:395) and outlets like the BBC represent key actors in the creation and propagation of prescriptivist language ideologies. However, Feraday (2014:57) emphasises that "acceptance is also not as widespread as it seems", with mainstream media tending not to focus on issues such as disproportionately high homelessness and suicide rates among trans and nonbinary people. While articles like these imply a level of willingness to learn about nonbinary identities and language, "there is mostly only superficial acceptance, and violent pushback from people desperate to preserve cisheteronormativity." (ibid.)

3.2.2.2 Free speech

Other articles, however, approach the topic of misgendering from an altogether different angle: that of free speech, political correctness, and violence. The article about Canadian schools (BBC001) quotes parents who oppose trans and nonbinary inclusion calling school trustees "dictator" and "liar". The notion that nonbinary language is a form of violence is also suggested by the article's title using the word "axed" to describe such measures. This angle of approach can also be seen in the numerous articles (BBC008; BBC009; BBC010; BBC011; BBC012; BBC013; BBC014) concerning Dr Jordan Peterson – a Canadian professor who refused to use nonbinary people's pronouns – and Dr David Mackereth – who "claimed he was sacked because his Christian beliefs stopped him addressing transgender claimants by [their chosen pronouns]". Both demonstrate key arguments of the 'free speech' narrative that claims using a trans person's correct pronouns to be a form of 'compelled speech'.

Eide (2018:4-7) ties the emergence of nonbinary pronouns to the emergence of politically correct (PC) language, described as "an increased expectation to conform to certain language considerations, particularly when referring to individuals representing stigmatized minority groups". While this increased focus on language sensitivity and inclusiveness "has to a certain extent normalized the right to exercise pronoun preferences", it has also associated nonbinary language use with the backlash against PC language. Some people, especially on the political right, consider requests or demands to use politically correct language to be an 'attack' on free speech. As Ahmed (2016:24-25) explains, in the context of Britain, "free speech is increasingly mobilized as an ideological weapon" by which "dominant views become rearticulated as if they are minority views that we have to struggle to express" and which therefore must be protected by the notion of 'free speech'. Questioning violent language is therefore reimagined as a violent act in itself, as "minorities are often deemed as being violent, or as causing violence, or even as causing the violence directed against them".

The BBC articles contain numerous quotes from Dr Peterson himself where he refers to "social justice warrior, left-wing radical political activists" whose demands that nonbinary people's pronouns be respected represent a form of "authoritarianism", and from Dr Mackereth, who describes chosen pronoun use as "being forced to do violence to language and common sense". This clearly demonstrates Eide and Ahmed's elucidations of how transphobic discourse has painted trans people as violent, illiberal, unreasonable, and opposing the 'free speech' of transphobic public figures. Appealing to free speech as a means to delegitimise nonbinary language use and identities is a "mechanism of power" (Ahmed, 2016:27) which reinforces cisnormativity and enacts nonbinary-phobia by relegating nonbinary people to a state of personhood that is inherently debatable. Both Mackereth and Peterson directly compare "ideological" nonbinary language to the "common sense" language that they are accustomed to using. This demonstrates the role of "common sense in the service of sustaining unequal

relations of power" (Fairclough, 1989:84), in this case between (cis) binary people and nonbinary individuals. The idea that uses of language which are sociopolitically normalised and valued are "common sense" invisbilises the power mechanisms behind this normalisation and valorisation.

Gender Studies educator Lee Airton (2016:798), who worked on the same campus as Peterson, directly refutes his claims that it is legitimate to not use a nonbinary person's pronoun if it is deemed to be "ideological" and therefore "'excessive' effort is required" to use it. They point to the way that, as demonstrated through Peterson's willingness to use *he/him* and *she/her* pronouns for binary trans people, "'I will (choose to) use a transgender person's pronoun if that person's pronoun preference is personal and not ideological' becomes 'I will use a transgender person's pronoun if their gender expression is binary and gender-normative.'" It therefore becomes clear that this is not a case of 'ideology', but of Peterson's personal levels of discomfort with gender non-conformity and nonbinary identities.

Airton suggests an AFFECTIVE framework for understanding the discomfort felt by some people in being asked to use GNPs, which may lead them to reject this request and misgender an individual. Within this framework, the act of being asked to use a GNP represents an ASSEMBLAGE THRESHOLD, where the "sensate boundaries between the normative and the non-normative" are breached. Given that GNPs become non-normative through their rupturing of heterosexual matrix, they then become "hyper-visible objects of conscious thought and action" and their requested use requires a degree of conscious effort not usually felt when using a gendered pronoun.

Airton argues that the effort required to overcome this assemblage threshold itself is not in itself a problem – after all, it is undeniable that "changing the pronouns we use for another person or using a familiar pronoun in a new way entails practicing, making mistakes, and receiving correction", all of which are forms of effort. However, rather than being understood as "'extra' effort to accommodate social difference, which is felt to be unremarkable", the effort required to use GNPs is often felt and narrated to be "'excessive' effort, which is felt to lie beyond the scope of the social contract and therefore cannot be legitimately demanded of one".

Airton identifies this narration of GNP use as being 'excessive' as "a tactic deployed against efforts to secure accommodations for transgender people", as it allows people to "refuse to answer the demand without facing whatever sanction locally accrues to non-normative behaviour". Within this framing, 'compelled speech' "describes an encounter in which one notices oneself doing something one usually does without noticing", while 'free speech' becomes the "fight for one's right not to notice". Airton explains that, given that we take notice when others deviate from gender norms, this "right not to notice" is actually "an

argument that people should express gender only in limited ways; otherwise, the requisite effort to meet their needs is excessive, and therefore unjustifiable."

They offer a solution to this affective framework in the form of 'no big deal' tactics, which seek to recognise the awkwardness and anxiety some people may feel around being asked to use GNPs, and counter it not by denying those feelings but by offering a framing of the effort required to use GNPS as "not excessive, but rather like other kinds of effort one invests in meeting the needs of different people in everyday life." We see examples of such tactics in other articles (BBC015; BBC003) on misgendering, such as students at Oxford university who rebut "misinformation" from a Times article by explaining that "Requesting that people state their pronouns, and do not assume the pronouns of others, is not particularly radical or controversial", and a city council that offers pronoun badges to their staff, stating "Read the badge, respect people, it's that easy."

However, appeals to overcome affective hurdles can only go so far in the face of malicious misgendering. We can see this in the case of Dr Mackereth, who uses transphobic Christian discourses to justify his epistemic violence (cf.§1.2.3), and in the related cases of transphobic feminists weaponizing the concept of 'free speech' against trans and nonbinary people.[31] While Mackereth lost his court case against his former employer, in 2021 transphobic feminist Maya Forstater brought a case in which her "gender critical" views were ruled to fall under the protected characteristic of "religion or belief" in the Equality Act (Parsons, 2021). This sets an alarming precedent that transphobia is protected under the same legislation that purports to protect trans people – per Ahmed (2015), the oppressed and our oppressors are conflated, and the material impacts of violence on trans and nonbinary lives are ignored.

A key example of this conflation and relocation of epistemic violence was cited in the case brought by Forstater in the form of her online interactions with Scotland's only trans politician, Gregor Murray. Murray features in two BBC articles (BBC015; BBC016), where we can see the impact of the "'free speech' assemblage" as weaponised by transphobic feminists on an individual level. Murray made the decision to step back from frontline politics after receiving "threats to their life" and was later suspended for two months over what the Standards Commission for Scotland described as "derogatory online remarks" and what Murray themself explained as "a number of wrong judgements in communicating with people who campaign against my fundamental human rights". Such "derogatory" language included the word TERF, which, as explained in §2.1, is not on par with language such as slurs and misgendering which directly questions an individual's humanity, again projecting a languagelessness onto them. These articles demonstrate the consequences of transphobic discourses on trans and

[31] It is not surprising that transphobic Christian discourses and transphobic feminist discourses move in tandem here, as the two movements frequently work together and provide funding for one another with the goal of promoting transphobia (Parsons, 2020c; Lazine, 2021).

nonbinary lives - in this case, the freedom of Murray to do their job and the impact on their mental health.

3.2.2.3 Trans and nonbinary celebrities

The use of individual trans and nonbinary people such as Gregor Murray as figureheads of the trans and nonbinary community surfaces in numerous BBC articles, largely through the use of nonbinary celebrities such as singer Sam Smith (BBC017; BBC018; BBC019; BBC020), poet Kae Tempest (BBC021), footballer Quinn (BBC022), and drag queen Glamrou (BBC023; BBC024; BBC025). As noted by Gill-Peterson (2018:1), "As trans life has accrued [...] in recent years, certain figures have become oversaturated [...] offering very narrow windows to contest the terms of their representation". She offers the examples of black trans women and trans women of colour, and trans children. To this, I would add a third figure: the nonbinary celebrity or public figure. They are usually white, able-bodied, and thin. Their transness is made legible to the cis gaze through the androgynous combination of gender presentation features deemed masculine or feminine within the Western gender binary, or through a publicly disclosed narrative of socio-medical transition. They are automatically expected, both by the media establishment and by significant proportions of the trans and cis population, to act as a spokesperson for the universalised 'trans community'. And their public disclosure and discussion of their nonbinary identity is inevitably used as a jumping-off point for public and private discourses regarding issues as varied as pronouns and bathroom use.

We see this in the majority of the articles concerning nonbinary celebrities: Sam Smith is namedropped in articles concerning “how to be an ally to friends who’ve changed their pronouns” and “a brief history of gender neutral pronouns”; Quinn’s interview discusses current controversies surrounding trans people in sport; and Glamrou gives short definitions of LGBTQ+ terminology and intersectionality for an assumed cisgender audience. Feraday (2014:6) notes that even while certain identities are slowly gaining mainstream recognition, such as in national newspapers, “these pop culture examples only provide a small glimpse of the larger movement taking place online,” limited as they are by lack of direct access to and involvement in communities at the cutting edge of identity and linguistic innovation. However, all the articles mentioned do correctly gender their subjects and contribute to a normalisation of nonbinary pronouns by inviting a cis readership to explore linguistic innovation.

The most in-depth and nuanced of these articles are those where the nonbinary celebrities themselves are able to narrate their own existences, for example a short personal essay by model Jamie Windust (BBC005) and an episode of the BBC Sounds podcast *NB: My Nonbinary Life* (BBC024), where Glamrou and fellow nonbinary presenter Caitlin Benedict explore nonbinary language. Here we see examples of what Dame (2013:44) calls “trans expertise”, where “the trans individual is understood as expert, regardless of whether they consider themselves to be such”. The acknowledgement of trans and nonbinary people as

having intimate knowledge on the workings of gender identity and transphobia is absolutely necessary in order to achieve our liberation. However, it also puts trans and nonbinary people in the position of consistently being expected to provide information and advice about deeply affective topics, which can not only lead to excessive demands on our time and energy, but which also ignores the potentially vast differences in opinion between individual trans and nonbinary people. This ties to a wider issue where individuals from non-dominant groups are taken to be representative of their entire communities, regardless of their levels of expertise (Beck et. al., 2016; Daya, 2021).

3.2.3 The Guardian

The Guardian sample contains 30 articles, of which the majority (21) are positive. The most common themes covered within the articles are language change (12), misgendering (11), and trans and nonbinary celebrities (7).

3.2.3.1 Language change

The first Guardian article (GUARDIAN001) initiates the theme of language change, advocating for the use of singular *they* to refer to an antecedent of unknown or ambiguous gender. It is interesting to see that this linguistic stance, which is defended within the article on the grounds of it being an anti-sexist reform without mentioning nonbinary language users, still requires defending in 2013, many decades after it was first suggested by feminist linguists. This demonstrates how painfully slowly linguistic innovation can take to catch on when it is advocated for by a marginalised group.

The next articles on language change demonstrate the growing awareness of nonbinary language use within the newspaper and across wider society. A first article (GUARDIAN002) about the Royal Bank of Scotland offering the Mx title[32] to patrons notes the "many attempts to create a gender-neutral pronoun", but argues that these words "haven't caught on" because pronouns are a "closed class system". This ignores the fact that successful changes to the pronominal system have taken place before in English, such as the replacement of *thou* with *you*, and numerous studies showing that English language users are successfully able to use and understand singular *they* (e.g. Foertch and Gernsbacher, 1997; Ackerman, 2014; Bradley, 2020). The next article (GUARDIAN003), which asks "Is it time we agreed on a gender-neutral singular pronoun?", also considers previously coined neopronouns to be "failed attempts" and

[32] Mx, pronounced /mɪx/ or /məx/, is a nonbinary or gender-neutral title analogous with Mr, Miss, Mrs, or Ms.

argues that trans and nonbinary people should "stop fence-sitting" and decide on one "universal gender-blind pronoun".

As Feraday (2019:91) explains, it is “short-sighted” to consider a language change “successful only if it ‘sticks within mainstream language’ [...] Language change and lexical creation involve continuous processes and continuous conversations; there isn’t necessarily a finish line to be reached.” If a pronoun is able to provide both the "potential to call into question dominant cultural ideas" and also "life-saving resources for non-cis and non-straight people who find themselves excluded by normative terminology" (ibid.), then surely that is a sign that it has not failed. The Guardian journalist’s expectation that the trans and nonbinary community decide on a singular GNP exemplifies “the compulsion to perform on the normatively “here” side of language(s), rather than in the “there” of wayward, unhygienic, excessive, translingual, or disorderly speech”, which Gramling and Dutta (2016:337) have named “cislingualism”. This highlights how cisnormativity colludes with modernist, monolingualist language ideologies (Medina, del Valle, and Monteagudo, 2013) to push nonbinary speakers amongst others to the margins. It also reinforces a notion that the nonbinary community is homogenous enough to be able to make such a universalising decision.

Alternatively, a plurality of 3rd-person singular pronouns allows for a view of languages as fluid and capable of expressing individual and interpersonal identities which extend far beyond the gender binary or gender itself. One of Feraday’s (2019:89) research participants notes that “Twice actually, nonbinary people took ‘joke genders’ and made them actual terms.” I feel that this perfectly encapsulates the values of linguistic play and reclamation central to nonbinary language innovation, which clashes with the ideology that languages “are unified, countable, stable, orderly, well-bordered systems” (Gramling and Dutta, 2016:335).

The next article (GUARDIAN005) discusses the addition of the GNP *hen* to Swedish. Having first been coined in the 1960s, *hen* aimed to avoid the masculine generic *han* (*he*) and the "clumsy" *han/hon* (*he/she*). It was taken up by trans and nonbinary language users in 2000 and "can now be found in official texts, court rulings, media texts and books, and has begun to lose some of its feminist-activist connotation", before finally being acknowledged by the Swedish Academy. In many ways, this trajectory is analogous with that of singular *they* in English, though the latter was yet to gain such mainstream approval in 2015 when this article was published. This is demonstrated in the next article (GUARDIAN006), where the author argues that "what we need are alternatives to ‘he’ and ‘she’" - despite numerous alternatives having been used by nonbinary people for decades at that point.

We continue to witness the rise in awareness of singular *they*, with the next three articles (GUARDIAN007; GUARDIAN008; GUARDIAN009) defending its use on the basis of its purported ability to "solve sexism in English", to "benefit anybody who doesn’t like to have

a gender label attached", and to "boost positive feelings towards women and LGBT people". Each of these articles draws on the ways that nonbinary language can positively impact both women and trans and nonbinary people, demonstrating that, as Swamy and Mackenzie (2019:3-4) have argued, nonbinary language "is, in some ways, an extension of the principles of [anti-sexist language reforms] in order to embrace, socially and linguistically, gender identities neither masculine nor feminine". However, a further article (GUARDIAN010) on pronoun introductions reminds us that we need a nuanced view of pronoun use, for example not using *they* as a universally applicable pronoun, as this effectively misgenders trans and cis people who don't use *they* pronouns.

The final Guardian articles on language change (GUARDIAN011; GUARDIAN012; GUARDIAN013) all concern the recognition of singular *they* by dictionaries and linguists - arguably the closest English has to a language authority. In 2019, Merriam-Webster dictionary added *they* as a nonbinary pronoun before naming it their 'world of the year'; meanwhile in 2020, singular *they* was voted the word of the decade by the American Dialect Society.

Language authorities such as dictionaries play a key role in the creation and reproduction of standardised languages, which in turn propagate language ideologies that "serve to construct both normativity and markedness as well as, critically, a dichotomy between them" (Craft et. al., 2020:393). These authorities represent examples of what Borba and Milani (2017) refer to as "crystallised structures of cisnormativity", because language varieties outside of these mainstreams – such as trans and nonbinary language – "are usually in danger of being taken away or absorbed by that privileged minority [...] in order to deprive other populations of a distinctive voice and promote an artificial linguistic unity." (Feraday, 2014:15) The same power structures and sources of linguistic authority such as dictionaries which were and continue to be used to uphold (neo)colonialism were simultaneously pivotal in the creation of European national identities (Medina, del Valle, and Monteagudo, 2013; Heller and MacElhinny, 2017). They continue to enact epistemic violence through denying marginalised groups in both the imperial core and the periphery access to language that speaks to their identities and cultures. After all, "without adequate language to describe their experience, those who fall outside binary categories are marginalised and made invisible, unable to speak about their reality" (Bereket and Brayton, 2008:52). They are also limited in their ability to access communities that share their experiences.

The choice of these language authorities to now recognise nonbinary pronouns, many of which have been used for decades without attracting the attention of mainstream linguists, raises the question of whether including neopronouns in dictionaries or recognition by language authorities is truly liberating, as to do so requires their translation into a cisnormative framework. This relates to a larger debate within trans theory and sociopolitical work as to

"whether trans identities should be deliberately marginalized or whether they should be legitimized" (Rose, 2016:499).

On the one hand, Fisher (2019:11-17) argues that "nonbinary narratives must be catalogued" by language authorities, such as through dictionaries "expand[ing] the words available through their site" or through teaching neopronouns in schools. While I agree that these are noble goals, with the rate at which nonbinary language tends to grow and evolve within community spaces, is it really possible, or indeed preferable, for dictionaries to keep up? While dictionaries tend to sell themselves on their ability to keep up with a constantly changing linguistic landscape, Grahn (1984:xiii) argues that this has historically not been the case with queer terminology until such a time that interest in this language use is deemed legitimate by cisheteronormative institutions. In a modern context, at the time of writing the Merriam Webster dictionary does not recognise my own chosen neopronouns *xe* and *fae,* nor does it include relatively common queer terminology such as *demiromantic*[33] and *WLW*[34].

If dictionaries are unable or unwilling to record all neopronouns – a task which may well be impossible given the rapid rate at which these pronouns are coined and their often-niche usage – this runs the risk of formalising a hierarchy between those pronouns that are legitimised by their inclusion in dictionaries and those that are not. Swamy and Mackenzie (2019:1-2) question the very assumption that "legitimacy can only be granted by institutions to individuals rather than being inherent to those individuals", as arguably this would involve assuming that "the master's tools" (Lorde, 1984) can be used to 'fix' languages formed through processes such as colonialism and cislingualism.

3.2.3.2 Misgendering

The remaining Guardian articles on misgendering all come out in support of respecting trans people's pronouns, with one (GUARDIAN013) concerning the previously mentioned story of the Oxford student union's response to the Times' 'fake news' article about them telling students to use *xe* pronouns instead of *he* and *she*; another (GUARDIAN014) drawing on a No Big Deal tactic to ask "why say no?" to someone who uses *they* pronouns; and a third (GUARDIAN015) explaining how best to use *they* pronouns.

[33] Demiromantic refers to "a romantic orientation on the aromantic spectrum defined as someone who does not experience romantic attraction until they have formed a deep emotional connection with someone" ('Demiromantic', 2021)

[34] WLW is an acronym for 'woman loving woman' or 'women loving women' and refers to "a woman, woman-aligned and/or non-binary individual, who is attracted to women, exclusively or not" ('Sapphic', 2021).

3.2.3.3 Trans and nonbinary celebrities

A wide range of trans and nonbinary celebrities feature in Guardian articles, starting with author and activist Leslie Feinberg, whose obituary uses *she/her* pronouns (GUARDIAN016). Feinberg did use both *zie/hir* and *she/her* pronouns, with the article quoting hir explanation that "It matters whether someone is using the pronoun as a bigot, or if they are trying to demonstrate respect." However, it is significant that this article does not even mention hir multiple pronoun sets, perhaps because hir neopronouns were considered too “wayward, unhygienic, excessive, translingual, or disorderly”.

The next two articles (GUARDIAN017; GUARDIAN018), concerning Caitlyn Jenner and Chelsea Manning respectively, return the issue of misgendering to the fore. The former, written after Jenner had come out as a trans woman but before she had publicly changed her name or begun using *she* pronouns, defends the myriad ways that people can use pronouns in relation to their gendered identities, arguing that "when it comes to understanding gender dysphoria, forget grammar rules and proper English because language – like gender and sexual expression – is fluid". The next article describes a court order that banned the military from referring to Manning using masculine pronouns. Conrod (2019:17) identifies the figure of Chelsea Manning as being a highly politicised figure in the press and in public discourse due to the fact that “her identity as a transgender woman in the public eye is compounded with her identity as a figure of political intrigue”. This is “reflected in the way that English speakers refer to her”, including in their use of personal names and pronouns. Given that Manning has previously written for the Guardian, it is unsurprising that the newspaper is inclined to gender her correctly and support her transition.

However, a 2017 interview with artist Taylor Mac (GUARDIAN019), while initially respecting judy's pronouns[35], then goes on to consistently misgender judy later in the article. This once again demonstrates the cislingualist pressure to revert to pronouns deemed "normal" and "simple", relying on an ideology of “common sense” versus “excessive” language. Ochoa (2008:162) explains that: "To be taken "seriously" in the political sphere, one must cultivate a certain aesthetic and pluck out the inconvenient stray hairs. But in this refinement of a political aesthetic, we run the risk of *cayendo pesado* - of rejecting desire." This is also true of language use - trans and nonbinary language users are discouraged from finding joy in linguistic play and are instead expected both by cis individuals and cis-dominated institutions to conform to cislingualist norms. Nevertheless, Sam Smith, Kae Tempest, and novelist Akwaeke Emezi’s singular *they* pronouns are respected in the respective articles about them (GUARDIAN020; GUARDIAN021; GUARDIAN022). This may demonstrate the ongoing normalisation of *they* pronouns within media spaces, where only the most unobtrusive

[35] Mac’s pronouns are *judy/judy’s/judyself*.

nonbinary pronouns – both in the sense of their historical basis and their familiar morphology (Eide, 2018:45) – are respected. However, the latter article mentions that Emezi was “born a woman”, exemplifying how bioessentialism – the notion of absolute truths pertaining to human anatomy (Williams, 2019) - and transmisogyny still rise to the surface when trying to walk the line between respecting nonbinary pronouns and not straying too far from cisnormative understandings of gender. Language use is therefore only one step towards true trans and nonbinary liberation.

