

Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého

**Questioning the Gender Identity: The
Awareness of Non-binary Language Amongst
the Young Czech Generation**

(Bakalářská práce)

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The present bachelor thesis investigates the awareness of non-binary Czech language amongst the young generation in Czech Republic. The theoretical part focuses on the Queer Identity and Queer Translation concepts. The practical part aims to test the awareness of both binary and non-binary groups of young Czech people through a questionnaire using an English text written from the non-binary point of view.

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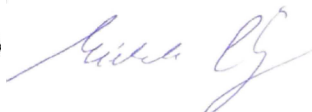
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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is spreading awareness about gender-neutral language in the Czech Republic as it is still a new term for many people living there and the Czech non-binary community is becoming more prominent every day and translating texts with better understanding of the identity and strategies the translator can take will lead to higher and better exposure and thus better understanding the people who are part of the community.

The theoretical part focuses on Queer Theory, Queer Translation, grammatical gender, gender-neutral language, English and Czech pronouns, and possible translation strategies for gender-neutral language.

The practical part of the thesis focuses on questionnaire which is the main part of the thesis where the respondents had to translate two authentic (written by non-binary authors) texts from English to Czech. The respondents were divided into two groups of 31 respondents each: non-binary and cisgender. The responses of these two groups are then compared to see how different the approaches are and how people react and are familiar with the non-binary language.

Key Words: non-binary, gender-neutral language, gender-fair language, translation strategies, pronouns, LGBTQ+ community

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INTRODUCTION

With the growth of interest in LGBTQ+ rights and their visibility rises the debate about gender-neutral language. This thesis focuses on perception of gender-neutral language among the young generation of the Czech Republic via a questionnaire in which they were asked to translate two authentic (written by a non-binary author) English non-binary texts into Czech while trying to keep the expression of non-binarity of the characters. The thesis thus focuses on linguistics and contains a comparative part of English and Czech language which discusses the differences of the languages when it comes to gender-neutral language. The Czech Republic's views on gender-neutrality were neglected due to the socialism period and "it was thus only the fall of the Iron Curtain which enabled the feminist reflection of the language," (Kolek and Valdřová 2020, 43) and that started the growing interest in gender-fair and gender-neutral language. But discrimination in speech is still very common according to Valdřová (2010). Sexism is one of the most disregarded problems in the Czech Republic as it is perceived as "a fabrication or an effort to destroy the "natural" differences between men and women or as an action taken by the ugly and mean feminists." (Valdřová, Knotková-Čapková, Pačlíková 2010, 10)¹. And that is why non-binary identities are still a very sensitive topic in the Czech Republic as the LGBTQ+ movement has not been fully accepted legally nor by all the citizens.

This why this thesis aims to raise awareness about gender-neutral language and spread the possible ways to express non-binary identity through the Czech language while including a part of the population of the Czech Republic.

1. Queer Studies

1.1. Queer Theory

With the rise of the AIDs epidemic, the society lived through a massive change of ideas which had been set in stone. Society was suddenly more aware of the LGBTQ+ prominence and it "provoked intellectuals to see themselves as bringing a queerer world into being" (Berlant and Warner 1995, 344) in 1990. "AIDs forced the issue of translating queerness into the national scene" (Berlant and Warner 1995, 345). They explain the deadly stakes AIDs had and how little people realised how vulnerable they were. How grief and anger can bottle up inside of them and how there was no help from the politicians at that time. Suddenly everybody was aware of the lack of education in basic things like finances and sexual practices and how harmful that was as it let people be open to exploitation.

Watson (2005) states that the term "queer theory" was first introduced by Teresa de Lauretis (1991) in an article called *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities*. It was created to open a conversation about LGBTQ+ problems. Queer theory connected with other fields,

¹ „výmysl, jako snaha zrušit „přirozené“ rozdíly mezi muži a ženami či jako aktivita zatrpklých, šeredných feministek.“ (Valdřová, Knotková-Čapková, Pačlíková 2010, 10) – the original version

mainly with gender studies where Judith Butler (1990) and their² *Gender Trouble* introduced gender and heterosexuality being performative and repetitive as it is expressed via gestures, movements, and clothing (Watson 2005, 72).

But what is queer theory? Berlant and Warner (1995, 344) state that “queer theory is not the theory of anything in particular, and has no precise bibliographic shape.” Which simply means that queer theory can talk about anything we consider falling under the umbrella term ‘queer’. Watson (2005, 69) gives more specific definition to the question as queer theory is “emerging directly out of liberal ideas of equality, building on feminist and other liberatory political movements, that pursued questions of identity categories and how power is distributed among and between them”. But this definition is still quite broad.

Let us have a look at queer theory from a different angle and ask: what is queer? “Once the term ‘queer’ was, at best, slang for homosexual, at worst, a term of homophobic abuse,” (Jagose 1996, 1). It is very clear that the term is still, to this day, evolving. Jagose (1996) goes on to say that ‘queer’ is an umbrella term or a “rhetorical model which has developed out of more traditional lesbian and gay studies” (1996, 1). While many would agree that moving on from the old definition of this term is a great step forwards, plenty of experts, Jagose mentions, such as Halperin (1995), Butler (1994) and Berlant and Warner (1995), in queer studies agree that giving the term a firm definition would be anything but beneficial. The term is not solidified yet and it gives people the freedom to use it for their benefits when needed. Jagose also plays with the idea that ‘queer’ challenges heterosexuality as a ‘natural’ sexuality. And that is done mainly through focusing on lesbian and gay subjects, but also on inclusivity of clothes, gender ambiguity and other subjects focusing on the definition of ‘male and female’ gender role in our society.

Therefore ‘queer’ and ‘queer theory’ are simply very broad terms which cover many topics as long as the author considers their topic to be queer.

1.2. Non-binary Identities

Who are non-binary people? To answer this question, we need to understand all of the definitions across different terms people may identify as.

“Cisgender is a description for a person whose gender identity, gender expression, and biological sex align. If someone does not identify as a man, but expresses themselves as masculine and biologically male, then the individual is non-cisgender” (Darr and Kibbey 2016, 75). They then explain that the term genderqueer can have two meanings: description of a person who does not fall into the gender binary or a person that does not identify as a man nor a woman or identifies as both. “Genderqueer is different from non-binary; genderqueer covers identity and expression, whereas non-binary refers specifically to identity and not to expression” (Darr and Kibbey 2016, 75). And while transgender is mostly considered an opposite term to cisgender, Darr and Kibbey see them as individuals who “identify as masculine, feminine, or neither masculine nor feminine” (2016, 75). And because of all this, they conclude that transgender and non-binary individuals are not a part of the binary and thus they need gender-neutral language and gender-neutral pronouns to be

² Every author cited in this thesis will not be gendered and thus will be referred to with the *they/them* pronouns.

able to express themselves appropriately. Others define non-binarity as an umbrella term for most of the other categories. “Non-binary gender identities are those that are not exclusively male or female. Non-binary people can identify as being a combination of male and female, shifting between male and female, or off the male-female continuum altogether. Non-binarity is an umbrella term and can also be used as a discrete identity term; other terms include genderqueer, genderfluid, and bigender” (McNabb 2018, 15).

In conclusion we can see that the term non-binary is not set in place with a certain meaning. It can cover only a part of the LGBTQ+ community but also a wide part of it. The definition is therefore given the meaning by the one who utters it. But what we can conclude is that we talk about people who are outside of the binary gender spectrum.

According to McNabb exposure to non-binary people has become more common as they are more visible around the world as gender nonconforming spaces are gaining popularity as popular media shows more non-binary friendly content where classical gender roles are being omitted. This gives people the opportunity to fight for their rights which could potentially lead to “new gender markers on identity documents, gender-neutral restrooms access, trans-competent health care, and hate crimes and discrimination legislation,” (McNabb 2018, 15). But this does not mean that non-binarity is a new thing, the opposite is true. Non-binary people have been recognized by many cultures for centuries. What McNabb (2018) calls the ‘Anglo-European gender system’ does not and did not allow the thought of a third gender as it is strictly binary. They give an excellent example: the Two-Spirit people of Native American tribes who use this term for natives who are gender or sex diverse who have been around for centuries. There are other examples from other cultures, but this would be the best known one.

Why is exposure so needed when they have been around for centuries then? Having been around and being accepted by the rigid gender system are two different things. As mentioned above, people still have to fight for the basic rights to be recognised or even to have access to a restroom where they do not feel uncomfortable or threatened. Discrimination, bullying, and violence against not only the non-binary community but the whole LGBTQ+ community is still very prominent even though official data and statistics are patchy and scarce according to Free&Equal United Nations for LGBTI Equality(2017). But they clearly state that LGBTQ+ community faces not only bullying (psychological and physical) but also assaults, torture, kidnapping, targeted killings, and sexual assaults called “corrective” or “punitive” rape. These acts of violence are dangerous for all people who might not look the way other people expect them to. Free&Equal United Nations for LGBTI Equality (2017) state: “Attacks on people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity are often driven by a desire to punish those seen as defying gender norms and are considered a form of gender-based violence. You do not need to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex to be attacked: the mere perception of homosexuality or of transgender identity is enough to put people at risk.” The exposure of the whole LGBTQ+ community will lead to safer lives of all as people can educate themselves and see that the community does not pose a threat.

