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Gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch; usage, semantics and attitude

MA Linguistics: Language and Communication

MA Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis has analysed the usage of gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch. 14 interviews with 19 interviewees, as well as a survey with 119 respondents were conducted to study three features of Dutch gender-neutral pronouns; usage, semantics and attitudes. Previous research on this topic is almost non-existent, as non-binary people and their pronouns are only recently becoming increasingly visible. Other studies have looked at the Dutch gender or pronominal system, but studies into the establishment of a gender-neutral pronoun are missing. This thesis tries to combat this research gap, in addition to trying to generate more academic interest in the topic. The results of the interviews and survey were multitude. Firstly, it was found that gender-neutral pronouns are often only used when a person specifically asked for them. There are few situations where gender-neutral pronouns are the starting point. Additionally, people rather use more words to talk around having to use gender-neutral pronouns. When talking about people on the street, *die* is the most popular gender-neutral personal pronoun in subject position, while *diens* and *hun* are similarly popular for the object position. Moreover, neo-pronouns, such as *lijj/leem* or *nijj/ner*, are often requested by cisgender people, but are not widely used or known. The expectations people have for a person who uses gender-neutral pronouns are such that their appearance looks non-binary, a mix of masculine and feminine features is assumed. All in all, it can be concluded that people are willing to use gender-neutral pronouns. However, there is often little need for it, and even if, it is unclear what the options are. The study has brought light to a new and confusing topic, but much is still uncertain. More time is needed to establish a new Dutch gender-neutral pronoun.

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Just like Rome was not build in a day, this thesis was not written in one. Writing a thesis in and of itself is hard, but when writing it during a pandemic, all bets are off. The fact that I was able to finish it anyway was because of some amazing people that helped me do so. First of all, I want to thank my supervisor Dr. Smakman for his invaluable advice and his helpful feedback. I also want to thank Dr. Foster for taking the time to read and provide feedback on my thesis as the second reader. Moreover, I am very grateful for all the participants in this study. Over 100 people helped me accomplish this study, and without any of you it might not have happened.

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Preface

Zij is een het, toch? ‘She is an it, right?’ My mom asked me this a couple weeks ago when we were talking about a writer who had recently come out as non-binary. With this one question she portrayed (some of) the issues regarding gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch. Not only did my mother misgender the writer by referring to them with the feminine pronoun *zij* ‘she’, she also referred to a person by using the pronoun *het* ‘it’. *Het* is the neuter definite article of Dutch. So while it is indeed gender-neutral, it is not a personal pronoun and cannot be used for people. From my own experience I know this neuter definite article is often used as an insult or derision towards non-binary, gender non-conforming or transgender people, so while my mother made an honest mistake, and did not mean to hurt anyone, it was a very insensitive thing she said. While these mistakes are not unimaginable or very strange, this sentence is a good example of how average Dutch-speakers might struggle with gender-neutral pronouns. For many they are new, unnatural, and because they might not know people who use gender-neutral pronouns, they do not often use them or even think they are necessary. This thesis is a first step in bridging the gap between the ‘average’ Dutch person and the Dutch non-binary community. While I myself am not non-binary, it is imperative that more research into this phenomenon is done to help make the Dutch language more inclusive, and I will gladly help with that.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

Non-binary people are becoming more and more visible in the Netherlands. Not only has it been possible to have gender-neutral passport since 2018, some of the biggest Dutch newspapers such as NRC, Volkskrant and Trouw have been publishing more and more articles about the topic (*Geen M of V, maar X*, 2018; Becker, 2020; Kas, 2021). Moreover, in 2020, Spangas: The Campus featured the first non-binary character in a Dutch television show ever, and in 2021, Anne+ featured the first non-binary character in a Dutch movie (De Nieuws BV BNNVARA, 2020; Segers, 2021).

An issue that has risen with the increasing visibility of non-binary people, however, is how to address them. Dutch has many gendered words, such as *meneer* ‘mister/sir’ or *mevrouw* ‘mrs’, that do not have a gender-neutral counterpart. This is traditionally also the case for third person pronouns. There is the masculine form *hij* ‘he’ and the feminine form *zij* ‘she’, but no official third gender-neutral form.