3.2.4 The Times

The Times sample also contained 30 articles, of which 12 were positive. The most frequently occurring topics were again language change (12), misgendering (10), nonbinary celebrities (3), and transphobia (3).

3.2.4.1 Language change

The first mention of pronouns as relating to language change occurs in a series of articles (TIMES001; TIMES002; TIMES003) between 2010 and 2011, where regular language column The Pedant declares singular *they* to be ungrammatical "PC language", resulting in numerous letters to the editor defending singular *they* and suggesting GNPs such as *heesh, hey*, and *per*. While none of the letter-writers explicitly self-identify as nonbinary, several declare that they use neopronouns for themselves, making this potentially the first example of nonbinary voices being heard within the British article sample. These pronouns, divorced as they are from discourses of trans rights and identity, are presented by the newspaper through the largely positive framing of linguistic innovation.

The next article (TIMES004) discusses the growing popularity and discussion of neopronouns within university spaces, taking a positive view of the matter. The author's interviewees show a preference for singular *they* as being "more likely to catch on", citing Dennis Baron's cislingualist view that GNPs are "the words that failed". This is followed by numerous articles (TIMES005; TIMES006; TIMES007; TIMES008; TIMES009) in which The Pedant’s author, Oliver Kamm - seemingly following a grammatical change of heart - defends the use of singular *they*, declaring that not only is the pronoun grammatically correct, but it is also "no modern contrivance" and its "sheer usefulness" is obvious. Kamm's stance is supported by a wide amount of linguistic evidence, with numerous studies showing that singular *they* is more likely to be understood as gender-neutral than use of the generic *he* (Bradley, 2020:2). Borthen (2010; 2011) contends that cross-linguistically, plural pronouns are prime candidates to be used in gender-neutral situations because they allow for “vague reference” more than singular gendered pronouns. This may explain why Merkhofer's (2013:10) research shows that

“rather than finding speakers “making do” with *they, they* is found to occur frequently and even to seem to be the optimal choice for some speakers and referents.” However, the fact that Kamm has had to defend this position multiple times exemplifies Bjorkman's (2017:1) observation that “For a functional element, singular *they* enjoys a curious notoriety, particularly among non-linguists.” This “notoriety” has less to do with the grammatical content of the word and more to do with the sociopolitical connotations to both trans and nonbinary people and feminist linguistics that it carries.

The next article (TIMES010) discusses the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook updating its rules on the use of neopronouns, deciding that singular *they* is “acceptable in limited cases [...] when alternative wording is overly awkward or clumsy” (Andrews, 2017). Reading the style guide provides insight into the conjugation of linguistic prescriptivism and attempts at nonbinary inclusion, as it stresses a preference for using a person’s name or rewording the sentence to avoid singular *they* pronouns altogether. This advocates for a linguistic degendering of nonbinary people – not misgendering them, but not permitting their identity to be acknowledged in full; a key example of the delegitimisation of the other through the projection of languagelessness. Particularly interesting is the refusal by AP to use “other gender-neutral pronouns such as *xe* or *ze*.” This suggests a hierarchy of grammatically, or what Nelson and Flores (2015) call “discourses of appropriateness”, between singular *they* and other neopronouns, reinforcing the notion that singular *they* is the most ‘acceptable’ of nonbinary pronouns in a journalistic setting. Lead editor of the Stylebook, Paula Froke, defended this choice, saying “We don’t, among our own staff, want to open a floodgate.” (Morgan, 2017) The imagery of neopronouns as a ‘flood’ needing to be held back, despite being used by a relatively tiny minority of individuals, reflects the notion of neopronouns as being “unhygienic” in the sense of threatening “a ‘pure’ and unified standard English variety” (Cameron, 1995:111).

This curtailing of nonbinary linguistic expression is also clear in the style guides of the newspapers analysed here. The next Times article (TIMES011) confirms that the Times does use singular *they* in its style guide, using a No Big Deal tactic to argue that "This shouldn’t still be a contentious area, especially when there are other fish to fry". Once again, however, a distinction is made between singular *they* and neopronouns, with the author declaring that "I doubt you’ll be meeting *ze, zie, hir, per, xe, xem* or *xyr* in our pages just for now". In this way, the inclusion of singular *they* can be seen as an “easy concession” (Garrett, 2017) designed to placate nonbinary readers or project an image of inclusivity without a corresponding “meaningful representation” of the multiplicity of nonbinary identity and language use. Similarly, both the BBC and Guardian style guides (BBC, 2021; The Guardian, 2021) approve the use of singular they without mentioning any other nonbinary pronouns. The notable absence of neopronouns within these style guides reflects both the prescriptivist language ideologies and the frequently transphobic gender ideologies espoused by these newspapers. This attitude is cemented by the final Times article regarding language change (TIMES012),

which positively reviews a Dennis Baron book within which Baron once again argues that *they* should be the GNP of choice as opposed to other "doomed" neopronouns.

3.2.4.2 Misgendering

While the articles on language use largely take a positive view of nonbinary pronoun use, or at least of singular *they*, the articles focused on misgendering are overwhelmingly negative. The first (TIMES013) is the notorious article about the Oxford Student Union leaflet supposedly telling students "to use gender-neutral pronouns such as “ze” rather than “he” or “she”". The idea that trans and nonbinary people are encouraging a singular, all-encompassing use of gender-neutral language is both and also depicts trans and nonbinary liberation as illiberal and 'excessive', adding to the moral panic which serves to other trans and nonbinary people in British society. This article also reinforces the common viewpoint that university campuses are “safe havens” of “liberal ideology” for LGBTQ+ individuals, given that the LGBTQ+ community has gained momentum as a political and social movement on university campuses. However, “LGBTQ students still report fear of, and encounters with violence, discrimination and abuse related to their sexual orientation or gender-identity” (Eide, 2018:19). Universities are not the ‘safe havens’ they might appear to be.

The next article (TIMES014) addresses an incident of misgendering of a school student which resulted in police involvement. Despite the article acknowledging that "the behaviour counted as a hate crime", the title refers to the incident as a "gender row", once again belittling the seriousness of transphobic violence through its choice of vocabulary. This reflects the language of “debate” that frequently surrounds trans and nonbinary rights, thereby relegating our personhood to a matter of opinion (Asquith, 2021). An article (TIMES015) on American college guides to neopronoun use consistently remarks on how "complicated" these pronouns are, highlighting nounself pronouns such as *pup* and *kit* that are frequently ridiculed by non-neopronoun users (Miltersen, 2016). Once again, this creates a sense of “common sense” language as opposed to “ideological” or “excessive language”. A three-paragraph article (TIMES016) on Dr David Mackereth's firing does not express a viewpoint on the subject, however the comments section is disproportionately large at 128 comments as of February 2021, again showing the degree of discussion and controversy surrounding trans and nonbinary people's pronouns.

The first article in the Times sample to address the emotional impact of misgendering, addresses schools providing pronoun stickers for trans students (TIMES017). This takes a positive stance, noting that the stickers are optional and that misgendering "has a cumulative effect which chips away at a person’s identity". A further article on misgendering (TIMES018) also cites trans people explaining that misgendering is "hateful conduct" against a community that is "facing high levels of abuse and discrimination". However, it also cites transphobic feminist Meghan Murphy’s argument that "transgender rights are a threat to the existence of

female-specific services", accusing Twitter of "cracking down on free speech" for banning her for misgendering a trans woman. Murphy was invited to speak at the Scottish parliament about proposed changes to the GRA, demonstrating the high level of influence that transphobic individuals have been given in debates over trans and nonbinary liberation.

Two articles (TIMES019; TIMES020) addressing a new BBC policy encouraging staff to state their pronouns in their email signatures describe the move as "well-intentioned but mistaken" because "English speakers do not use singular “they” where the antecedent is a proper name" and because only two per cent of BBC employees identify as transgender. The first argument is demonstrably untrue, and the second implies that cisgender people making small changes to make life easier for trans and nonbinary people is 'excessive'. The final article (TIMES021), written by Joanna Williams, asserts that "declaring your pronouns is pure narcissism". Not only does the article not understand how neopronouns work, using the example of "they loves me", it demonstrates how the 'culture war' over trans and nonbinary existence has led to the Times hiring a writer to contradict what its main linguistics correspondent has been defending for years. This clearly shows that the issue at hand is not, in fact, trans and nonbinary language use, but how this language use is tied to and used to legitimate popular transphobic talking points.

3.2.4.3 Trans and nonbinary celebrities

The nonbinary celebrities covered within the sample are genderfluid fashion designer Harris Reed (TIMES022), Sam Smith (TIMES023), and musician Tash Sultana (TIMES024). The articles approach their subjects positively and don't misgender them, but they do not fully embrace nonbinary identity and language. With regards to Harris, the author makes sure to mention that they are not a "dour gen-Z type droning on about gender politics", thereby tokenising them for not fitting a stereotype created in large part by publications such as The Times. Through not “droning on”, Harris does not make the author feel uncomfortable in his cisness, and is therefore made out to be “one of the good ones”, as if nonbinary identity – or the cultural facets associated with it – were “something to avoid” (Taylor, 2015).

Meanwhile the interview with Sultana notes that they "[don't] object to the pronoun "she""[36] and does not mention their gender beyond the headline. This can be seen as an alternative form of tokenisation, wherein an audience with a prior interest in trans and nonbinary identity is likely to read an article which mentions a nonbinary celebrity in the title, only for their gender to be invisibilised within the article itself.

[36] Sultana now exclusively uses *they* pronouns (‘Tash Sultana’, 2021).

3.2.5 Conclusions

The sheer scale of the articles written on this topic is itself indicative of the landscape of media discourse around trans and nonbinary pronouns in Britain. Between the year each publication began hosting online content and February 2021, the BBC offered 29 pages of results, The Times had 633 articles, and The Guardian provided well over the 10 pages of results that are analysed here. It is also possible to see the growth of this discourse over time: in 2014 – The Transgender Tipping Point – the English newspapers only published 4 articles on pronouns, rising to 12 by 2016, the year that then-Prime Minister Theresa May announced plans to reform the GRA, and then to 32 in 2019. This reflects growing interest in and controversy around trans and nonbinary identity and language use on the part of cis-dominated media and their readerships, spurred by trans and nonbinary people's demands for and gradual access to social goods.

The content of these articles has also changed significantly over the years. For example, while in 2011, the notion of alternative gender-neutral pronouns was presented as little more than a linguistic curiosity with overall support from the Times' language experts, by 2020 the same newspaper had come to accuse such pronouns as "pure narcissism". This demonstrates that, while recognition of these language forms has grown from a niche issue to an unavoidable fact of linguistic practice over the past decade, backlash to such language use has been swift and highly negative.

The overall key themes of the publications largely relate to sociopolitical issues regarding trans and nonbinary existence, such as misgendering, free speech, transphobia, and trans and nonbinary young people. The topic of language change combines both linguistic and sociopolitical factors, demonstrating how language ideologies are never separate from their broader contexts. Finally, the focus on trans and nonbinary celebrities reflects the media trend identified by Dan Irving (in Kinsman, 2009) of running stories featuring "successful" trans and nonbinary people where "the markers of success" are employment and contribution to society. Such articles fail to address systematic issues such as access to healthcare and housing which disproportionately impact trans and nonbinary people, particularly those who are multiply marginalised.

None of the publications give space for trans and nonbinary voices in the majority of their articles. This reflects wider trends within public discourse where nonbinary individuals are treated as objects of debate and enquiry, rather than subjects who should be treated as authorities on their own existences (cf.§1.3.2). The BBC has defended this practice in the face of criticism, claiming that they "do not share [the] view that it was necessary to include a contribution from a trans person" when discussing the High Court ruling around young people's access to TRHC (Duffy, 2021). Considering that the BBC (2021) claims to value lived experience

in its reporting, this statement not only ignores trans and nonbinary people's expertise on their own existences but also betrays their own definition of impartiality.

Overall, while none of the publications had a consistently positive approach to nonbinary identities and language use, the Guardian was the most positive, followed by the BBC, and then the Times. This is likely linked to the newspapers' political lines, however, as we have seen regarding wider Guardian coverage of trans issues, this is not a guarantee. While language change itself was a relatively uncontroversial topic – with all three publications largely taking a positive view of singular *they,* for example – the wider sociopolitical issues related to trans and nonbinary existence were frequently treated as sites of debate or ridicule, thereby enacting epistemic violence against trans and nonbinary people.

3.3 Spanish newspapers

3.3.1 Overview

The Spanish publications analysed in this thesis are elDiario, El País and El Mundo. elDiario is a digital left-leaning media outlet launched in 2012. Olveira Araujo (2019:155) found that both digital and print news media in Spain displayed similar tendencies towards transphobia in their coverage of trans issues in 2017, conveying a largely negative image of transness and frequently using language that is considered incorrect and offensive by trans people, such as using "*transexual*"[37] as a noun rather than an adjective. While it is therefore not possible to predict an outlet's coverage of trans issues based on its medium, elDiario seemingly prioritises the quality of their journalism regarding gender by being the first Spanish media outlet to incorporate a Chief Gender Editor in the form of Ana Requena Aguilar, a trans-inclusive feminist (Requena Aguilar, 2021).

El País is a centre-left newspaper, however it serves as a broadly politically centrist outlet in this analysis. Fernández-Cid's (2018) study of 2013 Spanish news media coverage of trans issues found that El País' reporting contained many stereotypes, with key issues including: the preponderance of articles concerning sensationalised "*malas noticias*" ("bad news", e.g. deaths and sexual exploitation); confused and offensive use of terminology, such as "*cambio de sexo*" ("sex change"); and graphic and hypersexual descriptions of trans people. Meanwhile, Olveira Araujo (2019:160) found that El País' reporting on trans issues had the

[37] In Peninsular Spanish, the word *'transexual'* is "closer to the Anglo-Saxon term 'transgender' than the medical understanding of transsexuality" (Platero, 2011:598), but most trans people prefer for it to be used as an adjective (e.g. *"una mujer transexual",* "a trans woman") rather than as a noun (e.g. **"una transexual",* *"a transsexual").

highest rate of delegitimisation of trans identity when compared to other outlets including El Mundo.

El Mundo is a centre-right newspaper; along with El País it is considered a paper of record in Spain (Kassam, 2014). Fernández-Cid and Olveira Araujo's studies found that El Mundo's reporting on trans issues was similarly problematic to El País', though the former was less likely to actively condemn transphobia. Examples of El Mundo's transphobic reporting in 2017 were their questioning of trans father Thomas Beatie's gender identity, referring to his "*maternidad*" ("motherhood"), and their description of a murdered trans woman as a "*travesti*" ("transvestite"[38]).

Overall, Fernández-Cid and Olveira Araujo stress that trans and nonbinary identities and issues are a relatively new subject for Spanish news media, but that they have become progressively more incorporated into journalism across the political spectrum in the last few years. As a result, much of these outlets' coverage presents stereotypical, outdated, and offensive content that invalidates the lives and identities of trans and nonbinary people in various ways. However, as trans and nonbinary communities are fighting back against these inaccurate representations – for example, the Chrysallis Euskal Herria recommendations for reporting on trans issues – Spanish news media outlets are responding to their critiques and changing their reporting accordingly. With the rise of political and public debate surrounding the Ley Trans (cf.§2.2) between 2019 and 2021, reporting on trans issues in Spain has increased, though this does not necessarily correspond to an increase in quality or a decrease in media transphobia.

3.3.2 elDiario

elDiario published 23 articles on the subject of trans and nonbinary language use between 2014 and 2021. The topic covered most frequently in these articles is that of language change (10), followed by trans and nonbinary celebrities (5), and transphobia (5). The majority of these articles (15) are positive towards nonbinary identities and language use.

[38] *Travesti* is a complex term, not quite synonymous with the English word "transvestite", which largely refers to people (usually those assigned male at birth) who like to wear clothes associated with the other binary gender without this necessarily having a correlation with their gender identity. In Latin America, travesti is used "to describe those who cross genders, cross-sex and cross-dress" and has been reclaimed by travestis as a personal and political identity (Campuzano, 2006). It is, however, totally inappropriate to describe a trans woman who does not identify as a travesti using this term.

3.3.2.1 Language change

The first article (DIARIO001) discussing language change covers the acceptance of the pronoun *hen* by the Swedish academy. Interestingly, the article does not choose to compare the situation in Sweden with that in Spain, even though the positions of the Swedish Academy and the RAE on the subject of neopronouns radically diverge. The article also explains two criticisms of the pronoun: firstly, that it is "*un exceso de corrección*" ("overly correct"), once again tying nonbinary pronoun use to political correctness and 'excessiveness'; secondly, that it represents a step backwards for linguistic equality between men and women. This argument is reminiscent of transphobic feminists who argue that gender-neutral language is an "erasion of womanhood". An imposed dichotomy between nonbinary identities and feminism deliberately excludes genders other than cis womanhood from being served by or serving feminism (Fisher, 2019:33).

From 2017 to 2018, elDiario published 5 articles concerning nonbinary language use, with highly polarised opinions on the topic. The first (DIARIO002) discusses a non-sexist language guide created by the Department of Health in Valencia. The guide, which defends the notion that language is "*un fenómeno social, dinámico, flexible y transformador*" ("a dynamic, flexible, and transformative social phenomenon"), was the subject of online criticism by RAE member Arturo Pérez Reverte, who described the suggestions as "*tontos*" ("stupid"). Pérez Reverte – who has previously described anti-sexist language reforms as "*empobrecedor, artificioso, y ridículo… tonto e inútil… grotesco*" ("impoverishing, artificial, and ridiculous… stupid and useless… grotesque") and attributed their use to "feminazis" (Zentella, 2017:26) – perfectly encapsulates the prescriptivist, conservative language ideology of the RAE. While neither the article nor the language guide mention nonbinary people, this same ideology inevitably also impacts nonbinary Spanish language users whose use of language is considered equally "artificial and ridiculous" (infobae, 2020), once again demonstrating the ways that cislingualist ideologies relegate nonbinary language users to a state of languagelessness.

The next article on the subject (DIARIO003), an opinion piece by linguist Elena Álvarez Mellado on the "*historia de la disidencia gramatical*" ("history of grammatical dissidence"), differs greatly in its language ideology. The author explains that:

> "*…el género neutro en -e puede parecer una extravagancia gramatical sin futuro. Pero es que el género gramatical con el que alguien se refiere a sí mismo y con el que le tratan los demás tiene una inmensa trascendencia social e identitaria.*"
> "…gender neutral language using *-e* might seem like a grammatical extravagance with little future. But the grammatical gender that someone uses to refer to themself and that others use to refer to them has a huge social significance regarding identity."

It is therefore clear that linguistic opinion regarding gender-neutral language is frequently split along conservative and progressive lines within Spain, with nonbinary people's access to accurate and respectful language hanging in the balance.

This clash of linguistic ideologies is also evidenced in Mellado's (DIARIO004) defence of "*pronombres subversivos*" ("subversive pronouns") such as *elle*. She argues that, while not all of these feminist linguistic innovations will stand the test of time, this does not mean that they are less worthy or less linguistically interesting, lending credence to Feraday's argument that linguistic innovation has no "finish line". Another article (DIARIO005), on the other hand, labels nonbinary language use as "postmodernism", a descriptor frequently used by transphobic philosophers such as Jordan Peterson in order to delegitimise trans activism (Contrapoints, 2018). This article, written by trans woman activist Mar Cambrollé, oscillates between arguments that I consider to be valid – such as describing the use of gender-neutral language to refer to trans women as a form of degendering that is not equally applied to cis women[39] - and those that are nonbinary-erasing – such as arguing that no nonbinary child has ever said *"mamá soy un niñe*" ("mummy, I'm a-M. child-ALT.N.). This denial of nonbinary childhood ignores the epistemic barriers preventing many young people from accessing gender-neutral language. Cambrollé's arguments appear to stem from both a genuine response to transmisogyny but also a transmedicalist exclusion of nonbinary people from the experience of 'true transness'. It is therefore not always the case that binary trans people in Spain are automatically allies to the cause of nonbinary pronoun use.

The final article of 2018 on the subject of language change (DIARIO006) discusses a guide for how the media should discuss misogynistic violence, which recommends the use of inclusive language that reinforces feminine forms rather than gender neutral language. The article explains that: "*Aunque reconoce el debate abierto sobre los pronombres neutros y la eliminación del género gramatical, aboga por mencionar el femenino expresamente, "para hacer visible la realidad de la discriminación de las mujeres por el hecho de ser mujeres*"." ("Although it recognises the open debate over neutral pronouns and the elimination of grammatical gender, it advocates for the explicit mention of feminine forms "in order to draw attention to the reality of discrimination against women on the basis of being women".") Davis, Zimman, and Raclaw (2014:1-2) make the point that gender has been "useful as a strategic tool", in particular to second-wave feminist linguistics, and it remains relevant in analysing the current and historical role of binaries in linguistic practices. Introducing non-, post-, or anti-binary positionalities to the field of sociolinguistics is not the same as questioning the crucial role played by binary-situated feminist linguistic studies. In a context such as this one, it may

[39] This has also been argued by trans commentators such as Eden Ladley (2021), @quendergeer (2020), and @communoah (2021).

make more sense for a gender-inclusive language approach to be used in place of a gender-neutral one, proving that they are not opposing forces but rather complementary ones.

The three articles from 2019 demonstrate the ongoing normalisation of nonbinary language practices, with the first (DIARIO007) discussing new guidance given to Spanish national police, which recommends avoiding the masculine generic by, for example, using pronouns such as "*alguien*" ("someone-M."). This represents a language shift to accommodate both women and nonbinary people, demonstrating that linguistic innovation can simultaneously target both groups.[40] The next article (DIARIO008) is a robust defence of the *-e* morpheme, emphasising its usefulness for including both women and nonbinary people and directly countering enforced languagelessness by declaring that *"Lo que no se nombra no existe"* ("That which has no name does not exist"). Finally, an article (DIARIO009) explaining why people choose to put *he/him* and *she/her* in their online bios emphasises the importance of pronouns and correctly identifies *elle* as the Spanish equivalent of *they/them*. Not only does this demonstrate how unavoidable GNPs and trans and nonbinary language practices have become in everyday life for the majority of Western subjects, it also provides an insightful example of sharing trans and nonbinary knowledges across multiple languages.