1.2.1. Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

Sexuality is a well-known term that most people understand as a person fitting into the homosexual or strait category but Milani (2016) states that sexuality is an umbrella term for

both sexual identity as well as eroticism as it is “understood in two main senses: (1) as a specific aspect of the human biology make up...; (2) as erotic and/or procreative desires and practices, which may build upon, but are not reducible to, those bodily features” (Milani 2016, 403).

And under the umbrella term fall two abstract categories: gender and sex. We are expected to act on the expectations these two categories put us into. The expectations were changing throughout history but “at present, clothing, body positioning, and hairstyle can code for gender categories, while chromosomes, genitalia, and hormones can code for sex categories” (Darr, Kibbey 2016, 73).

Gender can be defined by the labels ‘man and woman’. It is expressed through language but also by the social criteria of being under one of those labels. Saying that gender can be defined only by these two labels is not true as there are other categories which do not belong under the umbrella terms man or woman. Namely genderqueer, nonbinary, and transgender. These individuals may not fall into the assigned gender role as they might not follow the traditionally masculine or feminine social rules.

On the other hand, sex may be defined by the individual’s biological characteristics such as genitalia and hormones. Darr and Kibbey explain that even though this might seem very straight forward, it is actually not as there are people who identify as intersex and “intersex refers to the sex of an individual who has both feminine and masculine biological characteristics or has ambiguous genitalia at birth. These ambiguities are often surgically altered by doctors shortly after birth in order to facilitate an individual’s entrance into society as a fully functional male or female” (Darr, Kibbey 2016, 73).

It may seem that a person’s gender is predetermined by their sex assigned to them at birth. But as mentioned above, these categories are not linked together as strongly as one might think. When an individual does not follow their socially presumed gender they are automatically going against “gender roles, or the norms that are associated with a specific gender category” (Darr, Kibbey 2016, 73). But if a person, who identifies as an individual with a gender opposing to the sex they have been assigned at birth, is forced to act as an individual identifying as the sex they have been assigned at birth, they will not live a happy and fulfilled life. That has been proven by psychologist John Money who carried out an experiment on David Reimer. Money believed that “gender is solely an effect of enculturation and, as such, it’s radically mutable and alterable” (Sullivan 2015, 19). The experiment was the opposite of the above-mentioned problem; Reimer was born a male in 1965 and raised as a female since 1967 when a botched circumcision in 1966 destroyed his genitals and thus his parents allowed their son to undergo a sex reassignment. Renamed Brenda, David lived his life as a female but was perceived as ‘tomboyish’ as Morland (2015) states. In 1979 it was found that David was very unhappy as a girl and later the parents have told him the truth. Then he lived identifying as a male until he decided to end his life in 2004. Morland (2015) states that they do not perceive David’s life as a tragedy because they do not agree with the narrative of ‘being lied to causes harm’; they see the whole experiment as a teaching moment about “ethical and scientific shortcomings in Money’s work,” (2015, 90) as it has proved that gender cannot be chosen.

1.3. Queer Translation

Levý states that “translating is a DECISION PROCESS: a series of certain number of consecutive situations - moves, as in a game - situations imposing on the translators the necessity of choosing among a certain (and very often exactly definable) number of alternatives,” (Levý 2000, 148) which gives us an idea of the possible paths a translator can take when thinking about translating a new thing in a language.

What is the correlation between this statement and queer translation? When it comes to the term queer, we do not often know what it represents as its definition is still developing, but we can assume it has something to do with the LGBTQ+ community. Spurlin states that “queer is not simply about sexual rights in the same way that translation is not simply about seeking equivalences in one language from another, and the critical conjunction of translation and queer studies offers broadened opportunities for civic engagement and citizenship in a transnational world, as well as an important tool for knowledge production about sexual difference and for the decolonisation of desire” (2014, 181). Therefore, a translator goes through an immense decision process when it comes to gender and identity in gender-based languages while translating queer literature. The possibilities come to a very small number as the language does not bend to gender-neutral terms most of the time. And even as the cultural approach towards gender is generally more lenient and people are more willing to experiment with language, we still get a certain amount of disagreement on this type of inclusivity. This is why queer translation is so important. It combines multiple categories of LGBTQ+ fields such as queer theory and queer studies and it helps to educate people around the world as it creates sources for them to get information from.

Speaking on a very basic level, translation is not only a decision process but also a space between two cultures. De Toro (2009) states that the act of translation always creates modifications to the original text rather than repeating the thought in another language. Spurlin (2014) shows this on an example from Lesotho where women create sexual relationships with other women while being married and call their same sex partners *motsoalle*. This term was, according to Spurlin (2014, 173), translated by Limakatso Kendall as a ‘very special friend’ which does not cover the depth of the said relationship and thus the meaning has been lost to translation. “These slippages, these silences, these spaces of indeterminacy, these irreducible reminders in working across languages are the very spaces where desire resides, and they also instantiate translation as a queer praxis” (Spurlin 2014, 173). Translators hold power over the modifications to the original text. They have the power to erase parts of a character’s or even author’s identity because of their own beliefs or culture as Wehle (2020) states. They support this argument with the mention of Allen Ginsberg’s part of identity being erased by Rybowski in their translation. But the opposite is also true. When it comes to identity the translator is also able to embrace it partially or fully. Whether that is a moral decision is truly up to debate.

This poses a question: will we ever find an adequate translation?

1.3.1. Adequate Translation

“The translator’s task is to find the intention toward the language into which the work is to be translated, on the basis of which an echo of the original is awakened in it” (Walter 2012,

79). Translation does not face only the languages but also other disciplines and has to consider different cultures that the text is translated into. Finding the balance of this is therefore very difficult. Walter states that “fidelity in translating the individual word can almost never fully render the sense it has in the original...” (Walter 2012, 80). They talk about poetry in this case, but the statement can be taken and used on the translation as a whole. Mainly when it comes to words that express gender or a relationship specific to a certain culture that is not known in the other cultures. Spivak (2010) states translation is a form of social activism. They also state that the untranslatable is not something that one is unable to translate, “but something one never stops (not) translating” (Spivak 2010, 38). This space between languages “is a *queer* space, one that challenges any normative idea of straightforward translatability” (Spurlin 2014, 177). A translator is therefore expected to be ready to face this space with an enormous ability to grasp the original idea. They are also expected to try and find the word that renders the original as closely as possible. Yet not everybody agrees with Spivak’s idea of queer and untranslatable being connected. According to Kedem (2019) the term queer and untranslatability do not support each other once they become thinkable.

Spivak (2012) adds to the conversation that accessibility of the text is also important. They state that making a text accessible to a reader must be first preceded by writing the text “for the person who wrote it” (Spivak 2012, 322) meaning that translator has to focus on the author’s meaning first. They also state that making anything accessible depends on the way a person sees language as only transferring content is not enough. First step to accessibility is to learn the mother tongue of the other person we want to present the translated text to as we will be able to see the reality they perceive through their language knowledge. “In other words, if you are interested in talking about the other, and/or in making a claim to be the other, it is crucial to learn other languages” (Spivak 2012, 322).

It is pretty clear that perfect translation is not possible. After all, translators are only people. And people have their beliefs, cultural background, education, and ability to understand complex thoughts on very different levels. And making sure every task the translator has is fulfilled is exceptionally difficult. But adequate translation is a reachable goal for any translator who is willing to listen and focus on the author as well as the future readers.

2. Grammatical Gender

2.1. English Pronouns

Whenever we hear a debate about gender-neutral language we come across pronouns. Understanding what those are is a crucial part of this thesis because when we are talking about gender-neutral language in English we mostly refer to the said pronouns as they are one of the most gender influenced part of speech of English language. We can place them into a category called ‘function words’ (pronouns, articles, prepositions...) which “serve quieter, supporting roles – connecting, shaping and organising the content words.” (Pennebaker 2011, 44). These words do not have much meaning by themselves “for their meaning in itself is general and undetermined; their interpretation therefore depends to unusual extent on what information is supplied by context” (Quirk 1985, 335). Pronouns generally “refer directly to entities in the world” (Conrod 2020, 6) which is presented in example (1) where *she* directly refers (acts as a placeholder) to ‘Mary’.

(1) Mary went to the store. She_{FEM} should be back in an hour.

Quirk also points out that “some pronouns have morphological characteristic that nouns do not have:

- (a) CASE: There is a contrast between subjective and objective cases: *I/me, she/her, who/whom* etc
- (b) PERSON: there is a contrast between 1st, 2nd, and 3rd persons: *I/you/she*, etc
- (c) GENDER: there are overt grammatical contrasts between (i) personal and nonpersonal gender; and between (ii) masculine and feminine gender: *he/she/it*
- (d) NUMBER: there are morphologically unrelated number forms, as in *I/we, he/they*, as opposed to the typical regular formation of noun plurals: *girl/girls*”

(Quirk 1985, 335)

These characteristics are recognised mostly in personal pronouns “which may be regarded, by reason of their frequency and their grammatical characteristics, as the most important and central class of pronouns” (Quirk 1985, 335-336) (table (7)).