This thesis will study the Dutch pronoun system by looking into the usage of gender-neutral pronouns. In the field of Dutch pronoun studies, limited research has been done in finding or analysing a gender-neutral option. Studies that have been done have focussed on translating gender-neutral pronouns, or the resemanticization of Dutch pronouns, but not how Dutch speakers use gender-neutral pronouns. This study will add to the field of Dutch pronouns studies and will help create more academic interest in the specific area of Dutch gender-neutral pronouns. Additionally, the current study will contribute to the search of finding such a pronoun, as well as helps raise awareness for the issue of Dutch gender-neutral pronouns and non-binary people. This will be done through conducting interviews with people from the Dutch LGBTQ+ (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer)¹ community as well as running a survey, which is distributed with only one curtailment, namely that the respondent is a Dutch speaker.

1.2 Literature Review

In this section, the thesis will look into previous research, and discuss the literature about gender-neutral pronouns. The section will be divided into three parts. The first part will address studies of Dutch, and specifically its gender system and its pronouns. Languages such as Dutch are also known as ‘natural gender’ languages. While they (mainly) do not distinguish gender in nouns, pronouns are marked for gender (Prewitt-Freilino et al., 2012). The second part will discuss languages that do not have gendered third person singular pronouns, such as Indonesian or Finnish. Prewitt-Freilino et al. (2012) call these languages genderless languages, as gender is not marked on either nouns or pronouns. The third and last part will explore languages that have gendered third person singular pronouns, but have (partially) succeeded in adding a gender-neutral third person singular pronoun, such as

¹This is the abbreviation that the thesis will use to discuss the LGBTQ+ community. While other abbreviations exist, such as LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) or LGBTQIA (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex Agender/Asexual/Aromantic), the five letters and the plus sign are often seen as the preferred abbreviation (Ring, 2016).

English and Swedish. While these are natural gender languages, there have been efforts made to move away from the strict gender dichotomy in their pronouns, thus will be discussed separately.

Unsurprisingly, there have not been many studies done on gender-neutral pronouns of natural gender languages. These languages have third person singular pronouns that mark for gender, oftentimes meaning that there is a masculine pronoun and a feminine pronoun. For example in Dutch, these are *hij* and *zij* respectively. As there is no widely accepted gender-neutral pronoun (yet), there has not been much academic interest in them. However, some research has happened. In 2019, Kleiboer wrote their Master thesis on translating the English rules of roller derby into Dutch, focussing on ensuring a gender-neutral translation (Kleiboer, 2019). As the English rules of roller derby are gender-neutral and use the pronouns 'they' and 'them' to refer to the player, Kleiboer wanted the Dutch rules to be in accordance with this. To do so, they chose the pronouns *hen* and *hun*, which are literal translations of 'they' and 'them', although these are not (yet) officially accepted into Dutch as third person singular personal pronouns. The choice for *hen* and *hun* was based on a survey of the Transgender Netwerk Nederland (Transgender Network The Netherlands; TNN). In 2016, after two rounds of surveys, the TNN found that *hen/hen/hun* was most popular gender-neutral option (Transgender Netwerk Nederland, 2016). The gendered pronouns of Dutch, when organised as such, are *hij/hem/zijn* 'he/him/his' and *zij/haar/haar* 'she/her/her'.

Furthermore, research has been conducted that did not study gender-neutrality of pronouns. For example, in 2006 Audring found that the pronominal gender system of Dutch is changing (Audring, 2006). Depending on the individuation of the referent, the pronoun changes; high individuation is associated with the masculine gender and low individuation associated with the neuter gender. For example, a referent with a high individuation might be a bounded object such as a book. This would most likely be referred to with the masculine pronoun. An example could be *Waar ligt het boek? Oh daar ligt hij* 'Where is the book? Oh there he lies.' A referent with a low individuation is an unbounded abstract such as, for example, pain, which is most likely referred to by using the neuter. An example for this referent with low individuation is *Heb je nog pijn? Ja, het voelt verschrikkelijk!* 'Are you still in pain? Yes, it feels awful!' Feminine gender is only used for female humans and female animals. This shows a process of resemanticization, as Audring calls it, because before this change the Dutch gender system was not organized according to semantics, and now it increasingly is.