Nevertheless, this was not enough to convince the RAE of the usefulness of linguistic innovation, as can be seen in the final article on language change (DIARIO010), where the linguistic body declares that it is not necessary to change the instances of masculine generic in the Spanish constitution to make it more inclusive. Interestingly, the article quotes Carmen Calvo's rebuttal of the RAE's claims; she explains that "*el lenguaje ha avanzado en la "calle" y que "no está en manos de nadie pararlo*"" ("language has advanced in the "street" and "it's in nobody's hands to stop it""). The disconnect between Calvo's comments and actions regarding trans and nonbinary rights and liberation (cf.§2.2) and her defence of gender-inclusive language demonstrates the lack of understanding that many transphobic feminists have regarding the mutuality of feminist and trans and nonbinary sociopolitical and linguistic goals, which would be more easily achieved if the movements worked together.

3.3.2.2 Trans and nonbinary celebrities

The first trans celebrities covered by the newspaper were Chelsea Manning (DIARIO011) and musician Laura Jane Grace (DIARIO012) in 2014; the former was originally referred to using masculine pronouns, despite having publicly come out, however this was later changed. The

[40] The question of to what extent trans and nonbinary people should work with police institutions to improve their approaches to trans and nonbinary individuals and issues is beyond the remit of this thesis. However, it is possible to understand the adoption of gender-inclusive language by the Spanish police as representing a recuperation of initially radical linguistic reforms, which can serve both the positive goal of normalizing such language, but which may also serve to align trans and nonbinary communities with political agendas that they reject, such as policing.

misgendering of trans and nonbinary celebrities through translation into Spanish is described by López (2019) as *"un error de traducción exactamente tan grave como traducir a Barack Obama en femenino"* ("as serious a translation error as translating Barack Obama using feminine forms"). However, the seriousness of these errors is often not realised by cis journalists whose language use devalues the personhood of trans and nonbinary people.

The article about Grace uses a mixture of masculine and feminine pronouns, nouns, and adjectives for her, demonstrating the confusion experienced by many cis writers when describing a trans person's life before and after coming out. The figure of the trans and/or nonbinary celebrity does not then emerge in the paper until 2019 (DIARIO013), when visual artist Coco Guzmán was interviewed in the *Disidencias de género* blog, which focuses on feminist and LGBTQ+ issues. Then in 2020-2021, the newspaper covered basketballer Dwyane Wade's daughter coming out as a trans girl (DIARIO014), actor Elliot Page coming out as a nonbinary trans man (DIARIO015), and actress Gina Carano being fired from the Star Wars franchise (DIARIO016) after, among other things, mocking trans people's pronouns by listing her own as *"beep/bop/boop*". The rapid increase in articles of this nature demonstrates the degree to which trans and nonbinary identities have become an unavoidable part of everyday life in Spain, including within celebrity culture. Nevertheless, the use of pronouns, nouns, and adjectives for trans and nonbinary individuals mentioned in the articles continues to perpetuate misgendering, seemingly for the purpose of not confusing the implied reader (Schmid, 2014), who is always imagined to be cisgender under the assumption that cisness, like whiteness or maleness, represents a 'neutral' position (Vince, 2020).

The issue of correctly gendering trans and nonbinary celebrities through language use is directly addressed in a 2020 article (DIARIO017). This discusses how Wikipedia pages are now much quicker at changing the pronouns and names that they use to refer to binary trans celebrities such as the Wachowski sisters, and to nonbinary celebrities who use a conventionally 'binary' pronoun such as Elliot Page. Ironically, however, while nonbinary poet Kae Tempest is described on their Wikipedia page as a *poete* (poet-ALT.N.), the elDiario article uses masculine nouns for them and explains that Spanish Wikipedia editors' policy is that *"mayoritariamente se prefiere el uso normativo de masculino o femenino y los consensos aceptados por la Real Academia Española"* ("it is largely preferred to use normative masculine or feminine forms and the accepted consensuses of the RAE"). We can therefore see that neopronoun use is held to a higher standard by cislingualist Spanish grammar conventions in comparison to 'binary' pronouns, once again enforcing a languagelessness onto nonbinary language users.

3.3.2.3 Transphobia

The majority of the articles on transphobia are positive and supportive towards trans and nonbinary individuals, exploring the difficulties faced by Trans Mormons (DIARIO018),

decrying Jordan Peterson's ideology as "*antitransgénero*" ("anti-transgender") (DIARIO019), explaining the issues trans people have within the health system (DIARIO020) and at school (DIARIO021), and interviewing Arthur Britney, the first asylum seeker to be recognised as nonbinary in Britain (DIARIO022). These articles serve to humanise trans and nonbinary people, recognising the issues we face as systemic obstacles to liberation rather than points of debate.

However, in July 2020, elDiario published an article (DIARIO023) entitled *"Contra el borrado de las mujeres"* ("Against the erasion of women"). This opinion piece by ex-PSOE deputy Ángeles Álvarez uses key transphobic feminist talking points, arguing that *"leyes de autoidentificación que reconozcan que cualquiera puede ser una mujer se oculta la realidad de las mujeres"* ("self-identification laws that recognise that anyone can be a woman obscure the reality of womanhood"). In terms of language use, the article also opposes the use of *elle*s, linking it to a *"doctrina queer"* ("queer ideology") that *"invisibiliza a quien oprime y a quien es oprimida"* ("obscures who oppresses and who is oppressed")[41]. These lines of argument demonstrate how transphobic feminist rhetoric has gained traction in Spain as well as in Britain, using similar tactics of anti-intellectualism towards queer theory and scaremongering about transfeminine people. Álvarez's argument ignores the fact that, as we have seen, laws concerning gendered violence do take into account the genders of perpetrators and victims when deciding the type of language to use. The fact that a newspaper which has largely stood against transphobia and in support of trans and nonbinary people would choose to publish this piece demonstrates a lack of consistency in its editorial stance toward trans and nonbinary liberation. This may represent an attempt to create 'editorial balance' between the two sides of the 'debate' regarding trans and nonbinary self-identification, similarly to the BBC's policy. However, this justification relies on severely undermining trans and nonbinary people's dignity and safety, relegating our personhood to a matter of opinion.

3.3.3 El País

The El País sample contained the largest number of articles amongst the Spanish newspapers (28). The most popular topic within the articles was language change (18), followed by trans and nonbinary celebrities (6), then transphobia and trans visibility (4). 11 of their articles were positive, 9 were negative, and 8 were neutral or presented two sides of view.

[41] The notion that there is one gendered class which solely oppresses and one which is solely oppressed has been critiqued by many trans people, firstly for its bioessentialism which serves to naturalise a hierarchy between those assigned male and female at birth, but also because it serves to absolve women – such as transphobic cis women – from their positions of privilege and their ability to enact harm (@chicago-genizer, 2021).

3.3.3.1 Language change

In 2012, El País published several opinion pieces on gender-neutral Spanish language practices such as the use of the -@ morpheme, the doubling of gendered terms, and the feminine generic (e.g. *"nosotras"*, we-F., to refer to a mixed-gender group). Two of these (PAIS001; PAIS002) were written by linguistics professors: RAE member Pedro Álvarez de Miranda and Ignacio M. Roca. Both took negative views of such language changes, with Miranda declaring that "*Las convenciones lingüísticas más profundas no se pueden modificar*" ("the most deep-rooted linguistic conventions cannot be modified"). These articles analyse gender-neutral language outside of the lens of trans and nonbinary identity, placing such language firmly within the frame of feminism. As such, a distinctly anti-feminist linguistic stance is demonstrated through references to the "damage" caused by anti-sexist language guides. The third article (PAIS003), however, defends the fluidity of language and questions the notion that everyday speakers differentiate between grammatical and social gender, demonstrating the conflicts in opinion within Spanish language ideologies.

In 2014, the newspaper published two articles (PAIS004; PAIS005) concerning the addition of new gender options to Facebook profiles, firstly in English, then in Spanish. *Ello* is given as an example of a Spanish GNP within these articles, despite rarely being used in the context of nonbinary pronouns (cf.§1.2.4). The translation of third person singular *they* into Spanish is a common issue in a world where nonbinary identity is increasingly recognised by mainstream media. López (2019) notes that it is often mistakenly translated using the third person plural pronouns *ellos* or *ellas*. This represents a form of misgendering, and also signals to Spanish language users that there are no personal GNPs in Spanish, denying them access to language that feels authentic to them.

The focus on nonbinary pronouns as used on Facebook shows that in online spaces, the use of this language is increasingly normalised. Pearce (2018:41) argues that trans and nonbinary language is "facilitated greatly by the internet", and this is exemplified by the history of trans and nonbinary involvement in and creation of online spaces (Giardina, 2019). However, Mourad (2013:2540) counters that the digital architecture of a media interface – such as the language options or identity categories available – "determine the modes and forms of expression" available to users. Facebook's difficulties in translating nonbinary pronouns into Spanish demonstrates an example of these limitations, thereby withholding authentic modes of expression from nonbinary users.

Pedro Álvarez de Miranda goes on to write two more articles (PAIS007; PAIS008) dismissing linguistic innovation. In the second, he mocks members of an Asturian council who have decided to exclusively use feminine forms in their official communications, highlighting their lack of consistency in using feminine forms when speaking and declaring that this demonstrates the absurdity of such a linguistic innovation. Given that trans and nonbinary

speakers recognise that changing the way one uses language is a process that requires 'extra effort' and practice, Miranda is clearly projecting a language ideology that assumes that the language which one finds easiest to use is the most 'natural' and therefore the best. Craft et. al. (2020:393) highlight that ideologies about language often "represent themselves as forms of common sense, that rationalize and justify the forms and functions of text and talk". This therefore makes it "permissible to elevate or devalue the social standing and language performance of speakers according to their language choices". Regardless of how "rational" or "common sense" certain language users may consider their language ideology regarding pronoun use to be (e.g. *él* = male = assigned male at birth), Conrod (2019:6) demonstrates that "pronoun use is a socially sensitive variable and depends strongly on sentiment and attitudes about gender ideologies". The ways of speaking Spanish that feel most comfortable to Miranda are those that have been normalised through cisnormative systems such as education and the media – after all, "the gender binary is a cultural accomplishment, not a natural order, and often requires coercion." (Eckert, 2014:530)

The rest of the articles on language change in El País continue to show this linguistic back and forth between proponents and detractors of linguistic innovation. Those in favor (PAIS009; PAIS010) argue that "*ridiculizar el lenguaje no sexista es una forma grotesca de defender una posición de poder*" ("ridiculing non-sexist language is a grotesque way of defending a position of power") and that "*En cada pronombre estamos tomando una decisión. […] En cada ausencia se esconde una violencia.*" ("With every pronoun we are making a decision. […] With every absence a violence is hidden.") This represents a language ideology that recognises the political potential of language to either perpetuate or deconstruct power structures within society. Those standing against linguistic innovation (PAIS011; PAIS012) argue that "*los cambios en las lenguas no se imponen desde las academias ni desde un movimiento social*" ("language changes cannot be imposed by the academy nor by social movements") and that "*los idiomas son organismos autónomos con una vida propia al margen de lo que digan las élites sociales*" ("languages are autonomous organisms with their own lives outside of what social elites say"). These arguments offer a mix of linguistic apathy – "it's impossible to change language, so don't try" – and linguistic prescriptivism – "the way language is, is the way it's meant to be" – which we might call stealth prescriptivism. This stealth prescriptivism serves to stifle the prefigurative politics enacted through language change, thereby "defending a position of power".

This argument also attempts to depict the rise of nonbinary language as a 'change from above' rooted in academic elitism. Conrod (2018a) explains that unlike most language changes 'from above', nonbinary language "is not necessarily a prestigious variable" and comes from "groups with high salience but not necessarily high status". The notion that nonbinary language represents a 'change from above' is used to depict this language use as being unduly enforced upon people as a form of 'excessive' political correctness. There is also

an irony in El País journalists protesting “change from above” while simultaneously reproducing linguistic prescriptions regarding gendered language that originate from and are promoted by those “from above”.

Many of these articles coalesce around specific instances of linguistic controversy, such as gender-neutral parenting (PAIS013), the Andalusian council taxing the use of sexist language (PAIS014), and debate amongst academics over linguistic sexism (PAIS015). While the majority of the articles quote cis women defending anti-sexist language, there is a distinct lack of trans and nonbinary voices, or considerations of gender-neutral language as benefiting more than just cis women.

3.3.3.2 Trans and nonbinary celebrities

The trans and nonbinary celebrities covered within the El País sample were Chelsea Manning (PAIS016; PAIS017); Caitlin Jenner (PAIS018); nonbinary parent Kori Doti (PAIS019) who is raising their baby as nonbinary; visual artist Victoria Sin (PAIS020); the nonbinary child of game developer Margareth Stohl (PAIS021); Sam Smith (PAIS022); and actress Charlize Theron’s trans daughter (PAIS023). The earlier articles about trans individuals who use conventionally ‘binary’ pronouns often misgender their subjects, however by 2019 all pronouns and gendered language relating to binary trans individuals respects their identities. However, nonbinary individuals continue to be regularly misgendered, with singular *they* frequently mistranslated as *ellos* and masculine or feminine gendered nouns and adjectives used to refer to nonbinary people who exclusively use gender-neutral pronouns in English. This demonstrates that while the use of binary trans people's chosen pronouns has become less controversial within the newspaper, nonbinary pronouns still represent a sticking point, being mistranslated either due to ignorance, laziness, or editorial conventions – all of which perpetuate a language ideology that strips nonbinary people of their language and consequently their personhood.

3.3.3.3 Transphobia and trans visibility

The remaining articles discuss the issues of transphobia and trans visibility across a wide range of areas, all of which present positive views of trans and nonbinary existence. This includes an explanation of why using public bathrooms can be such a difficult experience for trans people (PAIS024) and an exposé on the photography project *PRESENTE-FUTURO* (PAIS025), which features trans young people, where the president of Chrysallis Andalucía[42] "*corrige amablemente*" ("kindly corrects") the interviewer when they use gendered terms such as "*niños*" (“children”-M.). Finally, after a brief comment from a Donna Haraway interview (PAIS026) where the feminist academic states that "*los pronombres son importantes para el*

[42] An organisation supporting trans and nonbinary children and young people and their families.

respeto" ("pronouns are important in order to show respect"), an article from late 2020 (PAIS027) gives voice to the experiences of numerous nonbinary people in Spain. The '*nosotres*' (us-ALT.N.) of the article's title are given space to discuss the gender binary, queer theory, self-determination, the Ley Trans, nonbinary language use, and transphobia. These articles, which are either written by or prominently feature the voices of trans and nonbinary people, serve to humanise the trans and nonbinary population past linguistic debates and sensationalised public figures, advocating directly to the reader for recognition and acceptance of their identities and their language.

3.3.4 El Mundo

The El Mundo sample contained the smallest number of articles (13). Once again, language change was the most popular issue covered (6), followed by trans and nonbinary celebrities (5). 8 of their articles were positive, 1 was negative, and 3 were neutral or presented two sides of view.

3.3.4.1 Language change

The earliest published article within both the English and Spanish samples was a 2008 El Mundo article directly addressing nonbinary pronoun use (MUNDO001). The article described Facebook's difficulties in translating gender neutral *they* pronouns into Spanish and once again used the pronoun *ello* as an example of a GNP, demonstrating that mainstream conceptions of gender-neutral Spanish were much more limited at this time. While nonbinary identity was not directly mentioned in the 2008 article, by 2014 an article on Facebook's new personalised gender option (MUNDO002) explained the update as being *"un nuevo guiño a los transexuales"* ("a new nod towards trans people"). However, the article also referred to *ello* as a GNP. Clearly, increased recognition of trans and nonbinary people does not necessarily imply increased understanding of our language use.

A 2015 article (MUNDO003) on an LGBT swimming pool in Sweden mentions the use of the pronoun *hen* in the country, explaining that it can be used by *"transgéneros"*. It is then not until 2019 that an article (MUNDO004) in the paper's section for younger readers, *Fcinco*, discussed the Spanish translation of the game Pokémon Go, which uses feminine forms where the character uses singular *they* pronouns in English. In its explanation of the issue, the article explicitly names nonbinary gender and describes singular *they* as "*el equivalente a "elle" en español*" ("the equivalent of *elle* in Spanish"). The fact that this article has an intended audience of young people may explain the choice to use these terms without providing further explanation for them, as young people may be more likely to be familiar with nonbinary language and identity.

A further 2019 article (MUNDO005) lays out the context of current linguistic debates around gender-neutral and gender-inclusive language in Spanish. Arguing in favour of these linguistic innovations, Daniela Lauria contends that all of us change language every day, while Sara Isabel Pérez and Marina Mariasch defend language as a way of expressing identity, creating social change, and offering validation outside of linguistic norms. On the other end of the spectrum, Pedro Álvarez de Miranda declares the use of *-e* to be "*una broma*" ("a joke") and argues that "*dudo que el señor que pinta niñes en una pared de Chile, en casa diga niñes*" ("I doubt that the same man who paints the word '*niñes*' (children-ALT.N.) on a wall in Chile also uses the word '*niñes*' at home"). This viewpoint reflects the idea that nonbinary language is merely a cynical political tactic rather than a key to self-liberation for nonbinary people that is legitimately respected by their allies.

This antagonistic attitude towards nonbinary language use is perfectly exemplified in an interview with author Charlie Geer (MUNDO006), where he mocks the idea of using GNPs in both English and Spanish, imagining the sentence "*ellos bebe una cerveza*" ("they-PL. drink-SING. a beer") and dismissing the use of correct pronouns as "*un poco de postureo*" ("a slight posturing"). This shows that even an author whose expertise is in language can misunderstand how nonbinary pronouns function in Spanish (López, 2019) and fail to recognise the genuine sociopolitical and personal impetus behind using such language. Geer also argues that the people who care about pronouns are those "*con opiniones y ganas de debatir*" ("with opinions who want to debate") rather than "*la gente de la calle*" ("the people in the street"). Here we once again see how elitism and the notion of a "change from above" is attributed to nonbinary language, despite its lack of prestige in the majority of cis-dominated environments. A nebulous and politically useful notion of "the people" is conjured in order to justify Geer's own opinion, assuming a 'neutrality' in the form of cisness to be both embodied and supported by "the people".

Two further articles in 2020 provided glossaries of LGBTQ+ terminology, the first (MUNDO007) as it relates to the Ley Trans and the second (MUNDO008) as it relates to 2020 Pride. The articles provide basic definitions of terms such as cisgender, non-binary, self-determination, and TERF, but also provide context relating to contemporary gender politics. The preponderance of this type of article demonstrates both how widely-discussed the topic of trans and nonbinary identity and language use has become in Spain in the past year, and also the lack of awareness that many cis people have of the language used by trans and nonbinary people.

3.3.4.2 Trans and nonbinary celebrities

The trans and nonbinary celebrities mentioned in the El Mundo articles are Chelsea Manning and Caitlin Jenner (MUNDO009; MUNDO010), who are both misgendered in articles about their coming out; boxer Pat Manuel Cacahuete (MUNDO011), who is gendered according to his

identity; and Argentinian travesti novelist Camila Sosa Villada (MUNDO012), who states firmly that travestis are women and should be addressed using feminine forms. Villada uses the feminist slogan "*NO es NO*" ("no means no") to argue that "*deberían respetar que queremos ser llamadas así*" ("they should respect what we want to be called"). This again demonstrates that feminist linguistics and trans linguistics share the goal of self-determination.

The change from misgendering to gender-confirming language and the increased space given within each article to trans and nonbinary people's voices demonstrates how media coverage of trans and nonbinary issues has changed over time. This is compounded by a blog post by Alberto Rey (MUNDO013) which compares how the Spanish reality show *Operación triunfo* has changed over the years, now addressing trans issues in ways that were unthinkable just a decade ago. While Rey attributes this change to "*el mundo de los adolescentes actuales*" ("the world of today's teenagers"), he makes it clear that it is not that trans people are new, but rather the way they are addressed within mainstream media.

3.3.5 Conclusions

The scale of articles published on the topic of trans and nonbinary pronouns in the Spanish newspapers between 2008 and 2021 was far greater than I initially expected, demonstrating a high degree of interest in the topic. The greatest rise in interest can be seen between 2017, when five articles were published on the topic between the three publications, and 2018, when this rose to 12, remaining consistent for the next two years. Interestingly, 2018 was the year when the Ley Trans was first proposed. The notably smaller sample of El Mundo articles may represent a relative lack of interest in discussing trans issues beyond *"malas noticias"*, while El País had the lowest percentage of articles which were explicitly positive towards trans and nonbinary people, displaying a higher tendency to show 'both sides of view'.

However, the main themes of the articles included in this sample demonstrate a much greater interest in the linguistic dimensions of gender than in the sociopolitical position of trans and nonbinary people. This follows on from the linguistic context of Peninsular Spanish, in which the RAE is held to high regard within areas such as the media that propagate linguistic prescriptivism, and where the issue of gender-inclusive language is a longstanding battleground linked to gender politics and language ideologies. This particular 'culture war' has far less to do with trans and nonbinary identity than it does to do with feminism and linguistic prescriptivism, however both trans and nonbinary people and women become the victims of epistemic violence in the form of ridicule and dismissal of their expressions of identity and linguistic freedom.

While the coverage of trans and nonbinary people's lives and struggles is largely sympathetic within the Spanish newspapers, language once again proves a sticking point, especially when referring to nonbinary individuals. Individuals including celebrities are repeatedly misgendered, demonstrating the overwhelming lack of recognition of nonbinary language forms in news media spaces.

Overall, there is a stark delineation between articles concerning language change and those that relate specifically to the sociopolitical realities of trans and nonbinary existence. However, for trans and nonbinary language users these two areas are not separate – after all, they must navigate those realities through the use of a language whose norms and rules are the site of ongoing and often bitter controversy regarding gender. As the issues of trans and nonbinary recognition and self-identification have risen to the fore of public consciousness in Spain through the Ley Trans, longstanding debates over language change have combined with broader societal transphobia to create new modes and targets of attack. This has resulted in a media environment that is increasingly aware of but also increasingly hostile towards trans and nonbinary language users.

3.4 Comparison

In many ways, the English and the Spanish newspaper samples were more similar than I initially expected – the former was larger, but not by an extortionate amount; both tended towards positive and neutral attitudes towards trans and nonbinary people; and both demonstrated an upward trend in coverage of trans and nonbinary pronouns over time. Differences between the newspapers within each set largely followed expected political lines: the left-wing newspapers were the most positive in their coverage, the right-wing papers more negative, and both the BBC and El País demonstrated a higher degree of neutrality towards trans and nonbinary people, preferring to show 'both sides' of various issues. This demonstrates that across the two countries, journalistic neutrality is held to a higher standard that unwavering support for trans and nonbinary rights – we can also see this in the surprising inclusion of a transphobic article in elDiario.