In case of English, pronouns have three case forms (6), sometimes four case forms (4), and nouns have two case forms: common (2) and Saxon genitive (3) case.

(2) Mary has a book.

(3) That is Mary’s book.

Pronouns also carry distinctions of person and Quirk (1985) divides them like this:

1st person pronouns: the pronoun refers to the speaker(s)/writer(s) of the message.

(4) *I, me, my, mine, myself*
we, us, our, ours, ourselves

2nd person pronouns: the pronoun refers to the addressee(s) but not the speaker(s)/writer(s).

(5) *you, your, yours, yourself, yourselves*

And 3rd person pronouns: the pronoun refers to a third party who is not a part of the situation where the utterance was uttered.

(6) *he, him, his, himself*
she, her, hers, herself
it, its, itself
they, them, their, theirs, themselves

(Quirk 1985, 339-340)

Pronouns are heavily gendered when in 3rd person singular as is shown in figure 1. And Quirk states that “the choice between personal and nonpersonal gender is determined primarily by whether the reference is to a ‘person’, *i.e.* to a being felt to possess characteristics associated with a member of the human race” (1985, 342). They also state that there is no “sex-neutral 3rd person singular pronoun” (1985, 42). But explains the informal use of plural *they* being an option how to tackle this missing piece of expression. But the future of gender-neutral language was not very clear at the time of releasing their book *A Comprehensive grammar of the English language*. But they make a point to mention the feminist movement affords to make the sexual bias problems of language known.

(7) Table central subclass of pronouns

1.	CENTRAL	a. personal		<i>I/me, we/us...</i>
		b. reflexive		<i>myself, ourselves...</i>
		c. possessive	i. determinative	<i>my, yours, his, hers...</i>
			ii. independent	<i>mine, yours, his, hers...</i>

(Quirk 1985, 345)

2.2. Gender-Neutral Language

Language is created by combining vocal sounds, gestures, symbols, and certain rules that make a system for us to communicate and cooperate together. Communication is done by referring to the world around us. And according to Butler (2013) who built their theory of performativity on J. L. Austin's speech act theory, words refer to reality as well as play a part in the social world where a person exists. And Conrod (2020, 5) builds on this by saying: "the speech acts that we use to describe, differentiate, claim, and identify bodies are part of the social practice of how we create sexed categories and, at another level of abstraction, gendered subjects. Language is a social practice, so language is how we come to social consensus about categories and membership therein."

Spivak states that in their view "language may be one of many elements that allow us to make sense of things, of ourselves... Making sense of ourselves is what produces identity" (Spivak 2012, 312). Meaning, we can express our gender and quickly fall into one gender role with one word. But when one does not fall into the gender stereotypes, the failure to match the person's pronouns to them is blamed on them and not on the system we are using to distinguish gender in language, notes Wayne (2005). A person who does not follow the gender stereotype is then considered a renegade. Yet, the only thing they do is use language means we already use on a daily basis to their advantage while adding the omission of gendered words and using genderless expressions instead.

Why bother with gender-neutral language when we live in a system which is very keen to keep the two-gender system in place? As mentioned above, language is what produces identity. Gender-neutral language is a means to include anybody into the society and using it can be traced far back into history. Anne Curzan (2003) found out that singular *they* had been in use as far as in the 15th century. Singular *they* had been replaced by *he* which was deemed sufficient to express neutrality. Ann Bodine (1975) adds that the replacement happened after many academics decided to speak against the use of singular *they*. One of the first mentions of this is in Wilson's work from 1553 where they speak against not using the 'natural' order of male and female in society. They refer to males as the 'worthier' gender. Bodine (1975) explains that throughout the 17th and early 18th centuries English grammar did not go through a lot of changes and therefore singular *they* had been used alongside other singular pronouns. This all changed when Murray presented their work claiming that all pronouns must follow the gender, number, and person of nouns they refer to and thus attacking the singular *they* in 1795. Bodine continues to explain that other authors later expanded on Murray's work which leads to the Act of Parliament in 1850 which legally replaced singular *they* with *he*. The debate was brought out again in the 20th and 21st century when "feminist scholars and linguists had framed the (prescribed-for) use of generic *he* as a reflection of (perhaps unconscious) sexism" (Conrod 2020, 3).

Mackay (1980) decided to study 108 sources by different authors, with the median date being 1971, for the use of neutral language. The main focus were the uses of prescriptive *he*, generic use of *she*, *it*, combination of *he or she* with preferred *he*, and combination of *she or he* with preferred use of *she*, and the singular *they*. Their findings gave two main positive outcomes: neutrality and naturalness. They state that "singular *they* was neutral with regard to sex for all antecedents in the corpus" (Mackay 1980, 355). Prescriptive *he*, on the other

hand, was found to refer to predominantly male antecedents. They and other two linguists (Langendoen 1970, Valian 1977) found out that people naturally prefer singular *they* when it comes to forming questions or indefinite sentences. Conrod (2020, 80) states “singular *they* has been a part of the English language for over 600 years, while generic *he* has only been prescribed for 200 years.” This could explain the nature of people using singular *they* more automatically as it developed with English and covers the need for a neutral gender according to them.

Mackay (1980) then covers the negative characteristics they have found while studying the sources: ambiguity (covert, overt, partial), conceptual availability, connotations, functional problems, and problem referents. Their main concern seems to be the possible misunderstanding to what or whom the speaker is referring to as the singular *they* can be very easily mistaken for plural *they*. They also explain that in certain cases the singular *they* works the same as the prescriptive *he* as people interpret it as referring to a person of male gender as well as the problem of function where singular *they* sometimes does not work and a sex-indefinite pronoun is needed to not confuse the addressee. They explain it by using (8) as an example.

(8) I hear that Mary’s doctor just broke their leg.

(Mackay 1980, 358)

Referring to *God* and *man* can also be challenging as these two are both very frequent in English. Lastly, they point out the overall vagueness of singular *they* which could lead to easy misunderstanding of the number people or things the sentence is referring to.

2.2.1. ‘He’

We might assume “...that *he* is physically male, presents as masculine, and is the natural heterosexual counterpart to *she*” (Wayne 2005, 85). That is simply not true if we look at it through linguistics point of view. As mentioned before the pronoun *he* is seen as an equivalent to singular *them* and therefore can be used as a sufficient replacement for neutral expressions. Wayne (2005) explains this by using a magnet metaphor where *he* covers the positive as well as the neutral part of the magnet while *she* is only on the negative part of the magnet, simply explaining that *he* is more powerful in language which became more obvious in the 18th century when the use for generic *he* was first suggested. Conrod (2020) explains that there were multiple reasons for this decision starting from hierarchy of the sexes to simply stating that the previous neutral language is not fitted for formal writing.

2.2.2. English Gender-Neutral Language

English gives an option to anybody to express themselves in a way they want as the language does not have to stick to a strictly two-gender language system. It also gives the option to opt out of using gender altogether when not sure what the addressee’s gender is. Both is done mainly by the use of neutral pronouns, singular *they* as mentioned above. Wehle (2020) states that English integrated the neutral language successfully as American Dialect Society voted the singular *they* as the word of the year in 2015. Singular *they* is not the only option

an English-speaking person can choose to refer to a person. Neo-pronouns are a trend that comes with new ways to refer to a person without using gendered pronouns. These are covered more closely in chapter 2.2.5. What we need to know now is that these were not very popular after their introduction and “none have seemed to work their way into mainstream English” (Darr and Kibbey 2016, 75).

Even though English can create gendered utterances, (9) and (10), there are possibilities to avoid gendered expressions and utter the same utterance while avoiding gender altogether (11).

(9) He_{MASC} works at the restaurant as a waiter_{MASC}.

(10) She_{FEM} works at the restaurant as a waitress_{FEM}.

(11) They_{NEUT} work at the restaurant as a server_{NEUT}.

All three utterances carry the same meaning, yet they are understood differently. Example (11) shows the use of a singular *they* as well as genderless expression of a gender-based word. But it can also be conceived as a plural *they* referring to the two examples above if a speaker uses all of the examples in the same context. Examples (9) and (10) show singular person, gender and gender confirming expressions.

2.2.3. Czech Gender-Neutral Language

“Beauviou notes that the world is represented through men, both through their perspective and through their self-identification with the world” (Wayne 2005, 86). Czech language is a good example of this statement as it is a heavily gendered language which favours male gender over any other. This can be seen in many naturally gender-neutral perceived words like *rodič* (*parent*) or *partner* which still carry the grammatical masculine gender. The academic debate has been in circulation since the 1990s as Valdová wrote her first texts on gender-fair language in 1996 and 1997 and according to Kolek (2019a) the first Czech guidebook for neutral language was released by Valdová in 2010 but it was “rejected by part of the Bohemian Studies community” (Kolek 2019a, 303).