Moreover, the Dutch gender system has been studied without focussing on pronouns as well. Kochari and Flecken (2019), Kraaikamp (2012) and Otten and Van Berkum (2009) are three examples of studies about it. Kraaikamp followed Audring's research and looked at the semantics of Dutch gender, and agrees that there is a semantic base on which the Dutch gender system is built on. Kochari and Flecken (2019) replicated the study of Otten and Van Berkum (2009) to see how the gender of Dutch articles influences predictive language processing. Whereas Otten and Van Berkum (2009) found that there is a significant influence of the working memory capacity on predictability, Kochari and Flecken (2019) did not (probably due to methodological differences, according to Kochari and Flecken).

These were a few examples of research done about the natural gender language Dutch, as defined by Prewitt-Freilino et al. (2012). While the gender system has been studied, there

seems to be a research gap when it comes to the notion of gender-neutral pronouns. Genderless languages, however, only have gender-neutral pronouns (as well as lacking gendered markings on their nouns; Prewitt-Freilino et al., 2012). Finnish and Indonesian are two examples of such languages, as their pronouns do not differentiate between genders. Both of these languages have been studied by linguists to examine the influence of this gender-neutrality. An example of this is Steinhauer's study on the Indonesian pronouns and the difficulties that arise when trying to translate the language to a (natural) gendered one and vice versa (2010). He shows examples of differences in the Indonesian translation of a Tolstoy story and the Dutch one and explains the strategies necessary to create a successful translation. In addition, Markham et al. (2017), did a similar study comparing the original Arabic version of the Quran to the Indonesian translation. They found that there were indeed many differences due to Indonesian's lack of gender marking. Other studies of the Indonesian pronouns are for example about which position the pronouns can take in. Djenar (2010) studied the difference between the third person singular pronouns *ia* (only subject position) and *dia* (subject or object position), and found that while both can be used as the subject of a sentence, *ia* is used as such almost three times as often. This study does not delve into the gender-neutrality of the pronouns, but does show how the solitary pronoun is used.

Furthermore, as mentioned before, Finnish is also a good example of a genderless language (one where neither nouns nor pronouns are marked for gender; Prewitt-Freilino et al., 2012). The third person singular pronoun is *hän*, meaning 's/he'. Just like Indonesian, this genderless language and its pronouns have been studied. For example, Ritva Laury edited a book of papers written about Finnish (and Estonian) pronouns (2005). The pronoun *hän* specifically was studied by Laitinen, who studied the pronoun in different varieties of Finnish. The researcher found that while in Standard Finnish *hän* refers exclusively to humans, in regional dialects the pronoun also refers to the speech or thoughts of the person that the speaker is reporting about (Laitinen in Laury, 2005, pp 75-106). In another study, done by Kaiser and Trueswell, the Finnish third person anaphors *hän* 's/he' and *tämä* 'this' are examined to investigate if there is a difference in salience required to interpret them (Gibson & Pearlmutter, 2011, pp 323-353). They find that while salience is often thought of as very important for the interpretation of an anaphor, this is most certainly not the only factor at play. Finnish was their chosen language because the third person singular pronoun does not mark for gender. This gave the researchers the opportunity to more easily study salience, as the difference in gender that many other languages mark for can be ignored.

These are a few examples of studies that look into genderless languages to show what type of research has been done. Following this, some examples of studies that analyse languages that (try to) combine the natural gender and genderless languages will now be discussed. In both English and Swedish, efforts have (at least partially) succeeded in adding a new gender-neutral third person singular pronoun to what was before a binary pronoun system. In English, besides 'he' and 'she', 'they' is now (more or less) accepted as an alternative for people who do not identify as either male or female. In Swedish *hen* is the new third option, next to *han* 'he' and *hon* 'she'. The gender-neutral pronoun *hen* was added to the Swedish Academy Glossary (SAOL) in 2015. This pronoun was chosen based on its similarity to the Finnish pronoun *hän*, as that was a gender-neutral pronoun in its original language, and it would fit with the pre-existing third person singular pronouns of *han* and *hon*. One example