However, the key difference between the English newspapers and the Spanish newspapers lies in their coverage of linguistic and sociopolitical issues related to trans and nonbinary people, in ways which clearly reflect their respective national-linguistic contexts. The English newspapers have a much greater focus on issues such as misgendering, transphobia, free speech, and trans and nonbinary young people, all of which tie to current discourses regarding trans and nonbinary people which are taking place in wider society. In a country where 'debate' over trans and nonbinary rights and recognition has led to an obsessive 'culture war', every aspect of trans and nonbinary life has become increasingly politicised. It is

therefore unsurprising that the English newspapers focus on these hot-button issues which will attract an audience who is already aware, if not deeply mired within, the sociopolitical dimensions of trans and nonbinary existence.

Meanwhile, the Spanish newspapers' approach to the sociopolitical aspects of trans and nonbinary identity is largely one of positive descriptivism, highlighting the experiences of individuals and communities without engaging in wider 'debates' around free speech or young people's healthcare, for example. It is not until 2020 that issues such as self-identification become both more common and more contentious within the sample, reflecting the changing sociopolitical landscape in Spain as a result of the Ley Trans.

On the other hand, language change is a much greater focus of the Spanish articles, and it is also a much more controversial subject. While support for singular *they* had largely been agreed upon in the English articles by the late 2010s, with the exception of notable transphobes such as Jordan Peterson, gender-neutral language is still hotly debated within the Spanish articles. This reflects the fact that in the British English context, singular *they* has been normalised enough to be recognised by language authorities such as dictionaries, perhaps due to the pronoun's longstanding usage in British English. In Spain, however, all gender-neutral language results from more recent linguistic innovation and is marginalised as a result. This would also explain why neopronouns other than singular *they* are still considered contentious by the English newspapers, given the prescriptivist environment of the media.

These divergent foci are visible throughout the two samples, even in seemingly unrelated contexts. For example, articles about trans and nonbinary celebrities abound in both the English and Spanish newspapers, but while the former is more likely to talk about the celebrities in the context of allyship and debates around trans people in sport, the latter dedicates multiple articles to what their identities mean in the context of the Spanish language. The consistent misgendering of nonbinary celebrities in the Spanish articles even up to the present day reflects both a media sphere and a wider Spanish society that is highly unwilling to adapt their language practices in order to acknowledge and include nonbinary people.

Nevertheless, despite these differences in foci, language remains a key political weapon across the two contexts. Pronouns are decried as ideological weapons of erasure or as liberatory tools of societal transformation, depending on the contributor's position in the 'culture war'. This demonstrates the highly politicised role of language – in particular that which is innovated by marginalised groups - even amongst those discussions that claim to focus solely on grammaticality. However, while the English newspapers' anxieties regarding trans and nonbinary language use largely revolve around its consequences for the sociopolitical position of cis people, the Spanish newspapers are more concerned with its impact on the language itself. In this way, both language and society become "crystallised structures of

cisnormativity", but their perceived need for protection is determined by national-linguistic context.

Overall, the analysis of these articles has offered crucial insights into the discourses surrounding nonbinary pronoun use in Peninsular Spanish and British English, offering contrasts and similarities between the two contexts. In the following chapter we will explore how these discourses and their contexts impact the ways in which nonbinary language users use pronouns, drawing on the input of nonbinary people themselves.

Chapter 4: Language users in their own words

The core aim of this thesis is to explore how nonbinary language users are using pronouns in Peninsular Spanish and British English, and the only way to know this is through hearing from them directly. In this chapter we will learn from the responses of research participants to questionnaires, video interviews, and focus groups what it means to use pronouns as a nonbinary user of Peninsular Spanish or British English today.

4.1 Methodology

Nonbinary language users were recruited as research participants using social media posts (cf.Appendices I-II), allowing me to reach a wider range of potential participants as the posts were shared by social media users. I was also able to target trans and nonbinary-specific spaces, having asked the permission of the moderators to do so as is recommended by Vincent (2017).

Interested participants were asked to specify which sections of the participation process they were interested in: questionnaire draft review; taking the questionnaire; video interviews; and a final focus group. Those who expressed interest in the first section were sent the first draft of the questionnaire; they were able to feedback on language choices and the inclusion or exclusion of specific questions, recognising their role as co-producers of knowledge within this process. The finished questionnaire was hosted using Qualtrics, as this is a GDPR-compliant hosting site.

The questionnaire was split into five main sections (cf.Appendices III-IV). The first (Page 3 of the questionnaire) asked them for general biographical information – this was the only section that was mandatory, and all questions had free-text boxes so that respondents could choose to provide as much information as they wanted on special categories of personal data such as race or disability. I was interested in gaining biographical information beyond simply gender, nationality, and language use, not only so that I could assess the representativeness of my participant cohort, but also so that the intersecting identities of individual participants could be better understood, including how they might impact on language use.

The second section (Page 4) focused on participants' individual usage of pronouns, asking about the chosen pronouns they currently used, had previously used, and would like to use, along with exploring environments in which they felt safe and/or comfortable asking for their chosen pronouns to be used. The environments examined are those where participants are likely to encounter a large degree of interpersonal connections and where they may face significantly more or less pressure to conform to cisnormativity: the workplace; place of learning; family of origin, such as parents and siblings; family of choice, such as partners and

children; close friend groups; and online spaces. Participants were also asked how their different identities outside of gender might impact their pronoun use.

The third section (Page 5) inquired into participants' opinions regarding neopronouns, including their definitions of neopronouns, their support for neopronouns, and whether they felt safe and/or comfortable using neopronouns in various environments.

The fourth section (Page 6) addressed societal attitudes within each national-linguistic context towards trans and nonbinary people in general and towards our pronoun use in particular. This focused on interpersonal environments, but also on broader entities such as the media, politics, and religious institutions.

An additional section (Page 8) asked for participant input on how the data collected could best be used to positively impact nonbinary communities.

For those participants who had completed the questionnaire and were interested in participating further, video interviews took place over Zoom so as to allow for audio capture. Interview questions were prepared in advance (cf.Appendices V-VI), however, these took the form of semi-structured interviews, allowing participants relative freedom over the direction of the conversation so as to collect authentic data on their opinions and experiences.

The final stage consisted of two focus groups (one in each language) where participants could discuss specific questions that had arisen during the research process and broader questions of how the data collected could be best used to respond to the needs and goals of nonbinary users of Peninsular Spanish and British English.

In terms of ethical considerations, participant safety was at the forefront of the methodology. Consent forms were filled out before every stage of the process. Content warnings were provided before potentially uncomfortable or upsetting material within the questionnaire and video interviews, and participants were provided with a list of helplines and resources that they could access should they need to do so. Vincent's (2017) discussion of the potential of denying agency to trans participants through insisting on anonymity, therefore undermining their efforts to create and enforce their identities including their chosen names, inspired me to give my participants the choice to be anonymous or to choose a name as an identifier.

4.2 English participants

This section will analyse the responses of participants who use British English (henceforth referred to as the English participants[43]) to the questionnaire, video interviews, and focus groups.

4.2.1 Participant demographics

Of the 22 English participants, aged between 20 and 38, eight were full-time students, three were unemployed, and the others worked in a variety of job roles and sectors. 15 self-identified as middle class, and the rest as working class. Two participants identified as non-white (Mixed White and Black Caribbean, and Mixed race/Latino respectively), and one participant was not a British national. Two identified as potentially intersex, and 16 identified as disabled, with the most common disabilities being neurodivergence and mental illness. Therefore, despite my attempts to involve a more representative group of participants, my sample group is representative of only a minority of the nonbinary community in Britain: largely those that are white, British, endosex[44], and middle class.

Seven participants were multilingual, which may well reflect the participation bias of the responses, especially given that the survey was shared on my Twitter, where the majority of my followers are linguists. While none of the participants explicitly identified as linguists in the survey, I know that several of those who identified as students do indeed study linguistics. This is worth noting in terms of the representativity of results, given that individuals who study linguistics are likely to have more knowledge and bias about the role of language use. Many participants used other languages several times a week. Seven participants had spent time living outside of Britain, either for brief periods in early childhood or adulthood, or, in the case of Anon5, from birth until adulthood.

4.2.2 Personal pronoun use

The participants have a diverse range of specific gender identities, including non-binary, genderqueer, stellarian[45], faggot, transmasculine, and nonhuman[46]. Many identify with a variety of different gender labels, either simultaneously or fluidly. 14 use exclusively *they/them*

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[43] This is in reference to their language use as opposed to nationality.

[44] Endosex is one of numerous words used to describe non-intersex individuals. See 'Dyadic' (2021) for further information.

[45] Stellarian is "a gender that is unrelated to masculinity and femininity and/or manhood and womanhood, however they still feel gendered and on a similar "plane" as male and female" ('Stellarian', 2021).

[46] For a discussion of nonhuman gender identities, see Feraday (2014).

pronouns, seven use a combination of *they/them*, *he/him* and/or *she/her* pronouns, and one (Bobbie) also uses *ne/nym* pronouns. For a full list of English and Spanish participant names and pronouns, see Appendix VII.

Participants' reasons for using exclusively *they* pronouns included its perceived gender neutrality (Anon5, Hobbes, Dylan, El, Jojo), seeing these pronouns as "natural" (Anon1, Quinn), the gender-affirmation these pronouns offer (Anon2, Anon4, Anon7, Oak), and that they "feel good!" (Daz, Anon9). Reasons for using multiple pronouns were largely to do with affirmation and reflection of specific gender identities, such as bigender, genderqueer woman, and transmasculine. Many participants described their complex relationships with each set of pronouns; for example, Anon8, who identifies as a nonbinary woman and primarily uses *she/her* pronouns, stated that "I sometimes claim that I only use *they* pronouns so that people don't forget I'm nonbinary" but also that "I worry that people use *they* to avoid affirming me as a woman." Some preferred *they* pronouns over their other pronouns as these emphasised the nonbinary/queer aspects of their identities, while others were more comfortable with the pronouns associated with their AGABs as they were more used to them.

For some, pronoun preference was dependent on the interlocutor(s), with Anon6 and Molly preferring that cisgender people use binary pronouns for them; Anon3 specifying that they only want "partners and close friends" to use *he/him* pronouns for them in addition to *they/them*; and Anon2 only using *they/them* with "closer friends" to whom they are out. Bobbie explained that "I mostly use *he/they* pronouns out of convenience" because "[cis people] have a very narrow understanding of transness, and I worry that using neopronouns would open me up to more transphobia and/or lead to people questioning my identity". Meanwhile, Dylan stated that "I don't mind *zie/xe/fae* and similar neopronouns but *they/them* is easiest for me and others." Pronoun use is therefore reflective of both an inner sense of self and a preferred way of being acknowledged by others. This reflects the dialectic nature of trans identity, where "it is not sufficient to conceive of oneself as trans, but one's transness must then be validated by interactions with other people in order to consolidate a cohesive identity" (Barnes, 2020b). Indeed, this is true of all genders, given that "gendered subjectivity is co-constructed in interactions rather than a pre-existing social fact" (Davis, Zimman, and Raclaw, 2014:3). However, it is a particularly fraught issue for nonbinary individuals, for whom recognition by the cisgender subject must often be carefully negotiated to avoid denial or violence. As Konnelly (2021:73) explains, oftentimes in interactions between trans and cis interlocutors "what might be considered 'normative' is in fact a survival strategy" in a context where normativity is "imbricated with a history of violence for trans people".

The amount of time participants had used current pronouns for ranged from less than a year to 13 years. However, many had tried different variations of pronouns before finding the ones that currently suited them best. Some initially continued to use the pronouns associated

with their AGABs for a while after recognising their nonbinary identities, but later dropped these pronouns. Others, however, initially came out as binary trans people and used the pronouns commonly associated with those genders before moving towards using *they* either additionally or exclusively. Molly had tried "various neopronouns before but none have ever stuck or felt as good as *she/her* and *they/them*", while Bobbie was only able to use pronouns other than *he* after becoming "more secure with both my masculinity and my nonbinary identity". This further deepens the links between pronouns and both personal and social identity. As these identities evolve over time and within different environments, nonbinary individuals connotate specific affective weight – that is, feelings such as comfort, safety, belonging, rejection, disgust, etc. (cf.§3.2.2.2) – to different sets of pronouns, which in turn affects their choices in terms of pronoun use.

This is also demonstrated through participants' responses to the question of whether they feel that they chose their pronouns, or that their pronouns are an inherent part of their identity. Half of the participants (12) felt that both statements both were true, with Anon3 explaining that "I think I chose the pronouns I wanted to use, but I chose them because they made me feel the most comfortable because they are the most in line with my gender identity." Anon2, on the other hand, described their pronouns as "a tool for me to be perceived in a way that more aligns with my identity" rather than "a part of my identity". The degree of affective weight that participants attach to their pronouns is clearly dependent on their individual relationships to their identities and language use – for some, identity and language are intimately tied; for others, the latter is simply a way to access and reflect the former. Each of these varied understandings of the relationship between pronouns and identity can potentially offer personal and linguistic freedom, as seen through Oak's responses. They explained that: "I feel *they/them* pronouns more chose me. I was very reluctant to identify as nonbinary but hearing people use *they/them* pronouns for me before I asked them to felt so much more accurate that I felt I should accept this part of me." Bobbie, meanwhile, found freedom through dislocating identity and language, describing how: "when I first came out I thought pronouns were an integral part of trans people's identities, and I spent a lot of time worrying about what pronouns to use. Now however, I feel like I can choose my pronouns and they aren't necessarily a huge part of my identity. The attitude that I'm trying to take towards pronouns nowadays is that if I like them or think they're cool, I can use them/try them out and I don't need any other reason."

4.2.2.1 Neopronoun use

A quarter of participants (6) stated that they would like to use less-common pronouns other than the ones they use currently, but the majority were unable or unwilling to use these pronouns due to difficulties with getting other people to use them. *They* pronouns were seen as more common, more widely understood, and less difficult to get others to use, and for this

reason Bobbie and Anon5 only used neopronouns or no pronouns in private. Some participants explained that they struggled to use or understand neopronouns themselves, and this limited their use of them. Feraday (2014) explains that negative associations accrued to certain neopronouns and neo-identities "can make people hesitant about using a certain label", thereby denying individuals the benefits of finding language that fits them. Examples of these nonbinary-phobic narratives which discourage the use of neopronouns include considering this language to be "too conspicuous", labelling neopronoun users as "transtrenders" as opposed to "legitimate" trans people, and the ableist notion that people who use neo-identities or neopronouns must be responding in some way to disability or neurodivergence[47]. These attitudes often arise from within the trans community itself in the form of 'transmedicalist' ideology. Transmedicalists purport to be able to distinguish between 'real' and 'fake' trans people, usually based on Western, cisheteronormative standards of gender presentation. This exemplifies the "militant "policing of the borders" of gender and sexuality" that Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore calls the "violence of gay assimilation" (Ruiz, 2008), which promotes a narrative of being LGBTQ+ that is least challenging to cisheteronormativity. Fisher (2019:5) highlights that transmedicalist discourse extends beyond trans circles and pervades mainstream cis perceptions of neopronouns, regardless of whether the cis public is aware of specific intercommunity discourses and terminology. This means that people who use neopronouns "cannot avoid criticisms and backlash against their identities, their language, and their experiences" (Feraday, 2014:35), making their everyday lives sites of epistemic violence.

It is therefore unsurprising that the issue of judgement values of neopronouns was raised by numerous participants in video interviews. Anon6 explained that when the issue of nonbinary pronouns is raised, many cis people will often try to "shut [the] conversation down, especially when it comes to neopronouns" because it "sounds silly", a behaviour the participant described as "bigot[ed]". Bobbie directly compared the "rhetoric around neopronouns that they're just used by confused children" as being "[a] similar rhetoric to transmedicalism, to be a trans person, you have to be completely assimilated". The notion that neopronouns are childish or "just a phase" reflects Fisher's (2019:5) association of the image of the 'transtrender' with attributes such as "being a teenager", "playing pretend at being transgender", and "speaking and performing a transgender identity simply for "oppression points," a sort of currency that's supposedly available in neoliberal identity politics". These are all narratives that arise within mainstream cis understandings of nonbinary identities, as demonstrated by the moral panics over the notion of 'cis-people-turned-trans' (Serano 2016, 2018). Molly also found that there are various "levels of acceptance" of neopronouns within certain trans communities, though she emphasised that "generally it's pretty positive." Outside of trans communities,

[47] This, of course, serves to delegitimise those people whose identities *are* inherently linked to their experiences of disability and neurodivergence.

however, she identified far more hostility towards neopronouns, explaining that "if you're using *they/them* you're on thin ice, but if you're using other neopronouns, that's not going to sit well, it's going to start an argument".

On the other hand, some participants expressed their uncertainty with using neopronouns; for example, Quinn explained that their difficulties with "internalising" neopronouns likely resulted from knowing few people who use them. Anon7, however, explained that, while they would never refuse to use someone's neopronouns, they were still "a tiny bit of a sceptic" about pronouns that are only used in certain circumstances or social circles, explaining that "it would make me feel like I was compartmentalizing my life". These explanations do not reflect the main tenets of transmedicalist rhetoric, since Anon7's concerns around the "compartmentalization" of pronouns is not the "pretend acceptance and false concern" of transmedicalist discourse (Feraday, 2014:35). However, it may well be a projection of their own feelings onto neopronoun users, given that they chose to reflect on how it would make *them* feel. This in itself ties to the anxieties inherent to queer respectability: a projection of one's fear of homo/trans/nonbinary-phobia onto the unassimilated Other, who is therefore blamed or pitied for their lack of respectability. Oak explored their own "internalised nonbinary-phobia" upon hearing that an acquaintance uses *sproutself* pronouns, with their first thought being "someone can't use a pronoun like that, that's childish". However, they then realised that "sprout can do whatever the fuck sprout wants" because "it's not my place" to tell sprout what is or isn't valid pronoun use. Oak also expressed worry that intracommunity discussions around whether some pronouns, such as *nya* or *it*, are "dehumanizing or infantilizing" – therefore projecting a prescriptivist ideology of languagelessness onto users of such pronouns – may be the result of "being dehumanized and infantilized by cis communities [and] beginning to internalize that in how we identify ourselves". They did not want the external opinions of cis people and the desire for assimilation to override nonbinary people's ability to "say fuck it and [...] come up with completely new pronouns".

The impact of such rhetoric on nonbinary people's use of neopronouns is also demonstrated within participants' responses. Bobbie related these attitudes to a "pressure" for nym to use *they* pronouns as a nonbinary person rather than neopronouns, while Quinn noted that the majority of neopronoun users that they know also allow people to use *they* for them rather than "their actual pronouns that they really want people to use". This would seem to reflect an internalised desire to lessen the 'excessive' effort felt to be associated with using their pronouns, so as to encourage others to acknowledge their nonbinary identities, albeit not in the exact ways they would prefer. This is also demonstrated in Oak's observation that many nonbinary people have "just confined themselves to two pronouns and then it's got to be that order [e.g. *he/they*, *she/they*]. Even though I feel like a lot of nonbinary people would be happy using other pronouns such as a *fae/fae* or *ze/zir* or *eir*." They compared this norm within the nonbinary community of only using "up to two" pronouns (usually not including neopronouns)

as being "another binary", replacing or overlaying the Western gender binary and therefore curtailing the possibilities for nonbinary people to be more expansive in their pronoun use.

4.2.2.2 Misgendering, comfort, and safety

Fewer than half of the participants (11) wanted their pronouns to be used for them in all situations, with the most common areas of exception being around family of origin, in the workplace, and around strangers. This was largely due to participants not being out in these environments or due to fears of transphobic retaliation. This is also reflected in the frequencies with which participants' pronouns are used for them in different environments, with the workplace and family of origin having the highest levels of misgendering. The majority of participants whose pronouns were used "none of the time" in the workplace and with family of origin were those who had specified that they were not out or did not use their pronouns in those spaces. Places of learning also ranked fairly low in terms of chosen pronoun use, with participants explaining that "I would like my pronouns to be used at my university, but there has never been a distinct opportunity to come out" (Anon3) and "I haven't spent a lot of face-to-face time with my coursemates due to the pandemic, so I'm not 100% sure what pronouns they use for me" (Anon8). The highest-ranking environments were chosen family, close friends, and online spaces, with the singular participant whose friends used their pronouns "none of the time" explaining that this "is because I haven't yet made it clear to them that they've been changed, not because they're disrespectful." (Anon5)

Some trans and nonbinary people (Edelman, 2014:159) emphasise that choosing not to reveal one's transness should not be equated to "living a lie" and that this decision "can be an act of resistance because [...] cis people act like they are privileged to know that information". However, for trans and nonbinary people who wish to publicly use pronouns other than *he* or *she*, this act of gender non-conformity is likely to automatically reveal their transness. This linguistically mediated coming out "not only destabilizes one's position as an authentically gendered subject [...] but also opens oneself up to a litany of invasive personal questions" as well as violence in all its forms (Edelman, 2014:162). Therefore, one reason why correct pronouns may not be used for participants in certain environments is due to their feelings of safety and comfort in asking for their pronouns to be used.

Participants' responses appear to confirm this theory, showing that participants on the whole feel least safe and comfortable asking for their pronouns to be used in the workplace, with their family of origin, and in their place of learning. It is worth highlighting the difference between safety and comfort, as these were often experienced and reported at very disparate rates by participants. For example, while over 90% of participants at least "somewhat agree" that they feel safe asking for their pronouns to be used at their place of learning, this falls to less than 30% when asked whether they feel comfortable doing so.

The definitions of 'safe' and 'comfortable' that participants had in mind when responding to these questions cannot be definitively ascertained; perhaps the simplest distinction might be that threats to one's safety represent effective consequences – such as physical violence, verbal harassment, loss of income or housing – whereas threats to one's comfort represent affective consequences – such as invasive questioning, invalidation, mistrust. However, this distinction between safety and comfort is problematised by many trans and nonbinary people. For example, Jess Bradley (2016; cf.Bradley and Myerscough, 2015) explains that "anxiety dominates our lives" as trans people, and that this leads us to "live in a time of anticipation", awaiting "misgendering, perplexed looks, ignorance, transphobia". This results in transphobia feeling "inevitable" even when it does not occur, indicating that discomfort within a given space can often *feel like* unsafety for trans and nonbinary people. As Feraday (2014) and Conrod (2019) explain, behaviours such as misgendering – which would likely be considered an affective rather than an effective consequence – "can also indicate a person's level of (un)safety", making their users targets of ridicule, criticism, or even physical violence. The concept of 'safe spaces', as promoted within many LGBTQ+ communities, not only refers to a lack of violence, but also describes spaces "that promote self-expression, identity exploration, and self-care" (Feraday, 2014:8) – in other words, comfort is considered to be a key facet of safety.