Czech language depends, just like English, on three grammatical genders: masculine, feminine and neuter. Having the possibility of a neuter gender seems like a straightforward solution to non-binarity in Czech but it is not. Czech cannot achieve neutrality through neuter as the “neuter pronoun *ono* suffers a similar fate to the neuter adjective and its use for human beings seems strange” (Wehle 2020, 36). Wehle (2020) explains Czech words work mostly on female/male gender binarity as it derives words from other words to create gendered pairs. And even when a gender-neutral option is available we are forced to put it into an agreement when used in a sentence and thus the neutrality of the said word is lost.

English verbs are not affected by gender. They can carry progressive aspect with the *-ing* suffix, third person agreement with the *-s* suffix, and past tense with *-ed* suffix. The conjugation of Czech verbs is affected by gender in the past tense to the degree where we cannot omit the gender unless we want to use archaic Czech language and even that is not gender neutral.

(12) <i>Dodělal</i> finished _{PAST, MASC} 'He finished his homework.'	<i>svůj</i> his _{NEUT}	<i>úkol.</i> homework
(13) <i>Dodělala</i> Finished _{PAST, FEM} 'She finished her homework.'	<i>svůj</i> her _{NEUT}	<i>úkol.</i> homework
(14) <i>Dodělali</i> Finished _{PAST, PLUR, MASC} 'They finished their homework.'	<i>svůj</i> their _{NEUT}	<i>úkol.</i> homework.

As seen in (12) and (13), Czech verbs carry the gender in the sentence as Czech pro-drop language and subjects do not have to be over. Czech *onikání*, in (14), would be a direct translation of singular *they*. But it is considered an archaic expression of honorifics which means that it is not a neutral expression and using it can lead to unintended expression of superiority when used as a gender-neutral language variation. It also carries gender as the suffix *-i* lets the reader know we are talking about a group of which at least one male is a part of.

Czech language may not be gender-neutral yet but it is open to gender-fair language which means creating pairs of words that have both feminine and masculine version. But Kolek points out that “forming gender-inflected forms may lead to polysemy (i.e., *myčka* (*dishwasher*) may describe a machine or an occupation, *občanka* (*identity card*) may refer to a personal document or a gender-inflected form of the word *občan* (*citizen*)). In addition to this, certain forms are not yet consistently used (e.g., *chirurgyně* (*surgeon_{FEM}*) (Kolek 2019a, 304). They also discuss other possible ways of gender-fair language like using brackets and slashes or using both forms of the said word with the feminine gender being put first (*učitel_{MASC}*/*ka_{FEM}*), *učitel_{MASC}*/*ka_{FEM}*, *učitelky_{PLUR, FEM}* a *učitelé_{PLUR, MASC}*). But they object that using brackets in Czech language indicates less important information and thus may lead to the conclusion of women being less than men. Another possible expression of gender-fair language, they present, is the use of adjectives/participles (*vyučující_{NEUT}*, *studující_{NEUT}*) but that is not possible with every word and thus it is quite limited (*docent_{MASC}*/*ka_{FEM}* - **docentující_{NEUT}*). Adding to the limit Kolek (2019a) presented, Czech grammar “also requires the adjectives, or the past participles in agreement with the particular expression, to be in the masculine form (e.g., *úspěšní_{MASC}* *studující_{NEUT}* *získali_{MASC}*)” (Kolek 2019a, 305). Kolek (2019a) ends their discussion with pointing to the reality of different text types as these adjustments of speech are not suitable for every text and advises to use a combination of the adjustments as to not seem odd.

2.2.4. Gender-Neutral Names

Interesting addition to the debate on gender-neutral language and nonbinary exposure is the widely accepted trend of gender-neutral names in English-speaking countries. That poses the question whether we are not accepting the gender-neutral pronouns because they are theoretically new to the language or just because we cannot accept the idea of people not following the gender norms put on us by the society. Wayne (2004) states that many English-speaking parents opt to give their child a gender-neutral name to avoid possible

discrimination in the future as it is beneficial to not disclose the child's gender in the rigid two-gendered social system.

2.2.5. Spivak Pronouns

It was only a matter of time before somebody came up with gender-neutral pronouns that were not a part of the English language before. Not everybody feels like *they/them* pronouns express their identity fully.

Darr and Kibbey (2016) talk about gender-neutral pronouns in detail. Ey³ claim that even though many gender-neutral pronouns were introduced to the public, none have become a part of the mainstream English. That is underlined by the results of my questionnaire where many of the respondents had no idea what Spivak pronouns were and therefore had no idea how to work with them in Czech.

Darr and Kibbey (2016) go over other versions of gender-neutral pronouns throughout the history mentioning first gender-neutral pronouns *zie* and *hir*, pronouns derived from gendered pronouns using 'neutral' as prefix *ne/nem/nir/nirs/nemself*. Ey also show less successful gender-neutral pronouns: *ve/ver/vis/vis/verself* for clear gender derivation in *ver/vis* and *vers/vis* and *xe/xem/xyr/xyrs/xemself* which are hard to pronounce as the change is very unusual. The second most used system is *ze/zir/zirs/zirself* where *ze* is derived from the first gender neutral pronouns mentioned above. We can confidently state that the Spivak pronouns are the most known and common version of gender-neutral pronouns used in English. They were first used by the mathematician Michael Spivak in 1986 in his book *The Joy of Tex*. Hocko (2016) states that Spivak pronouns are easy to learn and understand since they come from the known form of *they* and *them* by dropping the *th-* (*ey/em/eir/eirs/eirself*). Ey thus stands for *they* (15), *em* stands for *them* (16) and *eir* for *their* (17). These examples show a singular use of these pronouns when referring to an unknown person or a person identifying as a non-binary.

(15) What are *ey*_{SING} doing?

What are they doing?

(16) Go ask *em*_{SING}.

Go ask them.

(17) It's *eir*_{SING} choice.

It's their choice.

But Darr and Kibbey (2016) point out that even though that Spivak pronouns avoid gendering, they do not follow the morphological rules of English language, as in the subject-verb agreement (18) when a person might not be sure whether to use the plural when referring to a singular person with every pronoun. It may also lead to perceiving the spoken text as informal as some English speakers tend to omit the first letter of them (19). Ey show these on examples (2016, 75) below:

³ This sub-chapter uses Spivak pronouns (*ey/em/eir/eirs/eirself*) instead of the singular *they*.

- (18) *Ey_{SING} wants to be eirself_{SING}.
 Ey_{SING/PLUR} want to be eirselves_{PLUR}.
 (19) ‘em’ – them
 ‘im’ – him

2.3. Czech Inflection

The function of pronouns in Czech is the same as in English. They are used to refer to the world around us and we use them as placeholders for nouns. The main difference is that Czech works with seven case forms instead of two (three) case forms. A pronoun is also not the main gender holder in Czech. As seen in Table (20), Czech has seven cases of which 6 uses pronouns when used in 3rd person, other use all seven cases (21). The forms differ according to the gender and case they are used in. And comparing it to the table (22) we can clearly see the gender variations of pronouns in English and Czech.

(20) Table of 3rd person singular and plural pronoun case forms in Czech language

	masculine	feminine	neuter
Sing. 1.	<i>on</i>	<i>ona</i>	<i>ono</i>
2.	<i>jeho ho něho něj jej</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jeho ho</i>
3.	<i>jemu mu</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jemu mu</i>
4.	<i>jej, jeho ho, oň...</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>je (o ně)</i>
6.	<i>něm</i>	<i>ní</i>	<i>něm</i>
7.	<i>jím</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jím</i>
Plur. 1.	<i>oni (živ.) ony (neživ.)</i>	<i>ony</i>	<i>ona</i>
2.	<i>jich jejich</i>		
3.	<i>jím</i>		
4.	<i>je</i>		
6.	<i>nich</i>		
7.	<i>jimi</i>		

(Kubeková 2011, 10)

(21) Table of 1st and 2nd person singular and plural pronoun case forms in Czech language

	1 st person		2 nd person	
	Sing.	Plur.	Sing.	Plur.
1.	<i>já</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>ty</i>	<i>vy</i>
2.	<i>mě, mně</i>	<i>nás</i>	<i>tě, tebe</i>	<i>vás</i>
3.	<i>mi, mně</i>	<i>nám</i>	<i>ti, tobě</i>	<i>vám</i>
4.	<i>mě, mne</i>	<i>nás</i>	<i>tě, tebe</i>	<i>vás</i>
5.	<i>-</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>ty</i>	<i>vy</i>

6.	mně	nás	tobě	vás
7.	mnou	námi	tebou	vámi

(Internet Language Reference Book 2008-2022)

(22) Table of gender distinctions in 3rd person singular pronouns

	masculine	he	him	his	himself
Personal gender	feminine	she	her	her hers	herself
Nonpersonal gender		it		its	itself

(Quirk 1985, 341)

2.3.1. Past Tense

One of the most prominent parts of Czech grammar is past tense. Past tense is created using the gender agreement of a subject of an utterance and the verb *být* (*be*) and the past form of a verb. There are six possible forms – three singular and three plural.