of a study researching the addition of this gender-neutral pronoun into the natural gender language of Swedish was done by Vergoossen et al. (2020). They looked at the processing cost of *hen* dependent on its referent. Either the noun was marked for gender or it was gender-neutral. The results of Vergoossen et al., however, show that there was no difference in processing cost. What they conclude from this is that the criticism that argues against gender-neutral pronouns because they are harder to process has no scientific basis (Vergoossen et al., 2020). Another study that examined the addition of *hen* in Swedish was done by Gustafsson Sendén et al. (2015). This study analysed the attitude and behaviour of Swedes towards *hen* over time. Between 2012 and 2015 the researchers used questionnaires to ask Swedes about their attitude and usage of the new pronoun. They found that both these factors increased; the attitude towards *hen* had improved and the pronoun was used more often in 2015. What we can learn from this is that while in the beginning gender-neutral pronouns might be regarded negatively, over time this can change, and additionally, there is no scientific basis for the argument that gender-neutral pronouns are harder to process.

While in Swedish the gender-neutral third person singular pronoun was officially accepted, in English the situation is different. As mentioned before, the search for a gender-neutral pronoun in English can be traced back to the late 18th century, but no official addition has been made like it was in Swedish (Baron, 2020). However, 'they' as a third person singular gender-neutral pronoun is finding more and more acceptance across the English speaking world. Studies that have looked into this pronoun are similar to those of the Swedish gender-neutral pronoun. Speyer & Schleef analysed the processing of 'he' and 'she' compared to singular 'they' for non-native English speakers and found that singular 'they' can be acquired fairly easily, providing additional supporting evidence to the notion of adding a gender-neutral pronoun to a natural gender language. A study that does something similar for English that Gustafsson Sendén et al. (2015) did for Swedish was done by Bradly (2021). This research examined the factors influencing the attitude towards singular 'they'. It was found that the resistance against gender-neutral language is affected by both sexist beliefs as well as linguistic conservatism. Both of these factors were found to negatively influence grammaticality judgments. This is a different approach to language attitude compared to Gustafsson Sendén et al. (2015), but just like that study, it gives us valuable information to understand the criticisms against the addition of gender-neutral pronouns into a natural gender language.

1.3 Research questions

To summarise, the literature review shows us what has been done to help better understand languages and their gender systems, and we can learn how to approach the addition of a new gender-neutral, third person singular pronoun in Dutch from it. The current study will take this knowledge and build on it, and thereby try to help increase awareness and acceptance of Dutch gender-neutral pronouns, as well as give insight into the issues still surrounding them. The research question that will help achieve this goal is "How are Dutch gender-neutral third person singular pronouns used, evaluated and understood by Dutch speakers, especially LGBTQ+ people?" This question looks into three features of gender-neutral third person singular pronouns; usage, attitudes and semantics. To examine the feature 'usage', the sub-question that is asked is "How and when do Dutch LGBTQ+ people use gender-neutral third person singular pronouns?" Additionally, the question "Which

pronouns do Dutch speakers use when discussing strangers on the street?” will help study usage. Following, the second feature ‘attitudes’ is studied by asking “What is the opinion of Dutch LGBTQ+ people about gender-neutral third person singular pronouns?”. To examine the third feature ‘semantics’, the sub-question “What do Dutch LGBTQ+ people think the meaning of Dutch third person singular pronouns is?” is asked. These four sub-questions will help answer the main research question. The answers will be found through individual and group interviews with Dutch speakers who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community as well as through conducting a survey. Research such as this has not yet been done on the topic of gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch, so this thesis is a first step in creating academic interest in this topic and will therefore advance the search for a Dutch gender-neutral pronoun that will be accepted and equal to the pre-existing gendered pronouns.

Chapter 2: Method

2.1 Research Overview

The usage of gender-neutral pronouns of Dutch speakers has been analysed in this study. To do so, 14 interviews with 19 participants and a survey with 119 respondents were conducted. The first was focussed on Dutch LGBTQ+ people, the latter was distributed among as many Dutch speakers as possible. Both the interviews and the survey were conducted online, with the exception of one interview that was held in person. The independent variables for both tools are gender identity and sexual identity, and age was taken into account to ensure the population was representative. Table 2.1 shows the definitions and/or explanations of each variant. These variants were the same for the interviewees as for the survey respondents.