Given these considerations, while a nonbinary person may not fear physical attack or direct discrimination in a given environment, they may still experience or expect nonbinary-phobia or trans-hostility that leads them to feel uncomfortable asking for their pronouns to be used. The particularly low feelings of safety in the workplace (63%) indicate that, despite nonbinary people being technically defended against workplace discrimination by the EA, many still fear the repercussions of asserting their identities at work. For example, Hobbes explained that they work "in a very conservative area of the country", while Anon6 expressed the practical concern that "I work in schools mainly with very young children with SEN[48], and know it could be confusing for them." As for families of origin, participants narrated how certain family members were better or worse at using pronouns than others, ranging from occasional slip-ups to outright rejection. It is therefore unsurprising that participants expressed low levels of both safety (68%) and comfort (41%) regarding family of origin. According to McLemore (2015), people who experience identity misclassification such as misgendering often choose to disengage from "non-verifying relationships". However, this is frequently not a possibility

[48] SEN, standing for Special Educational Needs, is an educational term including behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties, speech, language and communication, hearing impairment, visual impairment, multi-sensory impairment, physical disability and autism (Coventry City Council, 2021). This term, along with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), is a contested one, with educational and political bodies describing SEN and disabilities as separate but overlapping categories (UKEssays, 2018), while many disabled activists see "special needs" as a euphemistic and patronising way to avoid using the political term 'disabled' (Lightner, 2020).

for nonbinary people, as they may be unable to disengage from work, family, or educational relationships for a variety of reasons, usually most pressingly the need to survive under capitalism.[49]

On the other hand, participants felt safest and most comfortable asking for their pronouns to be used by chosen family, close friends, and in online spaces, presumably hence why their pronouns are most frequently used in these environments. Individuals who experience identity misclassification "seek to verify their collective identity" through how they define themselves and with whom they choose to interact (McLemore, 2015:51). By making their pronouns and identities visible online, and spending time with communities both on- and offline which validate those pronouns and identities, nonbinary people are able to enact a degree of "identity control" that may be denied to them in other areas of their life.

As Giardina's 'Oral History of the Early Trans Internet' (2019) reveals, trans and nonbinary people have been using online spaces to create and locate communities since the internet's inception. Fisher (2019:21) defines online nonbinary communities as forms of DIGITAL COUNTERPUBLICS: "space[s] of discourse" which "differ markedly" from dominant culture and which allow for trans issues and ideologies to "surface as legitimate areas of conversation, spectatorship, and imagination". These counterpublics "provide crucial linkages" between trans people and communities that are "often separated by social and geographic divides." This use of online spaces was highlighted by some participants, such as Fliss, who finds it "much easier for me to be vocal online, than it is to be vocal out in public" because of the "safety aspect", and Molly, who discovered various neopronouns on Twitter.

However, online spaces scored lower on ratings of safety and comfort than chosen family and close friends, with Anon8 explaining that "I don't feel safe as a transfeminine person online". This can be explained by Feraday's (2014:78-80) resistance to a "utopian" vision of online nonbinary communities, identifying downsides such as the evolution of extreme mentalities, cliques, and "a complicated set of rules and mores that presents new complications" for already marginalised users. Moreover, the internet itself is not a universally accessible space and therefore excludes certain marginalized or disadvantaged people. Given the degree of online harassment that many trans people face (Hunte, 2019), the greater degree of safety and comfort felt by trans and nonbinary people in certain offline spaces may therefore reflect the greater degree of control over the avoidance and removal of trans-hostile individuals that one has in an intimate capacity as opposed to in a wider online space. This is demonstrated by the participants who identify online spaces as arenas where "nitpicking" the

[49] The relationship of trans and nonbinary people to capitalism and cisheteronormative family structures is beyond the scope of this thesis, other than to say that it is a frequent source of tension in many trans and nonbinary people's lives. See Irving (2009), Feinberg (1992), and Fuller and Riggs (2018) for further details.

grammaticality of certain pronouns (Anon6, Molly) and “ridiculous Twitter arguments with the terminally online” (Fliss) often occur.

The majority of participants (21) were happy with the pronouns they ask people to use for them. However, 17 agreed that they would be more able to ask people to use or not use certain pronouns for them if they felt safer and more comfortable doing so, reinforcing the notion that safety and comfort are key factors in allowing nonbinary people to authentically express their identities through language use.

4.2.2.3 Intersecting identities

Additional factors influencing pronoun use can include the impact of other identities which language users hold, such as the experiences of being multiply marginalised. For example, Binaohan (2014) explores how trans and nonbinary people of colour’s experiences problematise the colonialist binaries between individual and collective identity, between gender and sexuality, and between the private and public arenas upon which the metaphor of the closet is based. All of these and more may impact the ways in which trans and nonbinary people of colour use pronouns.

When discussing the impact of their other identities on their pronoun use, both Fliss and El identified their middle class and white privileges as adding "a degree of ease" or "lots of protection" to their ability to use pronouns that identify themselves or others as trans. In this way, they acknowledge the far greater degree of violence faced by trans and nonbinary people of colour and working class and impoverished trans and nonbinary people (Edmonds, 2015; Mahowald, 2021; Marcus, 2021) and the relative privilege experienced by white trans and nonbinary people, which allows them access to greater degrees of safety and comfort (change, 2015). As queer theorist and criminologist Sarah Lamble (2008:25) explains, rather than assuming that all trans and nonbinary people’s experiences of transphobic violence are comparable, it is more constructive to “situate our own positions within structures of power that authorize violence in the first place”, such as by recognising the role white privilege plays in our lives.

Five of the disabled participants linked their experiences of disability to pronoun use. Both Huey and Anon6 explored the intersections of autistic and nonbinary experiences, with the former explaining that “I sometimes feel more compelled to use *she/her* pronouns as I often feel as though my agency/bodily autonomy as an autistic transfeminine person over my own gender and body are undermined, and using more 'explicitly feminine' language to refer to myself can sometimes feel like a way of retaking some of that power”. Anon6, on the other hand, identified that “I don't quite fit in anywhere, hence the choice and use of *they* pronouns fitting well for me”. We can therefore see that chosen pronoun use can be a means of countering or complementing neurodivergent experiences, as is reinforced by Anon8’s statement that “I think ADHD makes me more willing to be open about my identity, since I

have reduced impulse control, and a weakened sense of self when I am not being perceived correctly." For some disabled identities, however, disability may represent a barrier to chosen pronoun use, with both Alex and Anon8 identifying their anxiety as making it difficult for them to assert their chosen pronouns. Bobbie's experience synthesises these two narratives, explaining that: "A combination of being disabled and trans often makes me feel like a monster or an alien (see the ADHD alien comics), not in a bad way but in the sense that my gender is beyond human comprehension. This is why I like '*nyah*' pronouns and why I want to find pronouns that denote alien-ness." For Bobbie – as for trans activist Susan Stryker (1994), comic artist ADHD Alien (2021), and many xenogender/monstergender people before nym (Feraday, 2019:55) – associations with monstrousness and alienness need not be negatives, but rather sources of self-acceptance and inspirations for innovative language use.

We can therefore see that nonbinary people's pronoun use is impacted by far more than simply their individual gender identities. Factors such as comfort, safety, and being out in a given environment, along with the impact of white privilege and ableism, can play equally significant roles in nonbinary people's access to language that feels authentic to them.

4.2.3 Neopronouns

4.2.3.1 Neopronoun definitions

All but one participant (El) were familiar with the term 'neopronoun'. Six participants defined a neopronoun as any singular third-person pronoun other than *he*, *she*, or *they* (although Huey also extended this to include *it/its* as part of "the 'closed class' of personal pronouns"), while the others referred to such pronouns as being "relatively new" (Dylan), "not historically part of the language" (Anon1), and "not recognised in dictionaries" (Anon3). Both Oak and Anon1 specified a time period of "the last 100 years" within which a pronoun would have been developed in order to be classified as a neopronoun. Anon5 included a lack of pronouns in their definition of a neopronoun.[50] It is unsurprising that nonbinary people are very aware of neopronouns given that they are more likely to participate in communities where these pronouns are used and discussed. Many participants mentioned that neopronouns are innovated for the specific purpose of being gender neutral or expressing nonbinary gender identities. This emphasises the sociopolitical role played by neopronoun formation.

Sarah Ahmed (2016:31) states that: "Survival becomes a project when your existence is the object of a rebuttal." For many nonbinary people, a key part of the project of survival

[50] For more information on the use of no pronouns by some trans and nonbinary individuals, see PFLAG (2021).

involves what Swamy and Mackenzie (2019:3) refer to as “creat[ing] the linguistic conditions for congruent self-expression”. Feraday (2014:18) draws on the examples of African American English, gayspeaks such as Polari, and the reclamation of traditionally pathologised or hateful words such as “bisexual” and “queer” to demonstrate how marginalised groups must often turn to “creating, bending, and breaking language” in order to create such linguistic conditions. Similarly, the innovation of neopronouns uses "the oppressor's language" to "create a space to speak", which is a political move as much as a purely linguistic one. Rather than being a 'closed class', as is the consensus within formal linguistics, Bradley (2020) and Miltersen (2016) have argued from a sociolinguistic perspective that the flexibility of pronouns in the hands of nonbinary language users complements an expansive understanding of both gendered realities and linguistic categories. That these gendered realities are significantly politically charged also makes pronouns a key area of linguistic intervention (Bodine, 1975; Allen and Lester, 1995).

A significant area of controversy for participants was whether singular *they* can be considered a neopronoun, with over 60% (15) of the participants disagreeing, 25% (6) somewhat considering it to be a neopronoun, and one who was uncertain. I came into this research with the theory that singular *they*, when used to refer to specific individuals of known nonbinary gender, does represent a neopronominal use of an older pronoun. This corresponds to Bjorkman’s (2017:1-2) distinctions between three different uses of singular *they*.

The first occurs when the antecedent is a generic or hypothetical person, such as in the sentences *“Somebody left their umbrella”* or *“When a student is raising their hand, you should call on them”*. Bjorkman explains that “they has been possible with quantificational, indefinite, and epicene antecedents throughout the Modern English period.” It would therefore be anachronistic to assign this use of gender-neutral *they* the label of a neopronoun.

The second use, however, occurs when the antecedent is “singular, definite, and specific”, such as in the sentences *“The professor said they cancelled the exam”* or *“When the student gets here, please give them their package”*. Bjorkman refers to this as “an innovative distribution of *they*”, and I therefore contended that it is accurate to refer to this form as ‘neopronominal *they*’.

The third form is a subset of the second, but where the singular, definite, and specific antecedent is “a proper given name or gender-specific noun”, such as in the sentences *“Sam left their umbrella”* or *“I’ll let my sister introduce themselves”*[51]. Bjorkman explains the difficulties faced by certain language users in accepting the third use, even if they accept the second, as reflecting both “internalised cultural assumptions that all humans can be sorted

[51] Bjorkman chooses to use the reflexive form *themselves* as the non-plural reflexive of *they*. Upon discussion with the nonbinary English-speaking participants in this study about their preferred reflexive form, I will be using *themself* throughout this thesis.

into binary gender categories" and "a grammatical obstacle" related to the coding of certain names and nouns as feminine or masculine.

However, the majority of my participants disagreed with these definitions. The main reason given for not considering singular *they* to be a neopronoun was the "extremely long time" that it has been used for in English. For some, this history was evidenced in the literary canon; for others, the pronoun's historical significance was evidenced through references to its linguistic evolution, such as its "Proto-Indo-European roots". The recognition and defence of the historicity of singular *they* pronouns has gained momentum both in and outside of nonbinary communities in recent years, with numerous articles being published concerning the history of its usage (Crum, 2017; Baron, 2018; David, 2019). This has largely served as a resistance to the historical revisionism of certain influential, prescriptivist English-language grammarians who imposed their views on the language, fighting against the long-standing use of singular *they* up to and including an 1850 Act of Parliament which legally replaced '*he or she*' with '*he*' (Bodine, 1975). This revisionism was explicitly mentioned by Quinn, who argued that "It was only in the 18th/19th century that [singular *they*] took on the "grammatically incorrect" narrative". In a time when the grammaticality of singular *they* pronouns is often made into a key battle by "people who are engaged in transphobic efforts" (Anon7), it is considered important by many nonbinary people to defend it on the grounds of its history and therefore its grammaticality.

It could be argued that defending singular *they* on the basis of its historicity and through appeals to grammaticality rests on the assumption that "legitimacy can only be granted by institutions to individuals rather than being inherent to those individuals" (cf.§3.2.3.1) – in this case, through inclusion in literary and linguistic canons. This serves as its own form of "cislingualism" by colluding with language ideologies which perpetuate and defend notions of grammaticality based upon supposed historical precedent. By defending singular *they* on the grounds of its historicity, there is a risk of neopronouns being delegitimised, as they do not fit this requirement for validation. However, it is also quite possible that these participants are instead defending historicity as a sufficient condition for legitimacy, rather than claiming it to be essential. It is important to remember Konnelley's (2021) exploration of the legacy of violence tied to the delegitimisation of trans and nonbinary identity and language use, and to understand the importance placed on historicity by my participants within this context.

Overall, given that the majority of my participants, all of whom use *they* as at least one of their pronouns, disagree with the definition of *they* as a neopronoun, it does not feel right for me, as a binary trans man who does not use *they*, to uniformly question their knowledge. In their interview, Anon1 expressed that: "My concern with describing *they* as new is that in Western history, there have been nonbinary people for a long time. [...] I don't know enough of

the history to know for sure that nobody in the English-speaking world has ever wanted to use *they/them* in the nonbinary sense. Personally, I'm kind of cautious about it." Given that I do not wish to contribute any further to the potential erasure of historical nonbinary existence, I will not continue to defend the definition of singular *they* as a neopronoun. After all, it is less important that a given GNP fits into a linguistic category than it is that GNP users recognise our shared use of language as a tool of liberation.

4.2.3.2 Attitudes towards neopronouns

The vast majority of participants had positive attitudes towards neopronouns, with all but one agreeing with the statements "I always use neopronouns to talk about someone else if they ask me to"; "Anyone should be allowed to create their own pronouns"; and "Everyone should use neopronouns to talk about other people if they are asked to". This demonstrates that even though only a minority of the participants use neopronouns other than *they* themselves, they still respect these pronouns and validate them in their language use. However, with regards to whether that respect extended to wider trans communities, the responses leaned more towards "somewhat agree" (55%) than "strongly agree" (41%), which may reflect participants' experiences with transmedicalist or nonbinary-phobic elements of certain trans communities.

Despite majority support for neopronoun use among the participants, this did not mean that they considered neopronoun use to be easy. While a slightly majority of participants (54%) disagreed with the statement "Neopronouns are difficult to use to talk about someone else", the vast majority (82%) agreed that "Neopronouns take practice in order to use them more easily". This demonstrates that nonbinary language users recognise the 'extra effort' required to use neopronouns, but that they largely do not view this effort as 'excessive'. Rather, they stressed that "I wish I was better at consistently using neopronouns" (Bobbie) and "I do find that sometimes I default to *they/them*, even though I know I shouldn't" (Anon1). Rather than an expectation or imposition of perfect neopronoun use as is often suggested through transphobic discourses (cf.§3.3.3.1), there is an awareness of the fallibility of both language and its users.

The one respondent who consistently checked "Don't know/not sure" for the majority of these questions was Anon4. They explained their reasoning as being: "including *they/them* in with neopronouns makes the above questions impossible to answer accurately. the point of *they/them* is that it is neutral and never incorrect." This answer in part demonstrates the difficulties of trying to define whether singular *they* is a neopronoun, since participants' responses to these questions may well have been different had a different definition of 'neopronoun' been given to them. However, Anon4's assertion that *they/them* is "never incorrect" appears to demonstrate a belief that other neopronouns can be "incorrect". Given that Anon4 also described singular *they* as "grammatically correct" in an earlier answer, we can deduce that they take a prescriptivist view towards the use of pronouns which favours singular

they over other neopronouns. This may also explain why they responded to the statement "Anyone should be allowed to create their own pronouns" with "somewhat disagree", since a prescriptivist approach to grammar is likely to take a more negative view of innovative pronoun use given that it is often considered to be a closed category. Nonbinary individuals are therefore not immune to cislingualist language ideologies.

It can and has been argued (cf.§3.2.3.1) that it would be simpler for a single gender-neutral singular pronoun to be decided upon and universalised within each language rather than for there to be a multitude of neopronouns. It is true that English speakers, even those with more familiarity with neopronouns, tend to find it easier to use *they* to talk about someone else than they do to use other neopronouns, with 63% of participants agreeing with this statement. However, this does not mean that neopronouns are inherently “incorrect”. Almost all “intentional [language] reform efforts” (Bradley, 2020) require a degree of effort to overcome initial difficulties, without this making the efforts pointless.

4.2.3.3 Safety and comfort using neopronouns

When asked whether they felt safe and/or comfortable using neopronouns to talk about other people in various environments, participants' responses displayed similar patterns to those in §4.2.2.2. Participants struggled to use neopronouns to talk about others "in situations where I know that doing so would be dangerous to myself or that person" (Fliss), and worried about "judgemental and transphobic" reactions (Alex). However, participants overall felt safer and more comfortable using neopronouns for other people in their workplace, place of learning, or with their family of origin than they did asking for their own pronouns to be used. This may reflect the fact that, according to 73% of participants, it is at least "somewhat" possible to use neopronouns without revealing that the person you are talking about is trans and/or nonbinary. In particular, participants mentioned that using *they* can be construed as gender-ambiguous, especially for language users such as Dylan, who make a habit of using *they* "for everyone unless I know they prefer another pronoun". Other neopronouns, on the other hand, are "strongly associated with trans communities" (Bobbie), making them harder to use ambiguously. Participants therefore acknowledged that they would feel "less comfortable and less safe" (Anon3) using neopronouns other than *they* because this "would likely provoke some comments and questions" (Dylan), which may be uncomfortable or emotionally exhausting to respond to.

However, another reason given by participants for feeling safer and more comfortable in using neopronouns to talk about others is a feeling of solidarity towards other nonbinary language users. Both Hobbes and Fliss explained that "I can happily and comfortably defend my fellow trans/nonbinary folks but do not have the confidence to do the same for myself". As a marginalised group, nonbinary people often depend on each other for emotional and practical support, and as such develop close bonds and a sense of shared struggle. It is

therefore important for many nonbinary people that their fellow community members' chosen pronouns are respected, potentially above and beyond defending their own chosen pronouns.

We can therefore see that there is a high level of awareness and support for neopronouns within British nonbinary communities. However, there is a clear split between singular *they* – which is considered easier to use both in terms of linguistic familiarity and due to feelings of safety and comfort due to its perceived ambiguity – and neopronouns – which are considered more difficult to use and more conspicuous, even by nonbinary language users who know they should and make efforts to use them. What's more, certain nonbinary language users align themselves with cislingualist ideologies, arguing against the 'grammaticality' of any GNP other than *they*.

4.2.4 Societal attitudes

When asked whether trans and nonbinary people are respected in the various environments they move within, participants' responses unsurprisingly mirrored §4.2.2.2 and §4.2.3.3: workplaces, places of learning, and families of origin ranked lowest; families of choice, friendship circles, and online spaces ranked highest. Descriptions of workplaces and places of learning demonstrated mixed attitudes and behaviours towards trans and nonbinary individuals, with both Fliss and Anon2 explaining that these spaces "claim to be queer friendly" without evidencing this or that they are "trying [their] hardest" but still do not fully provide for trans and nonbinary people's needs. Anon1, meanwhile, had positive reactions from their peers in these spaces, but was refused "basic facilities like neutral bathrooms" by university management. This demonstrates how structural nonbinary-phobia can often supersede interpersonal oppression in terms of its capacity to enact harm.

However, all of these environments ranked far higher in terms of respect for trans and nonbinary people than broader categories such as British media, politics, and religious institutions, all of which received a majority of "strongly disagree" responses. This is unsurprising given the current context of Britain, cf.Ch.2-3. In the questionnaire and in video interviews, participants frequently described feeling that nonbinary people are "non-existent" within British politics, given that they are not currently legally recognised, with Anon6 explaining that "I don't think we're seen as human beings a lot of the time". Examples of political transphobia included the refusal to extend the GRA to include nonbinary identities; the government signalling support for transphobic hate group LGB Alliance; and the Labour Party refusing to oppose transphobia within its membership. British media was condemned as "the most transphobic western media institution" by Jojo.

Institutional transphobia within politics, the media, and religious institutions also affects cisgender people's attitudes towards trans people's pronouns. As Fliss explained, "the mainstream media has still got an awful lot of clout in terms of public opinion", while Anon8 stressed that the government's endorsement of transphobia contributes to "the idea of pronouns as a culture war front". Considering that, according to participants, fear of transphobia is the largest contributing factor in preventing nonbinary people from using their chosen pronouns, the overwhelming sociopolitical transphobia in Britain clearly impacts nonbinary people's use of pronouns. Other institutions which participants highlighted as impacting cisgender attitudes towards pronouns included entertainment media (particularly comedy), the education system and academia, social media, and charity/hate groups such as Woman's Place.

In terms of broader cisgender attitudes towards trans and nonbinary people's pronouns, participants perceived high levels of both ignorance and negativity. Not only are trans and nonbinary people's pronouns considered by cisgender people to be ungrammatical and difficult to use, there is also a false assumption that "only trans and nonbinary people have pronouns/'preferred' pronouns". This demonstrates the way that, given the sociopolitical context of Britain, pronouns have expanded from a linguistic category to a buzzword related specifically to trans and nonbinary people. However, Anon1 stressed that it is difficult to homogenise all cisgender people's attitudes because they are "highly individual", running the gamut from LGBQ+ individuals who are "hyperaware" of trans and nonbinary issues, to those who are actively transphobic.

These attitudes are even more pronounced with regards to neopronouns, which the majority of participants (18) identified as being less respected by cis people than *they/them* as they are "either ignored completely or seen as frivolous" (Anon8). This reinforces that the distinction between *they* and neopronouns is based on both cislingualist language ideologies and nonbinary-phobic societal attitudes, both of which explain participants' difficulties using neopronouns for themselves and, in some cases, for others.

Overall, participants judge the sociopolitical context of nonbinary identity and pronoun use in Britain to be highly negative, with bigotry and misinformation being spread on an institutional level leading to material consequences for both cisgender people's attitudes and consequently for trans people's behaviours. While singular *they* is a "slightly" more respected pronoun for nonbinary people to use "because there are many high-profile figures who use those pronouns and because of their long history in the English language" (Quinn), the majority of participants stress that "I don't think any neopronouns [including *they*] are respected by the majority of cis people" (Jojo). This means that nonbinary language users must balance

authentic and affirming pronoun use with a sociopolitical context that devalues and denigrates such language use.