(23) *dělal-Ø/-a/-o jsem, dělal-Ø/-a/-o jsi, dělal-Ø/-a/-o*
dělal-i/-y/-a jsme, dělal-i/-y/-a jste, dělal-i/-y/-a

(Karlík and Migdalski, 2017)

Gender-neutral language proves to be quite difficult to achieve when we have to work around the gender agreement in the past tense which we talked about in 2.1.3. chapter. Past singular

(23) for male presenting people has no suffix or a null suffix without any over realisation, for female presenting people it ends with the *-a* suffix and when it comes to neuter it ends with the *-o* suffix. Plural past for male presenting people ends with the suffix *-i*, for female presenting people it ends with the *-y* suffix and neuter ends with the *-a* suffix. The *-i* suffix in plural also marks neutrality – when we talk about a group consisting both of male and female, we use the *-i* as there is a presence of a male and Czech considers the male gender as the default gender. The *-y* suffix is used only when the writer is sure there is no male in a group they are writing about. This is the reason why literal translation of *they* for English to Czech does not work as there are three possibilities of translation and each expresses a gender.

2.3.2. Possible Ways to Tackle Non-binarity in Czech Language

Kolek says that “it is possible to assume... that the demand for the queer-oriented publications will rise” (2019b, 120). This demand can be already seen – not only from the non-binary and transgender Czech population – but also from other communities of the LGBTQ+ community as well as from LGBTQ+ literature from abroad.

Wehle (2020), whose work was an inspiration to this thesis, works with nine different translation strategies which they present in their thesis and three (I., IV., IX.) of them are presented to respondents in their questionnaire.

- I. Using the gender a character was assigned at birth (A)
- II. Bypassing gendered phrases (A)
- III. Using the opposite of the gender a character was assigned at birth (M)
- IV. Using the neuter grammatical gender (M)
- V. Switching between feminine and masculine gender (M)
- VI. Using plural instead of singular + Using third person plural (M)
- VII. Using the opposite grammatical gender for a gendered noun, changing its structure (R)
- VIII. Using new grammatical structures and pronouns (R)
- IX. Use of fonts and other graphic adjustments of gendered expressions (R)

(Wehle 2020, 56)

They divided these strategies into three categories: acceptance (A), resistance (R) and in-between (M). They explain that strategies in acceptance are those which “are in compliance with the well-established language and social norms of the target culture,” (Wehle 2020, 55) whereas resistance strategies are those which “challenge the well-established language and social norms of the target culture for the purpose of setting a change into motion” (Wehle 2020, 55).

Acceptance strategies are mostly the least problematic when it comes to grammar and the general public. Wehle (2020) details how every strategy works: I. strategy does not transfer the non-binarity into text as the identity of the author/character is lost in translation. II. strategy can be gender neutral as Czech allows to bypass gender, but it does not bring up the non-binary identity of the author/characters. It is also not reader friendly as the flow of text is not natural.

Middle strategies are the grey area where the general public can observe some degree of new addition to language while still following the social norms to a certain degree. III. strategy seems daring to a certain point, but it just uses the other gender thus completely erasing non-binary identity if an author/character expresses it. But it can sufficiently carry the transgender identity. IV. strategy can express the non-binary identity, but neuter gender expresses a certain degree of degradation as neuter is mainly used for inanimate objects, children, and baby animals. V. strategy disrupts the binarity in a grammatically possible way, but the changing of gender could be potentially confusing for the addressee. VI. strategy follows the English norm of gender-neutral language but the problem with this strategy is consistency as forming past does not omit the gender in Czech as mentioned above.

Resistance strategies are more radical in the way they break the social expectations. VII. strategy is inspired by a member of TakyTrans (Czech activist group that focuses on non-binary people in the Czech Republic) who uses it in the day-to-day life. It uses the means of language that Czech already has but it “would be well noticeable in the text. (Wehle 2020, 74). VIII. strategy expresses the non-binarity most accurately as it is detached from the

typical structure. That, however, can be compromising to the reader as it is highly unusual. And lastly, IX. strategy is considered, according to Wehle 2020, the most experimental. Any graphic adjustment lets the reader know that there is a change in the perception of a character, and it can be very effective, but the adjustments can be very intrusive and disrupt the flow of the text.

3. Questionnaire

This questionnaire aimed to compare the approach of two groups of young Czech people to non-binary language in translation. The aimed age group were people between fifteen and twenty-five years old as they grew up with the internet and thus might be more aware of non-binary identity and LGBTQ+ community as a whole. The aimed size of the sample was sixty people, who would be divided into two equal groups: thirty people who identify as the gender they were born with and thirty people who identify under the non-binary umbrella term. Both groups were presented with the same set of two texts and were asked to translate it as they see fit. Those translations were then compared and analysed to see how each group works with non-binary text and how they reflect non-binary identity in the translated texts. They were allowed to use online dictionaries and translators as some respondents might have found it challenging to find the right translation to some of the words. Automatic translation has been discouraged as it would create inconsistent plural translation.

3.1. Prediction for the Questionnaire

The prediction for the questionnaire was quite simple: the non-binary community would tackle the translation with ease as they use the non-binary language on a daily basis and the level of experimentation with the possible variations of gender-neutral language on their part would be quite high. On the other hand, the cisgender community would have to spend more time on the translation as the language is not as familiar to them and thus the answers from them would be more reserved and less experimental. A degree of difficulty was also expected with the Spivak pronouns in text 2 as neopronouns are quite a foreign idea for people in the Czech Republic and thus the respondents would have to come up with their own solution to them.

The expectation for the feedback to the questionnaire was also quite low. We expected a significant number of negative comments and troll responses which did not come true.

3.2. Questions Featured in the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of two main sections: first being the question section and second being the translation section.

The first section contained six mandatory questions and one optional question.

The first question asked about the age of the respondent as the aimed group was highschoolers and university students. This age group was expected to have some knowledge of the non-binary community and a higher level of English than an average Czech citizen. This aim was met as 93.3 % were either 15-18 or 19-25 years old. The remaining 3.8 % of the respondents were younger than 15 and 2.6 % were between the age of 26-30.

The second question asked whether they have heard of the term *non-binary person* or *non-binarity* and the third question specified whether they identify as a nonbinary person. Only one respondent from the 78 answers has not heard about the term *non-binarity* which confirmed the assumption from question number one. 51.3 % of the respondents identify as a non-binary person and 43.6 % do not identify as a non-binary person. The 5.2 % left are

various variations of the answer *other* which were counted as non-binary people for the purposes of this thesis as they are not cisgender and thus fall under the umbrella term genderqueer as explained in chapter 1.2.

The fourth question asked whether they belong to the LGBTQ+ community and this was followed by an optional question which asked them to specify to which part of the community they belong. People who are a part of the LGBTQ+ community can be expected to have a higher interest in LGBTQ+ themes and higher knowledge of each part of the community. And most of the respondents belong to the LGBTQ+ community as 83.3 % answered “yes” and only 15.4 % answered “no”. 1.3 % found the question difficult to answer. The optional question was answered by 64 respondents and the most common responses were: non-binary, bisexual, and queer.

And the last two questions were concerned with the place in the Czech Republic they come from and also where they live now. The respondents come from all over the Czech Republic with most respondents (14.1 %) being from Jihočeský kraj and then Olomoucký kraj and Jihomoravský kraj (both 12.8 %). Most of them now live in Olomoucký kraj (25.6 %) followed by Jihomoravský kraj and Hlavní město Praha (both 12.8 %).

The second section contained two texts in English for the respondents to translate to Czech. Text 1 was from a book titled *Finna* from Nino Cipri (2020). Text 2 was a part of a comic book *Gender Queer: A Memoir* from Maia Kobabe (2019) which contained Spivak pronouns mentioned above.

3.3. The Distribution and the Respondents of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was made public on September 1, 2021. The target number of respondents was reached on November 19, 2021, the questionnaire has been made private on the same day.

The aimed sample of respondents was 60 people; 30 respondents from the cisgender community and 30 from the non-binary community, in order to be able to split the sample into two equal groups of respondents to compare the answers between both groups.

The expectation of having trouble to find enough respondents to fill in this questionnaire was found to be unnecessary as the reached sample was 78 with 41 respondents from non-binary community and 31 from cisgender community and 6 unusable responses. Ending with 62 usable responses as 10 respondents from the non-binary community had to be discarded by using a random number generator to make the number of respondents in each group the same.

The first step in distribution of the questionnaire was to email English teachers from 2 randomly chosen secondary schools from every region in the Czech Republic. The schools were chosen from a list of all secondary schools in the Czech Republic which were expected to have a good level of English among the students. This approach was not met with many responses to the questionnaire. Therefore, the questionnaire had been shared in online Facebook groups of universities where we met the aimed number of cisgender respondents. The TakyTrans group shared the questionnaire on their website after a small adjustment of the questions which helped to spread awareness of it. Most of the respondents from non-

binary community came from personal reaching out on Tumblr which is a website where a big part of the Czech non-binary community can be found. They are very active in LGBTQ+ rights and gender-neutral language. Once a few of them were contacted a domino effect took place and the questionnaire was spread from a person to person.