Table 2.1 Definitions and explanation of the variants

Variant	Definition/explanation
Man/ Woman	Transgender people are part of the variants 'man' and 'woman' of the variable gender. A transgender man is a man, thus part of the 'man' category. Similarly, transgender women are part of the 'woman' category. While their background might be different than that of cisgender people, their gender is the same.
Non-binary	All answers pertaining gender that were not '(transgender) man' or '(transgender) women' were combined under the overarching category 'non-binary'. This is, however, not one gender; it is an umbrella term for many genders. For the ease of this study, all genders that are not the binary genders of 'man' or 'woman' are joined together.
Unknown	This variant shows when the answer to the question was either unknown to the participant or to the researcher. For example, a participant might not know their sexual identity and has indicated as such. In other cases, the question was not properly answered.
Pansexual/ Bisexual	These two sexualities have been combined into one category, because both pertain to attraction to multiple genders. Within the LGBTQ+ community there is a debate about the definitions of these sexualities. Not only is the discussion about the difference between them, even the validity of the 'pansexual' identity is questioned. In the simplest of terms, both sexualities, as they

	are seen as separate by this researcher, mean having romantic and/or sexual attraction to more than one gender. For the ease of this study, they are combined into one category.
Queer	This sexual identity is purposefully more open-ended and vague. Someone who identifies as queer is part of the LGBTQ+ community, but their specific sexual and/or romantic attraction is left undefined. Some people with a queer identity even use it as a gender identity, for the same reasons as it can be used as a sexual identity; to leave the answer more undefined or vague.
Gay	This sexual identity signifies people that are sexually and/or romantically attracted to their own gender. Gay women, also known lesbians, are women that are attracted to women. Gay men are men who are attracted to men. While an argument could be made that there should be a difference between gay men and gay women, for this study they are combined to reduce the amount of categories, and therefor increase the generalisability of the results.
Asexual	This sexual identity means that the person does not experience sexual attraction. This is a spectrum; some asexual people might experience some sexual attraction, or experience it only in specific circumstances. Being asexual does not mean that the person does not experience romantic attraction. Asexual people can for example be homo-romantic, meaning they are romantically attracted to their own gender. The participants in this category can have different romantic attractions, but they are joined together in the asexual category to study if sexual attraction has any effect on the use of personal pronouns, and because it is an important identity as well. By solely focussing on romantic attraction, these people would be underexposed.

2.2 Sample

2.2.1 Interviewees

19 people were interviewed for this part of the study. The interviews were conducted either individually (one on one with the interviewer), or in small groups (one interviewer and multiple interviewees). The interview with the most participants had four interviewees. All in all, there were 14 interviews conducted, of which 13 were held online through Zoom and one was done in person. This interviewee felt more comfortable doing the interview offline and lives close to the interviewer. In Table 2.2 the variables and variants of the interview sample are shown.

Table 2.2 The variables and variants of interviewees. 19 people participated, of which 13 were between 20 and 30 years of age, three were between 30 years and 40 years old and three were 60 years or older.

Variables	Variants	Quantity
Gender	Man	3
	Woman	6
	Non-binary	10
Sexuality	Pansexual / Bisexual	7
	Queer	5
	Gay	2
	Asexual	3
	Unknown	2

The population that is represented by the interview sample is the Dutch speaking LGBTQ+ community. The sampling technique has tried to represent this by including as wide a variety of identities from the LGBTQ+ community as possible. The endeavour was to not only find participants that fit in the community due to their sexuality, but also those that fit due to their gender. Special focus was put on including non-binary people, as those are most likely to use gender-neutral pronouns. This variety was successfully achieved. Furthermore, it was attempted to include people from different ages to ensure valid results. This was achieved partially, as the majority of participants were between 20 years and 30 years. However, there were also participants of 60 and older, although no interviewees were between 40 and 60 years of age.