4.2.5 Resisting cislingualism

Participants offered a variety of suggestions for countering cislingualist ideologies and encouraging the acknowledgement, respect, and usage of nonbinary people's pronouns. In terms of the data collected within the questionnaire, participants emphasised the importance of using it to combat language ideologies that focus on "grammatical correctness" (Anon1) and which resist linguistic evolution; to evidence the hostility faced by nonbinary language users; and to simply have reliable, Own Voices data on an understudied population to "give some academic legitimacy to the things nonbinary people are already saying." (Anon8) This demonstrates an approach to creating change which recognises the links between language and sociopolitical context: in order to achieve respect, we must encourage acceptance; acceptance requires normalisation; and normalisation depends on awareness and education to encourage a rethinking of both linguistic and political ideologies.

Numerous participants highlighted the importance of an internationalist approach which compares national-linguistic contexts to highlight certain "privileges" within specific contexts (Anon6) and which "challenge[s] the dominance of British English in conversations about pronouns" (Anon3). 77% of participants feel that "there is too much focus on the English language in conversations about trans people's pronouns" and they are therefore interested in learning from the perspectives of nonbinary users of Spanish to contrast their own experiences of pronoun use.

However, Anon4 dissented from the idea that a linguistics-focused study could "protect anyone" because it does not focus on "the larger systemic issues" affecting nonbinary people. While I agree that it is important not to lose sight of material issues such as physical violence and access to social goods, I reject the notion that the study of language use is unrelated to "larger systemic issues". As we have seen throughout this thesis, issues of epistemic violence and injustice are intimately tied to language ideologies and use, and both have direct consequences on the material conditions of nonbinary people, be it their legal recognition, their access to TRHC, or their job security.

In terms of wider methods of encouraging understanding, respect, and use of nonbinary people's pronouns, Anon1, Bobbie, Molly, and Quin stressed the importance of representation of nonbinary people so as to expose cis people to nonbinary identity and language use. This includes celebrities but also nonbinary individuals "being in less accepting people's lives" to help them understand nonbinary issues. However, Oak and Fliss emphasised the importance of efforts made by cis people themselves, such as putting their pronouns after

their name in emails and practicing using unfamiliar pronouns. Anon7 also highlighted that the degree to which it is possible to educate someone on nonbinary pronouns use "depends massively on how instinctively hostile the person is".

Overall, participants recognised the need for a diversity of tactics in challenging the nonbinary-phobic linguistic and sociopolitical context surrounding nonbinary pronoun use in British English. Key areas of resistance include education regarding language ideologies and sociopolitical realities, greater familiarity with nonbinary people and communities, and the recognition of nonbinary individuals' experiences within society. The changes brought about by these tactics would allow nonbinary people to feel safer and more comfortable using their pronouns in a wider range of environments and might encourage more nonbinary people to explore GNPs other than singular *they*.

4.3 Spanish participants

4.3.1 Participant demographics

The 13 participants who use Peninsular Spanish, henceforth referred to as the Spanish participants, were aged between 20 and 38. Seven were students, two were unemployed, and eight identified as middle class. One participant, Jai, is not a Spanish national, while another, Mel, has dual Columbian and Spanish nationality. However, six participants described their nationalities in terms of autonomous communities, European identity, or lack of national identity, demonstrating a lack of identification with the construct of Spanishness within this group. Jai and Mel are non-white, with the former describing their ethnicity as mixed Welsh and Jamaican and the latter describing theirs as of African descent from Abya Yala[52]. Eight participants identified to some degree as disabled, including neurodivergence, mental illness, and chronic pain/fatigue. One participant identified as intersex, whereas one suspected they might be. The demographics of this group are therefore similar to those of the English participants, and must also be understood through the lens of their intersecting identities rather than considered representative of the overall nonbinary community in Spain.

All participants used English as well as Spanish on a regular basis, and the majority also used other languages such as Basque, Galician, and Portuguese. While there may again be a participation bias affecting the level of multilingualism within this group, there are other factors which make this linguistic plurality unsurprising. Firstly, Spain is a nation with numerous co-official languages in various autonomous communities, meaning that bilingualism is far

[52] Abya Yala is a Kuna language term meaning "land in its full maturity" which has been taken up by certain indigenous people and organisations across the Americas to "not only to refer to the continent, but also a differentiated indigenous locus of cultural and political expression." (del Valle Escalante, 2014)

more common than in Britain (Díaz, 2017; Multilingual Capital, 2021). Secondly, Spanish residents live in an age and a world system defined by anglonormativity, in particular within LGBTQ+ spaces and communities (Blackwood, 2014; Gramling and Dutta, 2016).

Once again, while no participants explicitly identified as linguists, I know that several do indeed study linguistics, and one is a translator. This requires acknowledgement due to its likely impact on their responses.

4.3.2 Personal pronoun use

Eight participants described themselves as *no binarie* (nonbinary), five as *agénero* (agender), and Mañe explained that "*Yo soy yo*" ("I am myself"). Nine exclusively use the pronoun *elle*; five use a combination of *elle* and either *él* and/or *ella* or no pronouns; while Anon11 exclusively uses the pronoun *él*. Their reasons for preferring certain pronouns largely concerned feelings of comfort, lessened gender dysphoria, and more accurate representation. However Anon11 described his reasons for using *él* as being "*Inercia, simplicidad e ideología lingüística*" ("Force of habit, simplicity, and linguistic ideology"). While these first two reasons are similar to those given by English participants who prefer the use of pronouns associated with their AGAB, the latter is the first example of a participant explaining that language ideology directly impacts their chosen pronouns.

In terms of preference between multiple pronouns, the question of interlocutors was raised once again, with Anon10 explaining that "*Prefiero que en lo público se utilice ella porque estoy en el armario, pero en lo privado acepto cualquiera*" ("In public I prefer for *ella* to be used because I am in the closet, but in private I am happy with any pronouns"). Ángel, on the other hand, feels equally represented by *ella* or *elle* but finds they tend to prefer *ella* in social situations because they feel uncomfortable asking people to use neutral forms. Dory, meanwhile, despite occasionally using *ella*, finds that this pronoun reminds them too much of their AGAB and therefore they prefer *elle*.

Once more, the amount of time participants had used their current pronouns for varied significantly, from a few months to eight years. Other than the pronouns assigned to them at birth, just two participants had used other pronouns in the past: Artran tried using *él* "*por eso de "oposición" al otro pronombre binario*" ("in "opposition" to the other binary pronoun") but found that it felt incorrect so they switched to *elle*; meanwhile Mañe exclusively used *ella* between 2008 and 2012 "*Por motivos legales, para tener acceso a transición médica*" ("for legal reasons, in order to access medical transition"). This emphasises that it is not just interpersonal relationships but also wider sociopolitical institutions which influence pronoun use.

The Spanish participants had nuanced responses to the question of whether they had chosen their pronouns or whether their pronouns were an inherent part of them. Amets declared that "*Los elegí, pero los elegí porque es el lenguaje que refleja cómo/quién soy, otros pronombres me crean mucha incomodidad, así que no es que tuviera mucha opción.*" ("I chose them, but I chose them because it is the language that reflects how/who I am, other pronouns make me very uncomfortable, so I didn't have much of a choice.") Here we see that the notion of pronoun choice may well be limited by factors such as dysphoria, defined here as discomfort or distress experienced as the result of one's innate gender identity not matching up one's AGAB, and including physical, social, and emotional dysphoria (Kyriacou, 2020). Jai, however, explained that "*Mis pronombres son una parte inherente de mí. Tienen un papel muy importante con respecto a cómo experimento mi vida diaria y como me siento hacia mi misme.*" ("My pronouns are an inherent part of my. They play an important role in how I experience my daily life and how I feel about myself.") The inherent nature of their pronouns is therefore linked to how it lets them navigate the wider social sphere, demonstrating the sociopolitical aspects of pronoun use.

4.3.2.1 Neopronoun use

None of the participants had considered using alternative or less common neopronouns other than *elle* in Spanish. Ángel explained that "*me encantaría usar de forma frecuente y sencilla el "elle" sin necesidad de explicarlo o sin sentirme juzgada por ello.*" ("I would love to use *elle* more frequently and easily without having to explain it or feel judged for it.") This suggests that in Spanish *elle* is itself an alternative and less common neopronoun that therefore requires normalising in order to be accepted. As Bershtling (2014) and Blackwood (2014) discovered regarding nonbinary and gender nonconforming language users of Hebrew and Minangkabau, this language use can involve using personal pronouns associated with the "other" gender, switching between or neologistically combining feminine and masculine forms, and avoiding gender altogether – all of which are used by Spanish respondents. This contrasts with the strategies of "resistance through renaming", such as creating neopronouns, which Blackwood identifies as "an expectation of the US LGBT activist movement" but which does not necessarily represent an authentic use of language for all nonbinary people in all languages.

Interestingly, Anon10 recounted that they have thought about using *xe/xer* or *ze/hir* pronouns in English because "*al contrario que they/them no engloban she/he, sino que son algo distinto*" ("unlike they/them they don't encompass she/he, rather they're something different"). This provides insight into the way pronouns are understood on an individual multilingual level – while Anon10 is happy to use any pronouns in Spanish, in English they prefer to break beyond *he*, *she* or *they* and look to the unique attributes of neopronouns. English may give them the opportunity to do this because of the amount of pre-existing

neopronouns currently available within the language or because, as a second language, it carries a different affective weight for them in terms of pronoun use.

4.3.2.2 Misgendering, comfort, and safety

70% of respondents (10) did not want or did not feel able to use their pronouns in all situations. Once again, the most common environments where their preference was against chosen pronoun usage was around family of origin, at work or when job-hunting, and when around known or potentially transphobic individuals such as strangers. However, Ásthar countered that "*al contrario, preferiría que sí se usara, no necesito esconderme*" ("on the contrary, I would prefer that my pronouns are used, I don't need to hide myself"). Ásthar resists allowing others to consensually misgender them, which many nonbinary people will permit when "there is no other option [...] or when safety is at stake" (Melanen, 2019:16). They instead demonstrate a self-confidence in their pronoun use that cannot be quashed by the potentiality or reality of transphobia. By publicly advocating to be referred to by their chosen pronouns, nonbinary people declare: "This is another way of being a person." (Grahn, 1984:46) In doing do they not only assert their own identities, they also challenge cisnormative expectations and open possibilities for other trans and nonbinary individuals to explore gendered language.

However, the fears discussed by the other participants are reflected in the frequency with which their pronouns are used in different environments. As with the English participants, the least frequent use of correct pronouns occurred in the workplace, place of learning, and with family of origin. However, in comparison, a higher percentage of Spanish participants reported that their pronouns were used at least the majority of the time in the workplace (70%) than the English participants (46%). Meanwhile, a lower percentage of Spanish participants (33%) than English participants (66%) experienced chosen pronoun use in their place of learning. Anon13 explained that, as a writer, their workplace consists of their office and social media, so represents a different sort of environment to other workplaces as they have more control over their surroundings. It is also worth considering that participants who use multiple pronouns including those associated with their AGAB may experience chosen pronoun use only with regards to that pronoun. However, Anon10 explained that, when completing the questionnaire, they selected the option "this does not apply to me" for situations where only *ella* was used for them but no other pronouns, as this does not demonstrate legitimate respect for their identity but rather cisnormative assumptions of their pronoun use.

Family of origin was also less likely to use the correct pronouns for Spanish participants (8%) than for English participants (46%), though for numerous participants this was due to them not being out to their families. Jai, who has also lived in Britain, explained the difference between Spanish and British nonbinary people's relationships with their parents as being due to the later age at which Spanish young adults tend to leave home, arguing that "people still live kind of under their parents' rules until they're about 30-ish". Not only does this result in

many Spanish nonbinary people discovering their identities later in life, it also results in many of them “suppressing” their identities and “living their life as their parents want them to”, resulting in them being less likely to come out to their families of origin. Mañe, meanwhile, described how their family of origin no longer uses masculine forms to refer to them but instead exclusively uses feminine forms, as opposed to their preferred use of all pronouns. They concluded that "*supongo que es un progreso*" ("I suppose it's a step forward"), demonstrating the expectation that nonbinary people should “stretch a little more” (Lorde, 1997) and accept a minimum of support so as to placate cis relatives. Again, chosen family, close friends, and online spaces were the environments where participants' pronouns were used most often.

Before being asked explicitly about feelings of safety and comfort, both Amets and Ángel discussed the role of safety in determining the frequency of pronoun use. The former stated that "*cada vez me voy sintiendo más segure de decirle a la gente que use mis pronombres correctos*" ("I'm feeling more and more safe to tell people to use my pronouns"), though they admitted that it disheartened them that this is yet to reflect in the behaviour of those around them. Ángel, on the other hand, explained that they only ask for their pronouns to be used when they consider a space to be "*suficientemente seguro*" ("sufficiently safe").

When examining the levels of safety and comfort felt by participants when asking their pronouns to be used, differences between English and Spanish participants arise once again. The latter are as much as 53 percentage points less likely to feel at least “somewhat” safe or comfortable asking for their pronouns to be used in a place of learning or by their family. English participants, on the other hand, are less likely to feel safe or comfortable asking for their pronouns to be used in the workplace. Anon13 explained that in their experience, inclusive language is a polemic topic at universities, making it *“muy difícil pronunciarte y decir que eres una persona no binaria y usar los pronombres”* (“very difficult to come out and say that you’re a nonbinary person and to use [gender-neutral] pronouns”) for fear of one’s identity being made into a debate. This directly contradicts the notion of universities as “safe havens” for nonbinary students and innovative language use (cf.§3.2.4.2). It also demonstrates the role of language ideologies relating to *lenguaje inclusivo* as having a significant impact on both cisgender attitudes and trans behaviours in academic spaces, where linguistic prescriptivism is likely to thrive.

This may be why Mañe explained that they use "*un método en cierto modo pasivo-agresivo*" ("a slightly passive-aggressive method") when introducing themselves to new people: not referencing grammatical gender and avoiding gendering themself through language so that their interlocutors are forced to ask them what the correct form of address is. It is testament to the sociopolitical weight of gender-neutral language that nonbinary language

users have innovated numerous language practices to protect their own comfort and safety in a given situation.

4.3.2.3 Intersecting identities

Finally, four participants also discussed ways in which other aspects of their identities impacted their use of pronouns. Amets explained that being transmasculine and androgynous-looking reduces the amount of fear that they feel in asking for their pronouns to be used in comparison to if they had a different physical appearance. Serano (2007) draws attention to the greater amount of spectacle generated by trans women's existence due to societal (trans)misogyny, resulting in a hyper-visibility which is tied to higher levels of violence against transfeminine individuals (Berberick, 2018). In this way, while transmasculinity is frequently invisibilised within mainstream understandings of trans identity, this can provide a safety net from more direct forms of transphobic violence (Bird, 2019).

Anon10, on the other hand, relates their lesbian and butch identities to both their gender and their pronouns, explaining that because they perform masculinity as a butch person, they prefer masculine forms for compliments. Here we see once again the complex and mutually-influencing network between gender identity, sexuality, gender performance, and language use.

Jai detailed that their paternal family are Jamaican and that "*No aceptan identidades no binarias, ni identidades no normativas en general. Es un tabú en esa cultura y no me siento ni segure ni cómode a la hora de compartir mi identidad con elles.*" ("They don't accept nonbinary identities, or non-normative identities in general. It's a taboo in that culture, and I don't feel safe or comfortable when sharing my identity with them.") As a result they use the pronoun *ella* with their family and present more femininely around them. Here we see the impact of specific cultural ideologies around gender on nonbinary people with relationships to those cultures. While we must not assume that all nonbinary people of Jamaican heritage face these exact same issues, it is also unlikely that Jai is alone in their experiences of culturally-imposed normativity limiting their options in terms of language use. Arguably, given the high levels of transphobia that participants associate with Britain and with Spain, British and Spanish cultures also impose a level of gender normativity and nonbinary erasure.

However, Jai also explained that their experiences of being a disabled person who is autistic and has ADHD have made them feel "*aún más cómode a la hora de usar pronombres neutros*" ("even more comfortable when using neutral pronouns.") Since they struggle to understand social norms and pressures, "*me siento cómode en mi propia piel. No me da cosa presentarme con mi nombre preferido, ni mis pronombres.*" ("I feel comfortable in my own skin. I don't have an issue with introducing myself with my preferred name and my pronouns.") Similarly, while Artran did not feel that any elements of their identity affected their pronoun use, they did highlight that they have noticed several neurodivergent and in particular autistic

people who fall under the nonbinary umbrella, which is backed up by research in the field (Stagg and Vincent, 2019). Artran suggested that this may be because "*las neurodivergencias, al ser un proceso distinto, frente a neurotípicos, de ver el mundo y entenderlo diferente pues [les neudivergentes] aprecien otras formas de vivirlo y de comprenderse.*" ("neurodiversity is a different way of seeing and understanding the world in comparison to neurotypical people, so [neurodivergent people] appreciate other ways of living in the world and understanding oneself.") While they emphasise that this is not a one-to-one correlation, this does tie to the high levels of disability, especially neurodivergence, within both participant groups and within trans and nonbinary groups as a whole.

Overall, personal pronoun use among the Peninsular Spanish users largely follows similar patterns to the British English users in terms of the importance of pronouns to nonbinary language users; the circumstances in which misgendering occurs and where, simultaneously, comfort and safety regarding pronoun use is low; and the intersecting identities which impact pronoun use. However, unlike the English participants, the Spanish ones had little interest in using neopronouns other than *elle* in Spanish. Rather than necessarily reflecting a desire for uniformity in nonbinary language use, this may reflect the fact that grammatical gender languages, rather than merely restricting nonbinary language use, present unique opportunities for linguistic innovation by nonbinary individuals and communities.

4.3.3 Neopronouns

4.3.3.1 Neopronoun definitions

All participants except for Mel were aware of the term neopronombre. Eight of them emphasised the newness of these pronouns in their definitions, however Amets pointed out that this is a difficult distinction to make given that "*el lenguaje está cambiando constantemente*" ("language is constantly changing"). This once again demonstrates the difficulties in creating an exact temporal definition of a neopronoun, and the fact that certain areas of language which generally experience much rarer and slower rates of change, such as pronouns, retain a sense of 'newness' for longer than nouns and verbs, especially when they emerge from marginalised communities. Amets and Gabriel highlighted that a neopronoun does not have to be a recent creation, expanding the definition to include pronouns that have been rediscovered, repurposed, or that are in the process of being created, such as *ilud*, which comes from Latin but is used by certain nonbinary Spanish language users.

Interestingly, Anon12 explained that "*No considero elle como un neopronombre pero sé que categóricamente lo es.*" While they do not expand on their reasoning for this, it could perhaps be that they are familiar enough with *elle* that it does not feel novel to them to use it,

or because they feel a need to reject the term neopronombre due to discourses tying it to a notion of "transtrenderism". Whatever the reasoning, this shows that 'neopronouns' is a category which nonbinary language users often have affective rather than formal grammatical relationships to. Nevertheless, the rest of the participants recognised *elle* as a neopronoun, reinforcing the fact that all nonbinary language in Peninsular Spanish is a relatively "new" innovation.

4.3.3.2 Attitudes towards neopronouns

All participants affirmed that they used neopronouns when asked to and that other language users should do the same. Once again, participants expressed a strong sense of linguistic justice with regards to using other nonbinary people's pronouns, with Jai explaining that "*Nunca usaría otro pronombre porque a MI me parecía más fácil/conveniente*" ("I would never use a different pronoun because it seems easier/more convient to ME").

Despite most participants considering *elle* to be a neopronoun, a clear split arose between *elle* and other Peninsular Spanish neopronouns. All but two participants felt that it was easier to use *elle* than any other Spanish neopronouns; six participants declared that they would feel differently about their answers regarding neopronouns if *elle* was not included in the definition of a neopronoun; and 21% of participants disagreed with the idea that anyone should be allowed to create their own pronouns. We can therefore deduce that there is a clear preference for *elle* over other neopronouns amongst Spanish nonbinary language users, similarly to the preference for *they* displayed by certain English participants. However, unlike with singular *they*, this preference is not based on historical precedent, but rather a desire for linguistic orderliness and/or accessibility.

Amets explained that they would probably feel less comfortable using neopronouns other than *elle*, but that they would use them regardless, whereas Anon11 stated that they would feel neither comfortable nor safe using other neopronouns and would therefore not use them. Their reasoning for this is that they do not know how grammatical agreements, such as the *-o/-a/-e* suffixes in *alumno/alumna/alumne*, function with such pronouns. Anon11 stressed in their video interview that a key factor in nonbinary Spanish language use is that of grammatical agreement, and that nonbinary Peninsular Spanish therefore extends far beyond pronoun use. In this way, their preference for *elle* reflects a desire for a uniformity of not only pronoun use but also concordant grammatical functions. Similarly, Anon12 explained their reluctance to condone a multiplicity of pronouns as being due to their difficulties remembering multiple pronouns. This demonstrates a cislingualist understanding of the effort required to use multiple pronouns as being 'excessive' as opposed to a "stable, orderly" system.

Ásthar explained that "*Tengo entendido que la enorme variedad de neopronombres puede dificultar la comunicación a personas autistas y que por eso es mejor consensuar un neopronombre para las personas no binarias*" ("From what I understand, the large variety of

neopronouns can make communication difficult for autistic people and it is therefore better to decide on one pronoun for nonbinary people"). While this does reflect a desire to create a "stable, orderly" language system, the drives behind this desire are not solely those of "crystalised cisnormativity" but also the need for accessibility for those with disabilities.

Given the large overlap between nonbinary and disabled identities, and the need for an intersectional approach to liberatory language use, it is important to take these access needs into due consideration. In order to balance neopronoun users' right to self-expression through language use with disabled people's right to accessible communication, trans and nonbinary people themselves have innovated language practices such as auxiliary pronouns and moulding language to ease usage for people with screen readers. Auxiliary pronouns are defined by LGBTA Wiki (2021) as "a pronoun set or sets that one likes less than their primary pronoun set(s), but still allows others to use to refer to oneself". These usually serve as a backup option for "people who cannot use [one's] preferred pronouns", such as those whose L1 is not English or who have learning difficulties or neurodivergences which make neopronoun use difficult. In this way it is possible to both acknowledge and support a multiplicity of neopronouns and ensure accessibility. Meanwhile, certain pronouns such as *ellx* have been identified by nonbinary language users as making language use difficult for people with screen readers, and they are therefore debating the merits of these pronouns on the grounds of a need for an intersectional approach to inclusive language (Barnes, 2020a).

Finally, opinion was split 6:7 as to whether neopronouns are difficult to use, but all but one participant agreed that they required practice in order to use them more easily. This once again shows an understanding of the effort required to use neopronouns as being extra rather than excessive, with Mañe explaining that if they mistakenly use the wrong pronoun for someone, "*es por error mío*" ("that's my mistake"), and it is therefore on them to work on correcting their pronoun use.