4. The Outcome of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was received very well among the respondents as out of 78 responses only 6 were unusable. Some of the respondents decided not to translate the second text as it was too challenging which is considered a valid translation strategy as neopronouns are not well known in the Czech Republic yet.

4.1. Text 1

The first text is from a book called *Finna* by Nino Cipri (2020). Nino Cipri is a non-binary author thus the text is an authentic non-binary literature. The book follows a love story of a nonbinary character and a cisgender character who used to be a couple and now they face an adventure together.

The text to translate was quite short. Respondents had to tackle multiple problems where English allows an easy gender-neutral solutions with neutral pronouns which are not possible in Czech.

The text in the questionnaire is the following: “Jules looked panicked. Ava felt bad for them; she’d been prepared for this to happen, and they hadn’t. “It’s just for today,” she added. “Okay,” Jules said. They were visibly pulling themselves back together. “I’m just gonna—” (Cipri 2020, 6).

The respondents received a short explanation of the context of the situation and characters and then had to tackle past tense and pronouns as the story is written through recalling the events in past. Literal translation to plural was the most popular solution in both groups of respondents.

4.1.1. Cisgender Respondents

Cisgender respondents seem to be more willing to experiment with language as the number of literal translations is fifteen. Other strategies are roughly on the same level, some differ only in small changes.

One respondent (24) chose to use *l*a* text adjustment but with neuter neopronoun *one* while other respondent (25) chose to use the same strategy but used plural pronouns.

(24) Zdálo se, že Jules panikaří. Ava se cítila provinile; byla přece připravena, že se to stane, ale *one* ne. "Jen pro dnešek" dodala. "Fajn" odpověděl*a Jules. Viditelně se dával*a dohromady. "Jen se-

(25) Jules vypadal*a vyděšeně. Avě *jich* bylo líto, byla připravená a *oni* ne. “Je to jen pro dnešek,” dodala. “Dobře,” řekl*a Jules. Viditelně se dával*a dohromady. “Já jenom—“

The respondents who decided to go with gender switching also did not use the same strategy per say. Two of them used grammatically plural feminine and masculine gender suffixes *-i* and *-y* while the other one used grammatically singular feminine and masculine gender forms of pronouns and verbs. Others decided to go with one gender and combine it with plural pronouns while some decided to completely ignore the non-binarity of Jules and use masculine gender for them. Two respondents also chose to use grammatical neuter for Jules. The translation below (26) shows how unnatural it seems in Czech.

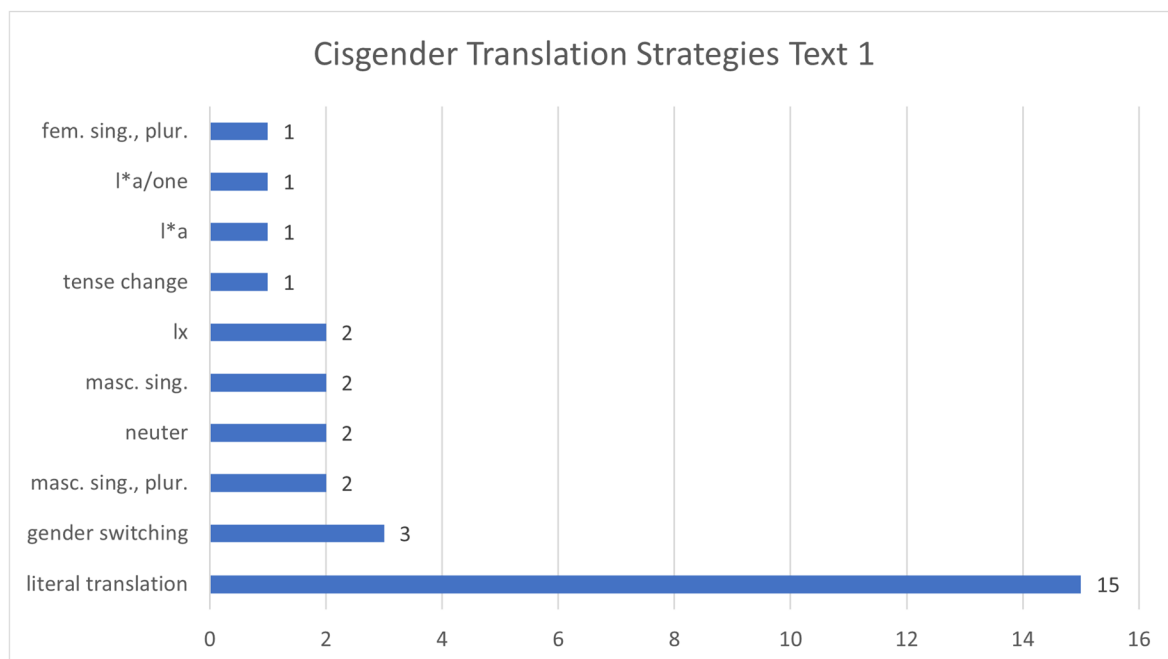
(26) Jules vypada**lo** znepokojeně. Ava se citila spatne, vedela, ze se to stane, ale *ono* ne. "je to jen na dnešek" rekla "okay" *reklo* James. Bylo videt, ze se s tim snazi smirit. "ja jenom.."

Graphic adjustment of text was used with suffixes *-lx* and already mentioned *-l*a*. Interesting translation strategy was a complete change of time from which the story is told. The respondent (27) decided to bring the narrator to present to omit the gendered past tense in Czech and thus create very non-binary friendly text.

(27) Jules *má* v obličejí vyděšený výraz. Avu to mrzí, ona byla jako jediná z nich dvou připravená na to, že se tohle jednou stane. "Je to jenom pro dnešek," doplní. "Tak dobře," *souhlasí* Jules. Bylo znát, že se *snází* dát do pořádku. "Jenom-"

Figure (28) shows the number of strategies used on the translations as well as number of respondents who decided to use the said strategy.

(28) Translation strategies of cisgender respondents for text 1



4.1.2. Non-binary Respondents

Non-binary respondents, on the other hand, seem to be less experimental as they tend to use literal translation more. Using neuter and one gender seems also to be less popular. This could be due to the implications these have as mentioned in chapter 2.2.2. But we can see the higher popularity of graphic adjustment of text as there are six respondents who used *-lx* or *-l*a* suffixes.

One respondent (29) also used the change of narrator's time strategy and omitted the past tense altogether.

(29) Jules *vypadá* vyděšeně. Avě je to líto; ona to čekala, Jules ne. "Je to jenom pro dnešek," *dodává*. "Tak jo," *říká* Jules. *Dává se* dohromady. "Tak já se..."

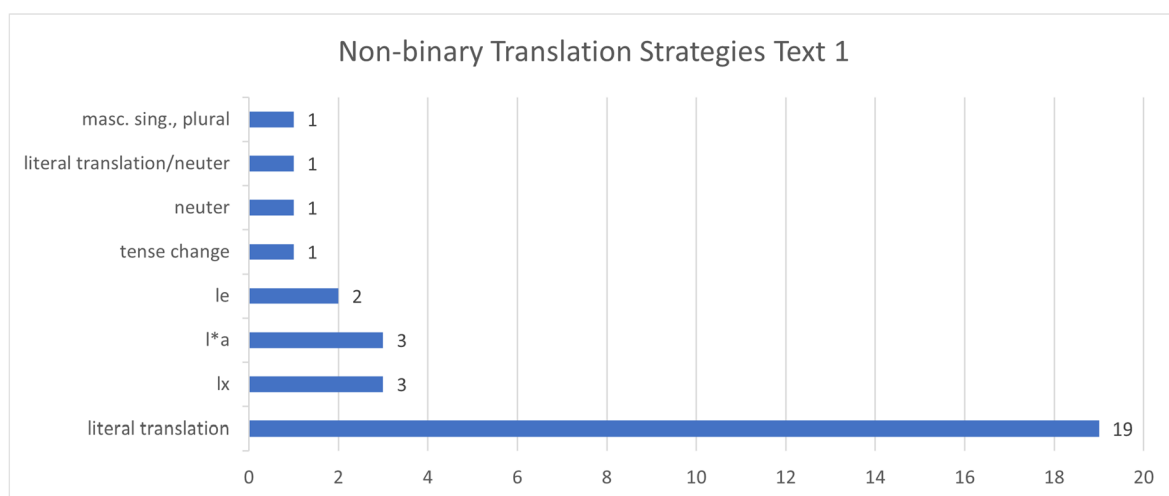
Lastly, two respondents used the suffix *-e* and *-le* which could be considered as a neo-gender in Czech as it is a new suffix which showcases to the reader that there is something special about the gender of the character in the book. One of the respondents (30) used plural and *one* for pronouns whereas the other respondent (31) used *oň/nij* neopronouns.