4.3.3.3 Safety and comfort using neopronouns

Levels of safety and comfort that participants felt when using neopronouns to talk about others followed the familiar patterns of this data. Overall, participants felt marginally more comfortable and significantly safer using neopronouns to talk about others at work, in their places of learning, and with their families of origin than they did advocating for their own pronouns to be used in these environments. This may reflect the previously discussed (§4.3.3.2; §4.2.3.3) impetus to defend other nonbinary people's language use over one's own, or that there may be fewer effective consequences to revealing that another person is nonbinary as opposed to coming out and advocating for one's own identity.

Only 37% of participants agreed that it was possible to use neopronouns without revealing that the person you are referencing is nonbinary, but only if the language user regularly uses neopronouns generically to talk about people of unknown gender, or in circles

where this generic use of neopronouns is common. For example, Jai declared that where they live in Andalucía this is a common practice. However, this is still a marked use of language and is "*muy excepcional*" (Mañe), as opposed to the relatively common generic use of singular *they* in English.

Finally, Spanish participants reported less respect for neopronouns in their trans communities (86%) than is the case for English participants (96%). This could be to do with the perceived relative newness of these linguistic innovations in Spanish, in comparison to the history of singular they in English, leading them to be rejected by binary trans people. This was highlighted in the video interviews, where both Anon13 and Mel reported experiences with binary trans individuals and communities which rejected nonbinary identities and language use, using the transmedicalist argument that nonbinary people are "appropriating trans pain" (Fisher, 2019:29). While Anon13 argued that this had changed in the last two or three years and that nonbinary people are now included in wider trans activism, Ángel disagreed, claiming that many binary trans people still need to understand that pronouns are not inherently linked to specific gender identities.

Overall, neopronouns are largely understood and supported by the Spanish respondents, though this is not the case in many of the environments they spend time in, including certain trans spaces. However, as with the split between *they* and neopronouns in British English, there is a division between *elle* and other neopronouns in Peninsular Spanish. This is based on the much higher levels of usage and awareness of *elle* in nonbinary communities, a cislingualist approach to linguistic conformity, and an awareness of the need for linguistic accessibility.

4.3.4 Societal attitudes

Spanish participants on the whole felt that trans and nonbinary people are less respected in their places of learning and by their families of origin in comparison to the English participants' responses. While Spanish participants felt that there was slightly more respect in their places of work, this was significantly less (70%) than those who experienced respect in their chosen families (100%), with friends (100%), and in online spaces (86%). However, as with the English participants, it was the media, politics, and religious institutions that were judged to have the least respect for trans and nonbinary individuals.

Once again, this sociopolitical context of disrespect towards trans and nonbinary people has a direct impact on nonbinary pronoun use. On an interpersonal level, for example, Anon13 and Anon11 – both of whom have encountered transphobic individuals at their places of learning – responded with “strongly disagree” when asked if they feel safe asking for their pronouns to be used or using neopronouns to talk about others in that particular environment.

On a systemic level, meanwhile, the majority of respondents identified the media, politics, and religious institutions as all having an impact on cis people's attitudes towards trans and nonbinary pronoun use.

With regards to the media, multiple participants explained that this influence could be used to encourage either positive or negative attitudes towards nonbinary people and language use, but that the former was likely not to impact people with ingrained transphobic ideologies. Amets and Mañe described the transphobic ideology of certain politicians as having a negative effect on public opinion, while Artran tied the discussion of the Ley Trans to a specific rise in nonbinary-phobia. However, where English participants overwhelmingly agreed that these institutions "absolutely" influence wider attitudes, Spanish participants were more evenly split between "absolutely" and "somewhat". This may reflect the fact that Spanish media and politics does not have quite as much of a transphobic stranglehold on wider discourses regarding trans and nonbinary rights in Spain as opposed to in Britain.

Ángel and Anon11 explained that religious institutions "*reafirman las actitudes previas de sus creyentes*" ("reaffirm the previous attitudes of their followers") and use the topic of nonbinary pronoun use "*como excusa del conservadismo*" ("as an excuse for conservatism"). This face that the English respondents did not comment on religious institutions may reflect the Catholic influence which Jai, who has also lived in Britain, noted as being particularly strong in Spain. Other influences on cis attitudes identified by participants included culture (especially fiction), social media, and a lack of adequate educational programs.

Finally, cis people's attitudes towards trans and nonbinary pronouns were judged to be even more misinformed and hostile by the Spanish participants than the English ones. The responses demonstrate a particular focus on grammaticality and language ideology in the Peninsular Spanish context, with 57% of respondents declaring that cis Spaniards consider all trans and nonbinary people's pronouns to be "grammatically incorrect". Although *elle* was highlighted by the majority of participants as being a neopronoun which is more respected by cis people, they all emphasised that the difference is "negligible" (Gabriel) and that in fact there is very little respect for any neopronouns in Peninsular Spanish.

4.3.5 Resisting cislingualism

The Spanish participants had numerous ideas regarding how to combat the nonbinary-phobic ideologies and behaviours they encounter in everyday life. Both with regards to the data collected within the questionnaire and to encouraging the respect and usage of nonbinary people's pronouns in general, visibility was highlighted by numerous participants as a key tactic. As Mel explained, "*Cuando no conoces a una persona no binaria, entender esa realidad es muy difícil.*" ("When you don't know a nonbinary person, it's difficult to understand their

reality"). As well as forming interpersonal relationships with nonbinary people, participants emphasised how culture such as books and films, activism from trans and nonbinary people, and simple steps such as introducing oneself with one's pronouns can create greater awareness for nonbinary identities, which Ángel expressed would then lead to recognition of nonbinary language.

However, there was a diversity of opinion regarding who should be held responsible for the role of educating about nonbinary identity and language use. Jai stressed that visibility "is going to have to come from us" through nonbinary associations, protests, and related activism; they also emphasised the need for nonbinary people to look after one another by creating safe spaces where they can feel visible and respected. Mel, on the other hand, argued that "*Responsabilicemos a la gente cis de todo esto, de que ellas puedan educar en esto*" ("We must hold cis people accountable for educating about this issue"), so that there is "*menos coste emocional*" ("less of an emotional toll") for nonbinary people themselves.

In terms of an internationalist approach to resisting cislingualism, while a minority of participants (43%) felt that there was too much focus on English in discourses regarding neopronoun use, they stressed the need for British English language users to understand the importance of grammatical gender across all areas of Peninsular Spanish, not just pronouns. They also wanted to be able to compare their experiences with those of British English users, exploring the difficulties each group faced and the different pronouns that English-Spanish bilingual individuals use in both languages.

4.4 Comparison

Overall, while the English and Spanish participants' responses show significant similarities with regards to the impact of cisnormative attitudes and behaviours on nonbinary pronoun use within particular environments, we can identify some key areas of difference which correlate to the specifics of each national-linguistic context.

Firstly, participants in both groups draw a clear correlation between their nation's sociopolitical contexts, which actively devalue, demean, and disregard nonbinary identities, and nonbinary people's use of pronouns. However, while the English participants identified the sociopolitical context in Britain as being one of outright hostility towards trans and nonbinary identity, the Spanish participants described their national context as being one of ignorance which has only recently become more heated as a result of the Ley Trans. This may explain the differences in levels of misgendering, comfort, safety, and respect which both groups experienced in various environments: while English participants were more likely to fear effective consequences at their workplaces as a result of their pronoun use, Spanish participants anticipated affective consequences when around their families of origin due to

their relatives' ignorance regarding nonbinary identity and language use. What's more, while the media and political institutions were considered to have impactful and overwhelmingly negative consequences for cisgender attitudes and nonbinary linguistic behaviours in both contexts, Spanish participants had a degree of hope that these institutions could be used to promote positive attitudes, whereas English participants roundly dismissed them as systemically transphobic.

In relation to the linguistic contexts, we can clearly see the distinction between the use and discussion of various GNPs in Britain and Spain. In the former context, singular *they* is considered fairly linguistically uncontroversial; however, its usage implies potential risks to nonbinary people's comfort and safey due to a sociopolitical context which is actively hostile towards trans and nonbinary identity. This also impacts neopronouns other than singular *they*, which, despite being more abundant in English language contexts than in Spanish ones, experience much less use than singular *they* due to the impact of both cislingualist language ideologies and sociopolitical pressures to assimilate to cisheteronormativity.

In the Spanish context, meanwhile, the impact of prescriptivist language ideologies and the controversies surrounding *lenguaje inclusivo* clearly have a significant impact on nonbinary pronoun use. This can be seen in the increased degree of scrutiny amongst cis people regarding all neopronouns including *elle*, in particular in academic settings, and has resulted in significantly higher levels of usage and awareness of *elle* as opposed to other neopronouns amongst nonbinary language users.

However, both groups of language users agree on the importance of challenging these cisnormative and nonbinary-phobic national-linguistic contexts through a diverse range of tactics, including education, activism, and internationalist approaches to understanding and supporting nonbinary language use.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This thesis has analysed the national-linguistic contexts of British English and Peninsular Spanish with regards to nonbinary pronoun use, exploring both the ways in which nonbinary identity and language use are discussed within the cisnormative space of the media, and the ways in which pronoun use is mediated by these discourses inside of nonbinary communities. Two major conclusions can be drawn from this analysis.

Firstly, the data drawn from English and Spanish nonbinary language users clearly shows that these communities of use recognise the impact of national-linguistic contexts on discourses surrounding nonbinary pronoun use and also on their own use of pronouns. The distinction between the hostile sociopolitical focus of cisnormative discourses and attitudes regarding nonbinary identity and language use in Britain and the cislingualist ideologies opposing all language considered to be non-normative in Spain has created specific modes of nonbinary language use. This includes the morphology and multiplicity of (neo)pronoun use, the influence of cislingualist and assimilationist linguistic and sociopolitical attitudes within nonbinary communities, and the distinct environments where nonbinary language users experience either respect and inclusion or confusion and hostility.

The second conclusion, however, is that there is a significant amount of overlap between the national-linguistic contexts of British English and Peninsular Spanish with regards to cisnormative discourses regarding nonbinary identities and language use and the impact of these discourses on nonbinary pronoun use. This is understandable given other similarities between these contexts, both in terms of attitudes towards trans and nonbinary identities and with regards to wider sociopolitical factors. Firstly, both Britain and Spain are Western, former imperial powers with similar degrees of economic development and international influence. They have therefore both experienced the rise of trans visibility within the last decade, which has occurred worldwide but with particular intensity in Western nations, and equally the transphobic backlash to this visibility. Given that a large proportion of both trans- and nonbinary-affirming and trans- and nonbinary-phobic activism takes place in online spaces, these movements have taken on an international quality that has resulted in the spread of both ideologies across national-linguistic borders.

However, this overlap also presents opportunities for an internationalist approach to resisting cisnormativity and cislingualism, as identified by the research participants themselves. By creating a more nuanced understanding of both the similarities and differences between these two national-linguistic contexts, it is possible to locate sources of conflict and possibilities for intervention in the use of nonbinary pronouns, learning from users of both languages so as to create networks of solidarity, education, and resistance. The goal, in my opinion, should not be a rejection of language ideologies altogether – after all, a supposed 'rejection of ideology' is in and of itself ideological. Rather, language ideologies which

contribute to material harm against marginalised subjects must be replaced with ideologies that centre the recognition, protection, and uplifting of all language which aims to minimise harm, especially that language which originates from or resonates with marginalised subjects. In this way, both the ideology and praxis of language use can enact Acosta Matos's (2018) ideal of a "prefigurative politics" which allows the ideals of a future egalitarian society to be enacted in the present.

5.1 Future research

The data collected in this thesis opens up the possibility for multiple avenues of future research. Firstly, there are numerous aspects of the British English and Peninsular Spanish national-linguistic contexts which, due to the time and space constraints of this thesis, I was unable to analyse in greater detail. These include the role of the Catholic church with regards to nonbinary identity and language use in Spain, and the relationships which multilingual participants have to pronouns in their multiple languages. Further research into these areas would help to provide a fuller picture of nonbinary pronoun use within and across the two contexts.

Secondly, while this work has benefitted greatly from the metalinguistic insights offered by both nonbinary participants and cisnormative media, it would benefit from a corpus of real language data within which GNPs are used by both nonbinary participants and binary interlocutors, so as to further study nonbinary pronoun use in context.

Finally, given the overlap between the two national-linguistic contexts in terms of attitudes towards trans and nonbinary identities and with regards to wider sociopolitical factors, it would be highly worthwhile for future research to compare other contexts which differ more greatly in one or both of these arenas.

Overall, it is important that academic research continue to, in the words of Anon8, "give some academic legitimacy to the things nonbinary people are already saying". Exploring this fascinating and fast-moving area of language use not only provides better insight into what may well be the future of mainstream language use, it also helps to provide tools for both nonbinary people and their allies to dismantle the linguistic and sociopolitical systems which constrain them.

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Appendix I: Participant recruitment advertisement in English

Are you a nonbinary person who lives in the UK and uses English to communicate as part of your daily life? Do you care about nonbinary people's pronouns? Do you have 20 minutes spare to help me with my research?

I'm a trans researcher at the University of Birmingham in the Department of Modern Languages. My research looks at the use of pronouns among nonbinary people, and I am looking for nonbinary participants for my study.

Participation would involve an online survey that should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. This does not have to be completed all at once. For those who wish to participate further, a follow-up video call would be arranged to discuss the answers given in the survey. All personal information will be kept entirely confidential, meaning only I will have access to it, and responses will be anonymised unless explicitly otherwise requested by the participant.

If you want your voice to be heard and to make a difference to the lack of representation of nonbinary people in academic research, please contact me at [redacted] or at the Twitter account @MichaelMABarnes.

Appendix II: Participant recruitment advertisement in Spanish

¿Eres una persona no binaria que vive en España y que usa el español para comunicar en tu vida diaria? ¿Te importan los pronombres que usan las personas no binarias? ¿Tienes 20 minutos libres para ayudarme en mi investigación?

Soy un investigador trans a la Universidad de Birmingham en el Departamento de Lenguas Modernas. Mi investigación trata del uso de pronombres por las personas no binarias, y busco a participantes no binaries para mi estudio.

Participar implicaría un cuestionario que debería tomar no más de 20 minutes para completar. No debes completarlo totalmente en un turno. Para las personas que quieren participar más, planearíamos una videollamada suplementaria para discutir las respuestas dadas en el cuestionario. Toda la información personal será totalmente confidencial, lo que significa que solo yo tendré acceso a ella, y las respuestas serán anónimas a menos que le participante solicite explícitamente lo contrario.

Si quieres hacer oír tu voz y hacer una diferencia con respecto a la falta de representación de las personas no binarias en las investigaciones académicas, contácteme por favor a [redacted]o a la cuenta de Twitter @MichaelMABarnes.

Appendix III: Questionnaire in English

Use of pronouns by nonbinary people

Page 1: Consent form

Disclaimer:

By responding to this questionnaire, you confirm that you consent to your answers being used as part of Michael Barnes' Masters through Research in the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Birmingham.

All your responses to the questionnaire are confidential, meaning no one except the research team will have access to them. The other members of the research team are Dr Norma Schifao (and Dr Alice Corr (. When the thesis is published, all your responses will be anonymized, meaning your name and any identifying information that you mention in your responses will be removed. However, if you would prefer not to remain anonymous, you can specify below what name you would like to be used to refer to you within the thesis. In this case, identifying information and names of other people mentioned in your responses will still be removed.

If you wish to withdraw your consent, you can contact Michael Barnes at the email address in order to do so. There will be no consequences for you if you decide to withdraw, your data will be permanently deleted, and your answers will not be used. The deadline for withdrawing from the project is one month after completing your participation.

1. Before participating, you must confirm that you agree with the following conditions:
   1. I have read the information provided about the project in the Participant Information Sheet and I am happy with the information given.
   2. I have the right to withdraw from the study according to the conditions described above and in the Participant Information Sheet.
   3. I want to participate according to the conditions described in the Participant Information Sheet.
   4. I can ask about the project before, during, and after completing the questionnaire at the contact details written above.
   5. I confirm that my participation in the study is voluntary, that I use British English to communicate in my daily life, and that I am at least 18 years old.

   I agree
   I do not agree

2. Do you wish to remain anonymous?
   - Yes
   - No

3. If you do not wish to remain anonymous, what name would you like to be used to refer to you within the thesis? For reasons of safety, this should not be your full legal name.
4. Date:
5. Full name:

Page 2: Content warning

This questionnaire contains references to transphobia, misgendering, and other content that may potentially make respondents uncomfortable. Each section of the questionnaire has questions which do not contain this content at the beginning, then a content warning preceding questions which contain this content. Respondents may skip any questions that they do not feel comfortable answering, other than the compulsory general information questions which appear in the first section of the questionnaire. Respondents are also asked to use content warnings in their answers where they consider it to be necessary.

In the event that you are upset or distressed by the content in this questionnaire, a list of helplines and resources is available here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/152kuopFKIZ6Q6ouTP-rCfIUbNHOHlnOOxefasZEfKvc/edit?usp=sharing.

Page 3: General information

1. What is your age?
2. How would you describe your gender?
3. What is your occupation?
4. How would you describe your socioeconomic class? *e.g. working class, middle class, upper-middle class, etc.*
5. What languages do you use (language use refers to speaking, writing, reading, or listening to a language)?
6. How often do you use each of those languages? *e.g. Daily, At least once a week, At least once a month, Less than once a month*
7. How long have you lived in the UK for?
8. Have you ever lived in any country outside of the UK? If so, for how long?
9. How would you describe your race/ethnicity?
10. How would you describe your nationality?
11. Do you consider yourself to have at least one disability?
12. If you would like to, you can give details of your disability/disabilities
13. Do you consider yourself to be intersex?

Page 4: Personal pronoun use

1. What pronouns do you want other people to use for you in English? *e.g. "This is Mikey. He is a student." Here, "he" is the pronoun I want other people to use for me.*
2. Is there a reason/reasons why you want people to use these pronouns for you? If so, what is/are the reason/reasons?
3. How long have you used your current pronouns for? *e.g. "I first asked people to use he pronouns for me in 2014, so I have been using them for 7 years."*
4. If you use multiple sets of pronouns, do you have a preference for any set/s over any other/s? If so, why?
5. Have you ever used any other pronouns? If so, why did you change your pronouns?
6. Do you feel that you chose your pronouns, or that your pronouns are an inherent part of yourself/your identity?
7. Do you use, or would you like to use, an alternative pronoun/s which you invented, or which you have heard about but which is not very common? If so, what pronoun/s?

CONTENT WARNING: The following questions contain references to misgendering and transphobia.

8. Are there any situations in which you do not want your pronouns to be used for you? *e.g. around your family, in your workplace, at school*
9. How often are your pronouns used for you...

	None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time	This does not apply to me
At your workplace?					
At your place of learning?					
By your family of origin? – e.g. parents, siblings, aunts/uncles, etc.					
Bo your family of choice? – e.g. partners, children, etc.					
By your close circle of friends?					

In your online spaces?					

10. Any further comments regarding your answers to the previous question?
11. To what extent to do agree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure / Don't know	This does not apply to me
I feel SAFE asking people to use my pronouns in my workplace						
I feel COMFORTABLE asking people to use my pronouns in my workplace						
I feel SAFE asking people to use my pronouns at my place of learning						
I feel COMFORTABLE asking people to use my pronouns at my place of learning						
I feel SAFE asking my family of origin to use my pronouns						
I feel COMFORTABLE asking my family of origin						

to use my pronouns						
I feel SAFE asking my family of choice to use my pronouns						
I feel COMFORTABLE asking my family of choice to use my pronouns						
I feel SAFE asking my close friends to use my pronouns						
I feel COMFORTABLE asking my close friends to use my pronouns						
I feel SAFE asking people to use my pronouns in my online spaces.						
I feel COMFORTABLE asking people to use my pronouns in my online spaces						
I am happy with the pronouns I ask people to use for me						
I would ask people to use/not to use certain pronouns for me if I felt						

SAFER doing so						
I would ask people to use/not to use certain pronouns for me if I felt more COMFORTABLE doing so						

12. Any further comments regarding your answers to the previous question?
13. Do you feel that any of your identities other than being nonbinary (e.g. if you are a person of colour, or if you are disabled) affect the ways you use pronouns, both for yourself and for others? If so, how do they affect this?

Page 5: Neopronouns

1. Are you familiar with the term 'neopronoun'?
   Yes
   No
   Somewhat
   Not sure / Don't know
2. How would you define a neopronoun?
3. Do you consider singular they/them when used to refer to a specific person to be a neopronoun? *e.g. "This is my friend Oak. They write poetry."*
4. What is your reasoning behind your answer to the previous question?

In this questionnaire, 'neopronoun' will refer to any pronouns other than exclusively he/him/his or she/her/hers. It is okay if you disagree with this definition.

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure / Don't know
I always use neopronouns to talk about someone else if they ask me to					
Anyone should be allowed to create their own pronouns					

Everyone should use neopronouns to talk about other people if they are asked to					
Neopronouns are respected in my trans communities					
Neopronouns are difficult to use to talk about someone else					
Neopronouns take practice in order to use them more easily					
It is easier for me to use they/them pronouns to talk about someone else than it is to use other neopronouns					

6. Any further comments regarding your answers to the previous question?

CONTENT WARNING: The following questions contain references to outing, misgendering and transphobia.

7. Is it possible to use neopronouns without revealing that the person you are talking about is trans/nonbinary?
   Yes
   No
   Somewhat
   Not sure / Don't know
8. What is your reasoning behind your answer to the previous question?
9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure /	This does not

					Don't know	apply to me
I feel SAFE using neopronouns to talk about other people in my workplace						
I feel COMFORTABLE using neopronouns to talk about other people in my workplace						
I feel SAFE using neopronouns to talk about other people at my place of learning						
I feel COMFORTABLE using neopronouns to talk about other people at my place of learning						
I feel SAFE using neopronouns to talk about other people with my family of origin						
I feel COMFORTABLE using neopronouns to talk about other people with my family of origin						

I feel SAFE using neopronouns to talk about other people with my family of choice						
I feel COMFORTABLE using neopronouns to talk about other people with my family of choice						
I feel SAFE using neopronouns to talk about other people with my close friends						
I feel COMFORTABLE using neopronouns to talk about other people with my close friends						
I feel SAFE using neopronouns to talk about other people in my online spaces						
I feel COMFORTABLE using neopronouns to talk about other people in my online spaces						

10. Any further comments regarding your answers to the previous question?
11. Would any of your answers to the previous question differ if neopronouns referred to pronouns other than he/him/his, she/her/hers, OR they/them/their/s? *e.g. if neopronouns only referred to pronouns such as xe/xem, bun/buns, etc.*

Page 6: Societal attitudes

CONTENT WARNING: The following questions contain references to transphobia, prejudice against nonbinary people, and misgendering

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure / Don't know	This does not apply to me
Trans and nonbinary people are respected in my workplace						
Trans and nonbinary people are respected in my place of learning						
Trans and nonbinary people are respected in my family of origin						
Trans and nonbinary people are respected in my family of choice						
Trans and nonbinary people are respected in my close circle of friends						
Trans and nonbinary people are respected in						

my online spaces						
Trans and nonbinary people are respected in UK media						
Trans and nonbinary people are respected in UK politics						
Trans and nonbinary people are respected in UK religious institutions						

2. Any further comments regarding your answers to the previous question?
3. How common do you estimate the following attitudes to be among cisgender (non-trans or nonbinary) people in the UK?