(30) Jules *vypadale* vyděšeně. Avě *jich* bylo líto; ona byla na tuhle situaci připravená, zatímco *one* nebyle. "Je to jenom dneska," *dodala*. "Dobře," *řekle* Jules. Zcela viditelně se z toho *vzpamatovávale*. "Já jenom-"

(31) Jules *vypadale* znepokojeně. Ava se pro *nij* cítila špatně; ona na tohle byla připravená, *oň* ne. "Jen to jen pro dnešek," *dodala*. "Dobře," Jules *řekle*. Bylo vidět, že se *snažile* uklidnit. "Já prostě jen-"

Figure (32) shows the number of strategies used and underlines the higher tendency for literal translation.

(32) Translation strategies of non-binary respondents for text 1



4.2. Text 2

Text number 2 comes from a comic book *Gender Queer: A Memoir* from Maia Kobabe (2019) which covers the experience of a non-binary person and is therefore an authentic text. The main focus of this text was for the respondents to tackle a more unusual gender-neutral language.

The respondents had to work their way around the Spivak pronouns *e, em, eir* and how to use them. These pronouns were a completely new thing for most of them and the idea for completely new version of pronouns in Czech was very foreign to them. This questionnaire did not look for a definite answer for non-binary language in Czech. It was made to see how people will work with the language and thus not translating or keeping the English version of these pronouns was an acceptable translation strategy to use.

4.2.1. Cisgender Respondents

Cisgender respondents again seem to experiment more with the language and come up with more variations of the pronouns/neopronouns in Czech. What is considered a literal translation in this case is when the respondents decided to keep the original pronouns and used them in the Czech text. There were some graphic adjustments used like **ich** (33) and *oni/y, jim/jich/je/jimi, jejich* (34) where the respondents played with the theoretical limits of written language.

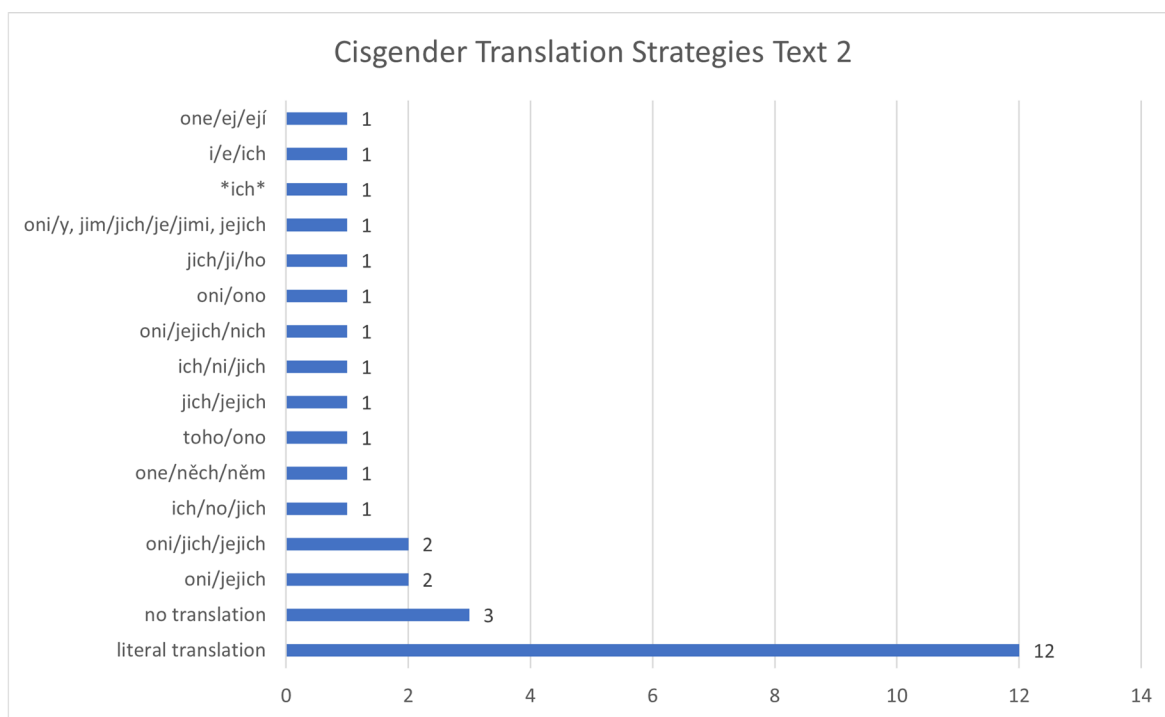
(33) Používám spivakovy zájmena "e, em, eir, jako v.." "Zeptej se **ich**, co chtějí v **ich** čaji."

(34) Používám Spivakova zájmena *oni/y, jim/jich/je/jimi, jejich* jako třeba "Zeptej se jich, co chtějí do čaje."

Other respondents played with neuter gender with different versions of it as *one, ono, no*. Otherwise cisgender respondents tend to aim for plural form of Czech pronouns. There are three respondents who did not attempt to translate the text at all.

(35) shows the number of different variations of pronouns used in the translations.

(35) Translation strategies of cisgender respondents for text 2



4.2.2. Non-binary Respondents

The experimentation with language is again lower with text 2 though the number of no translation is the same as with the cisgender respondents.

Otherwise, the responses are quite similar to the responses of the cisgender respondents with various forms of plural pronouns.

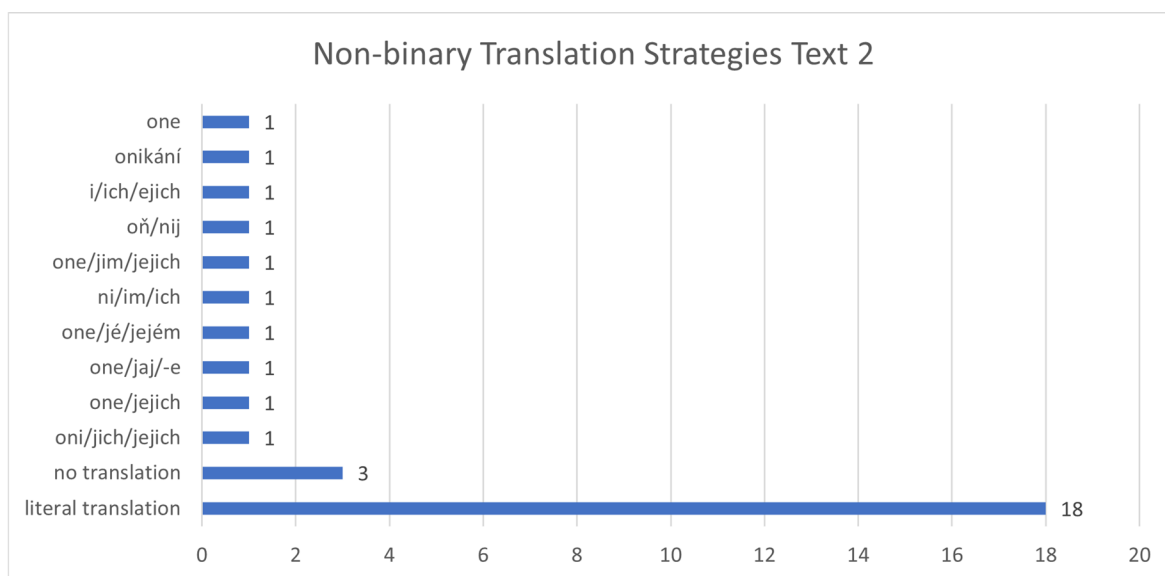
A visible difference came from a respondent who used *oň/nij*. Which are now being discussed as a neo-pronoun in the Czech non-binary community, but it has not come to the common knowledge of society as some members of the non-binary community expressed their concerns about them. *Oň* is an adjusted version of *on* (Czech masculine pronoun) and *nij* seems to sound too feminine to people as it sounds like *ni/ní* (Czech feminine pronoun in locative case).

Another version that did not appear in cisgender responses was *onikání* which is mentioned in chapter 2.1.3.

There is also no use of direct neuter. Cisgender respondents did not shy from using *toho/ono* while non-binary respondents gravitate towards *one* or plural pronouns.

(36) again shows the tendency to use literal translation as well as lower number of different variations to the gender-neutral language.

(36) Translation strategies of non-binary respondents for text 2



4.3. The Negative Response to the Questionnaire

Although the feedback to the questionnaire was mostly positive, there were some responses that seemed to be offended by the idea. Some did not fill in the translation and one respondent decided to fill in the whole questionnaire just to express that, in their opinion, this should not be talked about: “This language nomenclature does not belong to the Czech language. Our language does not work like that and it will only confuse people and cause chaos among them and it will ruin reputation of non-binary people. Please stop with this nonsense or you will turn the whole Czech Republic against yourself!!!!⁴”.

This shows that this topic can be still very sensitive for some people and makes it clear that this is something we should talk about and make sure people under the umbrella term non-binary are heard and seen.

4.4. Discussion

The outcome of this questionnaire suggests that both cisgender and non-binary people tend to use literal translation as it a direct way of expressing the identity of an English non-binary person. Other translation strategies were used as well but it is clear that they are not commonly known or used among young people.

The responses from the groups were not that different as they all worked with non-binarity as much as they possibly could. The only difference would be that some respondents from the cisgender community were not able to fully commit to the neutral part of the language or might have used a translation strategy (using the neuter) that could potentially offend a non-binary person.

⁴ “V českém jazyce tohle názvosloví nepatří. Náš jazyk takhle nefunguje a jenom to přivede lidi do omylu a zmatku a jenom to zkaží nebinárním lidem pověst. Proším přestaňte s tímto nesmyslem než si proti sobě poštvete celou republiku!!!!” (the original response to the questionnaire).

The first assumption was to expect the non-binary group to experiment and bring more variations of the translation to the discussion but that has been proven wrong. Cisgender group worked with more variations as non-binary language might be something they tried using for the first time or is something they do not use every day whereas the non-binary group is used to a certain way of expressing themselves.

The second assumption was that many people would not know what to work with the Spivak Pronouns which came true as neopronouns are not commonly known or used in the Czech language.

Almost every response was very respectful and many of the respondents made the effort to explain their thoughts and process behind their translation.

Reaching out to people of the non-binary community has also proven to be easier than expected as they were very willing to help and to participate as they are mostly interested in sharing and making the non-binary language more common.

Both groups consisted of people mainly from the LGBTQ+ community which is probably a big factor in the results of the questionnaire and it would be worth it to study responses from people who do not belong in the LGBTQ+ community.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to present the reader with an idea of what the Queer Translation and Queer Theory is and how it affects the language. And in relation to this the way young people in the Czech Republic perceive gender-neutral language and how they work with presenting the neutrality in translated texts.

First the thesis explains the roots of gender-neutrality, the history and present situation of gender-neutral language as well as how we perceive different identities and how we define them. Important addition to the debate was the field of Queer Translation which had to be defined and explained in order to fully understand the importance of bringing the Queer Theory to translation as the LGBTQ+ community needs well-informed representation in translated media to help spread the awareness.

Subsequently the thesis explains the gender-neutral language in more detail to explain the trouble a translator can face when working with a language that does not have the means to express gender-neutrality as it can be heavily gendered or connected to a culture that does not acknowledge the possible queer presence. This part of the thesis also covers the general description of pronouns as that is what we meet the most when we talk about gender-neutral language in English and thus it is needed to explain why pronouns are not the only focus of gender-neutral language in Czech and other gender focused languages.

Lastly the questionnaire shows the awareness of the gender-neutral language among the younger generation of the Czech Republic. During the time the questionnaire was online it was proven that people tend to translate the non-binary identity of the characters in the texts literally in both cisgender and non-binary group of respondents. The assumption of non-binary community being more willing to experiment with language has not been proven right as the cisgender respondents gave more variants of translations. But the experimentation has led to use of some translation strategies that might be perceived as offensive to the non-binary community. A good example is the use of Czech neuter case in reference to a person. The result of the questionnaire clearly shows that people from both groups gravitate towards a strategy they know very well and that is already in the Czech grammar and thus do not have to come up with a new way to address it. This is completely understandable as finding or using a new language variation to express non-binarity is a hard task and Wehle (2020) expresses that finding such gender-neutral language in Czech will probably take some time. This thesis showed an overall support from the young cisgender community towards the gender-neutral language and thus we can conclude that the future of Czech gender-neutral language is very bright and people are invested into making it possible to express identity for everybody through language.

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7. Appendixes

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

15.08.22 9:35

Povědomí mladé české generace o českém nebinárním jazyce

Povědomí mladé české generace o českém nebinárním jazyce

Dobrý den,

tento dotazník je součástí mé bakalářské práce, kterou vypracovávám pod Univerzitou Palackého v Olomouci.

Pomocí tohoto dotazníku bych ráda získala přehled o povědomí o (ne)binaritě mezi českou mládeží a zmapovala aktuální převládající sklony v jejich vyjadřování ohledně (ne)binarity. Dotazník si klade za cíl poukázat na případné rozdíly mezi vyjadřováním a vnímáním (ne)binarity mezi cisgender(2) a nebinárními osobami(1) a na základě zjištěných výsledků poskytnout shrnutí preferovaných výrazů.

Vyplněním tohoto dotazníku pomáháte zvyšovat povědomí o (ne)binaritě v české překladatelské komunitě a tím zvyšujete přístupnost tématu celé společnosti České republiky.

Poprosím Vás o překlad krátkých autentických textů (texty jsou napsané nebinárními osobami) z anglického do českého jazyka z knihy Finna od Nino Cipri a komiksu Gender Queer: A Memoir od Maia Kobabe. Podmínkou vyplnění tohoto dotazníku je dobrá znalost angličtiny (B1 a výše). Vyplnění Vám zabere zhruba 15 minut. U překladu můžete používat Vámi zvolené internetové slovníky nebo překladače. Vyhněte se, prosím, automatickému překládání celých vět – data by pak byla nepoužitelná.

Dotazník je plně anonymní a jeho vyplněním souhlasíte se zpracováním odpovědí.

(1)Nebinární osoba: osoba, která se nezařazuje ani mezi muže, ani mezi ženy.

(2)Cisgender osoba: osoba, která se cítí jako pohlaví, které jim bylo určeno při narození. (Osoba se narodila jako žena a jako žena se cítí.)

V případě nejistot se na mě obraťte: Lucie K., bp-nebinarnijazyk@seznam.cz

*Povinné pole

1. Do jaké věkové skupiny patříte? *

Označte jen jednu elipsu.

- mladší 15 let
- 15-18
- 19-25
- 26-30
- starší 30 let

2. Narazili jste na pojem 'nebinární osoba' nebo 'nebinarita' před otevřením tohoto dotazníku? *

Označte jen jednu elipsu.

- Ano
- Ne
- Jiné: _____

3. Identifikujete se jako nebinární osoba? *

Označte jen jednu elipsu.

- Ano
- Ne
- Jiné: _____

4. Jste součástí LGBTQ+? *

Označte jen jednu elipsu.

- Ano
- Ne
- Jiné: _____

5. Specifikujte, do které LGBTQ+ skupiny spadáte.

6. Z jakého kraje pocházíte? *

Označte jen jednu elipsu.

- Karlovarský kraj
- Plzeňský kraj
- Jihočeský kraj
- Středočeský kraj
- Ústecký kraj
- Hlavní město Praha
- Liberecký kraj
- Královéhradecký kraj
- Pardubický kraj
- Kraj Vysočina
- Jihomoravský kraj
- Olomoucký kraj
- Zlínský kraj
- Moravsko-slezský kraj
- Nepocházím z ČR

7. Ve kterém kraji nyní žijete? *

Označte jen jednu elipsu.

- Karlovarský kraj
- Plzeňský kraj
- Jihočeský kraj
- Středočeský kraj
- Ústecký kraj
- Hlavní město Praha
- Liberecký kraj
- Královéhradecký kraj
- Pardubický kraj
- Kraj Vysočina
- Jihomoravský kraj
- Olomoucký kraj
- Zlínský kraj
- Moravsko-slezský kraj
- Nežiji v ČR

Překladová
část

Gender: někdy nazýván jako sociální pohlaví nebo rod, se narozdíl od pojmu pohlaví liší tím, že označuje společenskou roli jedince ve vztahu k maskulinitě a feminitě (tzn. do jaké míry se osoba cítí být ženou nebo mužem a jaké chování je od nich společností očekáváno).

Nebinární osoba: nebinární lidé nezapadají do kategorie muž či žena. Patří sem lidé s fluidním genderem (tzn. genderovou identitou měnící se v průběhu života), lidé s více gendery najednou, lidé s genderem, který není ani mužský ani ženský, nebo lidé, kteří žádný gender vůbec nemají.

Cisgender osoba: cisgender (často jednoduše zkráceno cis) je označení pro lidi, jejichž genderová identita odpovídá pohlaví, které jim bylo určeno při narození. Jde o protiklad k termínu transgender. Příklad: osoba se narodila jako žena a cítí se jako žena.

Spivak zájmena: gendrově neutrální zájmena (tzn. nevyjadřují ani mužský, ani ženský rod) používaná především v angličtině. Jsou pojmenována po Michaelovi Spivakovi, který je v roce 1986 použil ve své příručce The Joy of Tex.

8. Přeložte text: Jules looked panicked. Ava felt bad for them; she'd been prepared *
for this to happen, and they hadn't. "It's just for today," she added. "Okay," Jules
said. They were visibly pulling themselves back together. "I'm just gonna—"

KONTEXT PRO PŘEKLAD: Postava jménem Jules je nebinární osoba, Ava je cisgender
žena. Jules a Ava byli partneři, nyní jsou krátce po rozchodu a nečekaně na sebe narazili v
práci, kde oba pracují.

9. Přeložte rozhovor na obrázku: *



Vřele děkuji
za Váš čas
a ochotu
vyplnit tento
dotazník.

V případě zájmu o výsledky dotazníku nebo v případě dotazů mě můžete kontaktovat na email bp-nebinarnijazyk@seznam.cz. S radostí Vám svou dokončenou bakalářskou práci zašlu.

10. Napadá Vás k dotazníku něco, co byste mi rádi sdělili?

Obsah není vytvořen ani schválen Googlem.

Google Formuláře