	Very common	Somewhat common	Somewhat uncommon	Very uncommon	Not sure / Don't know
Only trans and nonbinary people have pronouns/"preferred" pronouns					
All trans and nonbinary people's pronouns are hard to use					
All trans and nonbinary people's pronouns are ungrammatical - e.g. "Trans and nonbinary people are trying to go against the established rules of English grammar."					
All trans and nonbinary people's					

pronouns should be respected					
Neopronouns are hard to use					
Neopronouns are ungrammatical - e.g. “Using 3rd person singular pronouns other than he or she goes against the established rules of English grammar.”					
Neopronouns should be respected					

4. Any further comments regarding your answers to the previous question?
5. Does the UK media’s reporting on trans people affect cisgender people’s attitudes towards trans people’s **pronouns**?
   Yes, absolutely
   Yes, to some extent
   No, not much
   No, not at all
   Not sure / Don’t know
6. Any further comments regarding your answers to the previous question?
7. Do UK politicians’ and political bodies’ policies and comments about trans people affect cisgender people’s attitudes towards trans people’s **pronouns**?
   Yes, absolutely
   Yes, to some extent
   No, not much
   No, not at all
   Not sure / Don’t know
8. Any further comments regarding your answers to the previous question?
9. Do UK religious institutions’ attitudes towards trans people affect cisgender people’s attitudes towards trans people’s **pronouns**?
   Yes, absolutely
   Yes, to some extent
   No, not much
   No, not at all
   Not sure / Don’t know
10. Any further comments regarding your answers to the previous question?
11. What other influences are there on cisgender people in the UK’s attitudes about trans people’s **pronouns**?

12. Are there certain neopronouns which are more respected by cisgender people? If so, which ones?

Page 7: Cross-language dialogue

1. What would you want to ask a nonbinary user of Spanish about nonbinary people's use of pronouns in their language?
2. What would you want to tell a nonbinary user of Spanish about nonbinary people's use of pronouns in British English?
3. Do you think that there is too much focus on the English language in conversations about trans people's pronouns?
   Yes
   No
   Somewhat
   Not sure / Don't know
4. Any further comments regarding your answer to the previous question?
5. If you use multiple languages, how does your use of pronouns in English compare to you use of pronouns in the other language/s you use?
6. If you use multiple languages, how does nonbinary people's use of pronouns in English compare to nonbinary people's use of pronouns in the other languages you use?

Page 8: Use of data

1. In your opinion, what ways can the data collected in this questionnaire best be used to benefit nonbinary individuals and communities?

Appendix IV: Questionnaire in Spanish

Uso de pronombres por las personas no binarias

Page 1: Formulario de consentimiento

Descargo de responsabilidad:

Al responder a este cuestionario, afirmas que consientes el uso de tus respuestas como parte del Máster de Michael Barnes en el Departamento de Lenguas Modernas a la Universidad de Birmingham.

Todas tus respuestas son confidenciales, es decir nadie excepto el equipo de investigación tendrá acceso a ellas. El equipo de investigación es Michael Barnes [redacted] Dr Norma Schifano ([redacted]), y Dr Alice Corr [redacted].

Cuando la tesis sea publicada, todas tus respuestas serán anonimizadas, es decir tu nombre y cualquiera información personal que mencionas en tus respuestas serán omitidos. Sin embargo, si prefieres no mantener el anonimato, puedes precisar abajo el nombre que quieres que se usa para hablar de ti en la tesis. En este caso, la información personal y los nombres de otras personas mencionadas en tus respuestas todavía serán omitidos.

Si quieres retirar tu consentimiento, puedes contactar a Michael Barnes al correo electrónico MXB662@student.bham.ac.uk para hacerlo. No hará ninguna consecuencia para ti si decides retirar tu consentimiento, tus datos serán permanentemente omitidos, y no se usará tus respuestas. La fecha límite para retirarte del proyecto es un mes después de haber completado tu participación.

1. Antes de participar, debes afirmar que estés de acuerdo con las siguientes condiciones:
    1. Leí la información provista sobre el proyecto y estoy contente con ella.
    2. Tengo el derecho de retirarme del proyecto según las condiciones descritas arriba y en el Folleto de Información para Participantes.
    3. Quiero participar según las condiciones descritas en el Folleto de Información para Participantes.
    4. Puedo preguntar sobre el proyecto antes de, durante, y después de completar el cuestionario a la información de contacto arriba.
    5. Afirmo que mi participación en la investigación es voluntaria, que uso el español peninsular para comunicar en mi vida diaria, y que tengo al menos 18 años.

    Estoy de acuerdo
    No estoy de acuerdo

2. ¿Quieres mantener el anonimato?
   - Sí
   - No
3. Si no quiero mantener el anonimato, ¿cuál nombre quieres que se use para hablar de ti en la tesis? Por razones de seguridad, no debería ser tu nombre completo legal.
4. Fecha:
5. Nombre completo:

Page 2: Aviso de contenidos

Este cuestionario contiene referencias a la transfobia, al misgendering, y a otros contenidos que podrían potencialmente incomodar a les encuestades. Cada sección del cuestionario comienza con preguntas que no contienen ese tipo de contenidos, seguidas por un aviso de contenidos antes de las preguntas que contienen ese tipo de contenidos. Les encuestades pueden saltarse cualquiera pregunta que les incomoda a responder, aparte de las preguntas obligatorias de información general que aparecen en la primera sección del cuestionario. Se pide que les encuestades usen avisos de contenidos en sus respuestas cuando consideran que es necesario.

En caso de que estés moleste o angustiade debido a los contenidos del cuestionario, hay una lista de recursos aquí: https://docs.google.com/document/d/152kuopFKIZ6Q6ouTP-rCfIUbNHOHlnOOxefasZEfKvc/edit?usp=sharing.

Page 3: Información general

1. ¿Cuántos años tienes?
2. ¿Cómo describirías tu género?
3. ¿Cuál es tu ocupación?
4. ¿Cómo describirías tu clase socioeconómica? *ej. baja, media, media-alta*
5. ¿Cuáles lenguas usas? (Usar una lengua refiera a hablar, escribir, leer, o escuchar a una lengua)
6. ¿Con qué frecuencia usas cada de esas lenguas? *ej. Cada día, Al menos una vez por semana, Al menos una vez por mes, etc.*
7. ¿Desde hace cuánto tiempo vives en España?
8. ¿Has vivido en otro país fuera de España? De ser así, ¿durante cuánto tiempo?
9. ¿Cómo describirías tu raza/etnicidad?
10. ¿Cómo describirías tu nacionalidad?
11. ¿Consideras que tienes una discapacidad?
12. Si quieres, puedes dar detalles de tu/s discapacidad/es?
13. ¿Consideras que eres intersexual?

Page 4: Uso personal de pronombres

1. ¿Cuál/es pronombre/s quieres que otras personas usen para referirse a ti en español? *ej. "Es mi amigo, Mikey. Él es un estudiante." Aquí, 'él' es el pronombre que quiero que otras personas usen para referirse a mi.*
2. ¿Hay unas razones por las cuales quieres que otras personas usen este/estos pronombre/s? De ser así, ¿cuáles son las razones?
3. ¿Desde hace cuánto tiempo usas tu/s pronombre/s actual/es? *ej. "Pedí por la primera vez que la gente use el pronombre 'él' para mi en 2014, pues lo uso desde hace 7 años."*
4. Si usas múltiples pronombres, ¿tienes una preferencia por un pronombre en vez de otro/s? De ser así, ¿por qué?
5. ¿Has usado otro/s pronombre/s en el pasado? De ser así, ¿por qué cambiaste tu/s pronombre/s?
6. ¿Consideras que elegiste tu/s pronombre/s, o que tu/s pronombre/s son un parte inherente de ti?
7. ¿Usas, o quieres usar, un/os pronombre/s alternativo/s que inventaste, o que encontraste pero que no es muy común? De ser así, ¿cuáles pronombres?

AVISO DE CONTENIDOS: Las siguientes preguntas contienen referencias al misgendering y a la transfobia.

8. ¿Hay circunstancias en las cuales no quieres que se usa estos pronombres (RESPUESTA A 1) para referirse a ti? *ej. alrededor de tu familia, en tu lugar de trabajo, en tu universidad*
9. ¿Con qué frecuencia se usa tus pronombres para referirse a ti...?

	Jamás	Algo del tiempo	La mayoría del tiempo	Siempre	No es aplicable para mí
¿En tu lugar de trabajo?					
¿En tu lugar de aprendizaje?					
¿Con tu familia de origen? ej. padres, hermanes, etc.					
¿Con tu familia elegida? ej. parejas, niñes, etc.					

¿Con tus amigues íntimes?					
¿En tus espacios en línea?					

10. ¿Tienes otros comentarios sobre tus respuestas a la pregunta previa?
11. ¿En qué medida estás de acuerdo con las afirmaciones siguientes?

	Muy de acuerdo	Algo de acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No sé / No estoy segure	No es aplicable para mí
Me siento SEGURE al pedir que las personas usen mi/s pronombre/s en mi lugar de trabajo						
Me siento CÓMODE al pedir que las personas usen mi/s pronombre/s en mi lugar de trabajo						
Me siento SEGURE al pedir que las personas usen mi/s pronombre/s en mi lugar de aprendizaje						
Me siento CÓMODE al pedir que las personas usen mi/s pronombre/s en mi lugar de aprendizaje						

Me siento SEGURE al pedir que mi familia de origen use mi/s pronombre/s						
Me siento CÓMODE al pedir que mi familia de origen use mi/s pronombre/s						
Me siento SEGURE al pedir que mi familia elegida use mi/s pronombre/s						
Me siento CÓMODE al pedir que mi familia elegida use mi/s pronombre/s						
Me siento SEGURE al pedir que mis amigues íntimes usen mi/s pronombre/s						
Me siento CÓMODE al pedir que mis amigues íntimes usen mi/s pronombre/s						
Me siento SEGURE al pedir que las personas usen						

mi/s pronombre/s en mis espacios en línea						
Me siento CÓMODE al pedir que las personas usen mi/s pronombre/s en mis espacios en línea						
Estoy contente con el/los pronombre/s que pido que las personas usen para referirse a mi						
Pediría que las personas usen/no usen cierto/s pronombre/s para referirse a mi si me sintiera más SEGURE al hacerlo						
Pediría que las personas usen/no usen cierto/s pronombre/s para referirse a mi si me sintiera más CÓMODE al hacerlo						

12. ¿Tienes otros comentarios sobre tus respuestas a la pregunta previa?

13. ¿Consideras que alguna/s de tu/s identidad/es que no es ser no binarie (ej. si eres una persona de color, o si eres discpacitade) afecta/n las maneras de que usas los pronombres? De ser así, ¿cómo las afecta/n?

Page 5: Neopronombres

1. ¿Conoces el término 'neopronombre'?
   Sí
   No
   De alguna manera
   No sé / No estoy segure
2. ¿Cómo definirías un neopronombre?

En este cuestionario, 'neopronombre' refiere a cualquier pronombre que no es él o ella. No es un problema si no estás de acuerdo con esta definición.

3. ¿En qué medida estás de acuerdo con las afirmaciones siguientes?

	Muy de acuerdo	Algo de acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Mu yen desacuerdo	No sé / No estoy segure
Siempre uso neopronombres para hablar de alguien si me pide hacerlo.					
Cada persona debería poder crear su/s propio/s pronombre/s					
Cada persona debería usar neopronombres para hablar de otras personas si le piden					
Se respeta los neopronombres en mis comunidades trans					
Es difícil usar los neopronombres para hablar de alguien					

Requiere práctica para usar los neopronombres con mayor facilidad					
Es más fácil para mi usar el pronombre elle para hablar de alguien que usar otro neopronombre					

4. ¿Tienes otros comentarios sobre tus respuestas a la pregunta previa?

CONTENT WARNING: The following questions contain references to outing, misgendering and transphobia.

AVISO DE CONTENIDOS: Las siguientes preguntas contienen referencias a la divulgación no deseada de la identidad de género, al misgendering, y a la transfobia.

5. ¿Es posible usar los neopronombres sin revelar que la persona a quien te refieres es trans/no binarie?
   Sí
   No
   De alguna manera
   No sé / No estoy segure
6. ¿Cuál es tu razonamiento para tu respuesta a la pregunta previa?
7. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Muy de acuerdo	Algo de acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	No sé / No estoy segure	No es aplicable para mí
Me siento SEGURE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas en mi lugar de trabajo						
Me siento CÓMODE al usar los neopronombres						

para hablar de otras personas en mi lugar de trabajo						
Me siento SEGURE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas en mi lugar de aprendizaje						
Me siento CÓMODE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas en mi lugar de aprendizaje						
Me siento SEGURE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas con mi familia de origen						
Me siento CÓMODE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas con mi familia de origen						
Me siento SEGURE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas con mi familia elegida						

Me siento CÓMODE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas con mi familia elegida						
Me siento SEGURE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas con mis amigues íntimes						
Me siento CÓMODE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas con mis amigues íntimes						
Me siento SEGURE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas en mis espacios en línea						
Me siento CÓMODE al usar los neopronombres para hablar de otras personas en mis espacios en línea						

8. ¿Tienes otros comentarios sobre tus respuestas a la pregunta previa?
9. ¿Cualquiera de tus respuestas sería diferente si 'neopronombres' refiriera a los pronombres que no son él, ella, o elle? *ej. si 'neopronombres' solo refiriera a pronombres como ellu, ellx, o ol.*

Page 6: Actitudes sociales

AVISO DE CONTENIDOS: Las siguientes preguntas contienen referencias a la transfobia, al prejuicio contra las personas no binarias, y al misgendering.

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Muy de acuerdo	Algo de acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Mu yen desacuerdo	No sé / No estoy segure	No es aplicable para mí
Se respeta a las personas trans y no binarias en mi lugar de trabajo						
Se respeta a las personas trans y no binarias en mi lugar de aprendizaje						
Se respeta a las personas trans y no binarias en mi familia de origen						
Se respeta a las personas trans y no binarias en mi familia elegida						
Se respeta a las personas trans y no binarias entre						

mis amigues íntimes						
Se respeta a las personas trans y no binarias en mis espacios en línea						
Se respeta a las personas trans y no binarias en los medios de comunicación en España						
Se respeta a las personas trans y no binarias en la política española						
Se respeta a las personas trans y no binarias en las instituciones religiosas en España						

2. ¿Tienes otros comentarios sobre tus respuestas a la pregunta previa?
3. En tu estimación, ¿qué tan comunes son las actitudes siguientes entre las personas cisgénero (que no son trans o no binarias) en España?

	Muy común	Bastante común	Poco común	Muy raro	Not sé / No estoy segure
Solo las personas trans y no binarias tienen pronombres/pronombres 'preferidos'					
Es difícil usar todos los pronombres que las personas trans y no binarias piden que se use para referirse a elles					

Todos los pronombres que las personas trans y no binarias piden que se use para referirse a elles son gramaticalmente incorrectos. - ej. “Las personas trans y no binarias intentan ir en contra de las reglas establecidas de la gramática española."					
Se debería respetar todos los pronombres que las personas trans y no binarias piden que se use para referirse a elles.					
Es difícil usar los neopronombres					
Los neopronombres son gramaticalmente incorrectos - ej. “Usar un pronombre de tercera persona singular que no es él o ella va en contra de las reglas establecidas de la gramática española.”					
Se debería respetar los neopronombres					

4. ¿Tienes otros comentarios sobre tus respuestas a la pregunta previa?
5. Los reportajes de los medios de comunicación españoles sobre las personas trans, ¿ellos afectan las actitudes de las personas cisgénero hacia los pronombres de las personas trans y no binarias?
   Sí, totalmente
   Sí, de algo modo
   No mucho
   No, para nada
   No sé / No estoy segure
6. ¿Tienes otros comentarios sobre tus respuestas a la pregunta previa?
7. Las políticas y los comentarios de les políticues y los órganos políticos en España, ¿ellos afectan las actitudes de las personas cisgénero hacia los pronombres de las personas trans y no binarias?

Sí, totalmente
Sí, de algo modo
No mucho
No, para nada
No sé / No estoy segure

8. ¿Tienes otros comentarios sobre tus respuestas a la pregunta previa?
9. Las actitudes de las instituciones religiosas, ¿ellas afectan las actitudes de las personas cisgénero hacia los **pronombres** de las personas trans y no binarias?
   Sí, totalmente
   Sí, de algo modo
   No mucho
   No, para nada
   No sé / No estoy segure
10. ¿Tienes otros comentarios sobre tus respuestas a la pregunta previa?
11. ¿Cuáles otras cosas influyen en las actitudes de las personas cisgénero españolas hacia los pronombres de las personas trans y no binarias?
12. ¿Hay ciertos neopronombres que las personas cisgénero respetan más? De ser así, ¿cuáles pronombres?

Page 7: Diálogos entre lenguas

1. ¿Qué querrías preguntar a una persona no binaria que usa inglés británico acerca del uso de los pronombres por parte de las personas no binarias en su lengua?
2. ¿Qué querrías decir a una persona no binaria que usa inglés británico acerca del uso de los pronombres por parte de las personas no binarias en español peninsular?
3. ¿Piensas que se pone demasiado énfasis en el inglés en las conversaciones sobre el uso de los pronombres por parte de las personas trans?
   Sí
   No
   De algo modo
   No sé / No estoy segure
4. ¿Tienes otros comentarios sobre tu respuesta a la pregunta previa?
5. Si usas múltiples lenguas, ¿cómo compararías tu uso de pronombres en español con tu uso de pronombres en la/s otra/s lengua/s que usas?
6. Si usas múltiples lenguas, ¿cómo compararías el uso de pronombres por parte de las personas no binarias en español con el uso de pronombres por parte de las personas no binarias en la/s otra/s lengua/s que usas?

Page 8: Uso de datos

1. En tu opinión, ¿de qué maneras podemos usar los datos coleccionados por este cuestionario para beneficiar lo mejor a las comunidades y a les individues no binaries?

Appendix V: Video interview questions in English

Reflection on questionnaire

Are there any comments you would like to make in response to the questionnaire?

Was there anything included in the questionnaire that you did not understand or would like to know more about?

Do you have any questions about my research in general?

Pronouns and community

How involved are you in trans and nonbinary communities?

What is the general attitude towards pronoun use in these communities?

How do you feel about this attitude?

Pronouns and politics

How would you describe the political position of nonbinary people in the UK?

Have you observed changes to this position?

How would you describe political parties' and politicians' attitudes towards nonbinary people in the UK?

Have you observed changes to these attitudes?

Is your use of pronouns political / politicised?

In what circumstances do you feel that your use of pronouns is most political / politicised?

Are there circumstances in which you do not feel that your use of pronouns is political / politicised?

Pronouns and transphobia

Do you consider people not using nonbinary people's correct pronouns to be an example of transphobia?

Do you consider people calling nonbinary people's use of pronouns 'ungrammatical' to be an example of transphobia?

Do you consider debate around nonbinary people's use of pronouns to be an example of transphobia?

Pronouns and society

How would you describe the position of nonbinary people in UK society?

Have you observed changes to this position?

How would you describe cisgender people's attitudes towards nonbinary people in the UK?

Have you observed changes to these attitudes?

How can we encourage people to understand, respect, and use nonbinary people's pronouns?

Appendix VI: Video interview questions in Spanish

Comentarios sobre el cuestionario

¿Hay cualquier comentario que quieres hacer en respuesta al cuestionario?

¿Había cualquiera cosa en el cuestionario que no entendiste o sobre lo cual quieres saber más?

¿Tienes cualquiera pregunta sobre mi investigación en general?

Pronombres y comunidad

¿Participas mucho en las comunidades trans y no binarie?

¿Cómo describirías la actitud hacia el uso de los pronombres en estas comunidades?

¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre esta actitud?

Pronombres y la política

¿Cómo describirías la situación política de las personas no binarias en España?

¿Has notado un cambio en esta situación?

¿Cómo describirías las actitudes de los partidos políticos y de los, las, y les políticques hacia las personas no binarias en España?

¿Has notado un cambio en estas actitudes?

¿Consideras que tus pronombres son políticos o politizados?

¿En cuáles circunstancias consideras que tus pronombres son más políticos o politizados?

¿Hay circunstancias en las cuales consideras que tus pronombres no son políticos o politizados?

Pronombres y sociedad

¿Cómo describirías la situación de las personas no binarias en la sociedad España?

¿Has notado un cambio en esta situación?

¿Cómo describirías las actitudes de las personas cisgénero hacia las personas no binarias en España?

¿Has notado un cambio en estas actitudes?

¿Cómo podemos animar a la gente a entender, respetar, y usar los pronombres de las personas no binarias?

Pronombres y transfobia

¿Consideras que no usar el pronombre correcto para una persona no binaria es un ejemplo de la transfobia?

¿Consideras que decir que “el uso de los pronombres por parte de las personas no binarias es gramaticalmente incorrecto” es un ejemplo de la transfobia?

¿Consideras que los debates acerca del uso de los pronombres por parte de las personas no binarias es un ejemplo de la transfobia?

Appendix VII: List of participants with their chosen pronouns

English participants

Daz – they/them
Anon1 – they/them
Hobbes – they/them
Fliss – he/him, she/her, they/them
Anon2 – they/them
Dylan – they/them
Huey – they/them, she/her
Anon3 – they/them, he/him (partners and friends only)
Dylan – they/them
El – they/them
Alex P – he/him, they/them
Quinn – they/them
Anon4 – they/them
Jojo – they/them
Anon5 – they/them
Anon6 – he/him, they/them
Anon7 – they/them
Oak – they/them
Anon8 – she/her, sometimes they/them
Bobbie – he/him, they/them, ne/nym, considering other pronouns/no pronouns
Molly – she/her, they/them
Anon9 – they/them

Spanish participants

Amets - elle
Anon10 – él, ella, elle
Ángel – ella, elle
Anon11 - él
Artran – elle, no pronouns
Dory – elle (preferred), ella
Anon12 - elle
Hélio - elle
Anon13 - elle
Mañe – any pronouns
Jai - elle
Gabriel D'Artemius - elle
Ásthar - elle
Mel – él, elle, ella, no pronouns