The criteria for participation in the interview were twofold. The first criterion was that to be part of the sample, the person had to be part of the LGBTQ+ community. This was checked through the first few questions, as the gender identity and sexual identity of the participant were asked. The second was that the participant had to speak Dutch. This was checked through the language of the interview, they were all conducted in Dutch. All participants met these criteria.

The method used to find the sample was the snowball method. The researcher asked LGBTQ+ people close to them to be interviewed, and additionally asked them to provide

more participants. In addition, messages were posted on several LGBTQ+ Facebook groups to recruit interviewees outside of the researcher's social circle.

The participants were instructed about a few things before the interview started. They were told that several questions would be asked, but that they did not have to answer if they did not wish to do so. In addition to that, the interviewees were told that there were no right or wrong answers, and if they did not know how to answer the question, that they could ask or indicate as such. The participants were informed all their answers would be anonymised and their names would not be included in the study. Lastly, the interviewees were apprised that the interviews would be recorded, and that if they had any questions during, or even after, the interview they were free to ask. No instructions about the contents of the interview were given beforehand.

2.2.2 Survey Respondents

The survey was distributed online to as many Dutch people as possible. 120 respondents completed the entire survey, and one person only partially completed it. This respondent was therefore discarded from further analysis. In addition, one other respondent was excluded, as they used the survey to argue against researching the topic instead of filling in the survey seriously. Therefore, the sample of the survey was 119. The variables and variants were similar to the interview, and can be seen in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Survey variables and variants

Variable	Variants	Frequency
Gender	Man	39
	Woman	62
	Non-binary	17
	Unknown	2
Sexuality	Heterosexual	58
	Pansexual / Bisexual	27
	Queer	10
	Gay	15
	Asexual	5
	Unknown	5

The sample of 120 respondents represents all Dutch speakers. An eye was kept on creating a great variety of people within the survey sample, but through the different means of recruiting respondents, the variety was natural. Age, gender and sexuality all varied, although again the majority of participants were under 30 years old. The most common sexuality of the respondents was heterosexual (as can be seen in Table 2.3), which reflects Dutch society.

Similarly to the interview, the method used to find the sample was the snowball method combined with posts on social media. The link to the survey was distributed through Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp to as many people as possible. To each message distributing the link to the survey, a request to share it with friends and family was added.

Moreover, the interviewees were asked to fill in the survey, so there is probable chance of overlap between the two participant groups.

The respondents of the survey were, similarly to the interview, informed that the answers were fully anonymous and voluntary. It was also explained that there were 26 questions and that the survey ended with the space to add comments and/or questions to the researcher. Moreover, the respondents were provided with a short explanation of the key concepts used in the survey, such as definitions of genders and sexuality. The instructions ended with a short disclaimer that the sketched situations in the questions did not reflect the researcher's opinion that gender or sexuality can be known from someone's appearance, but that they were simplified to help the survey.

2.3 Material

2.3.1 Interview Material

The material to be analysed for this part of the study are the 14 recordings of the interviews. The list of questions that were asked in the interviews can be found in Appendix 1.1. Thirteen of the recordings include both video and audio recordings, while one only features audio recording. The video recordings are irrelevant to the data, but helped the analysis by increasing the ability to distinguish the speakers. The interview that does not have a video recording was with only one interviewee, so this does not decrease the ease of analysis. 13 interviews were recorded through Zoom and one interview was recorded through the recording app on the researcher's phone.

The interviews were partially transcribed. The answers to three questions were written down to count the total number of words used to describe a picture and to compare those counts to the number of personal pronouns that were used.

2.3.2 Survey Material

The material for this part of the study was the answers to the survey. The entire survey can be found in Appendix 2. The survey was conducted online, and the answers were put together by the website that was used to do so; ThesisTool Pro. The results were exported into Microsoft Excel to efficiently analyse the data.

2.4 Procedure

2.4.1 Interview Procedure

The first step taken to conduct the interviews was to set up the list of questions for the interviewees. Originally, the list consisted of 13 questions, but later three more were added after it became clear the questions did not generate enough natural speech to properly study. The added questions asked the interviewee to describe a picture, one with a person using he/him pronouns, one using she/her pronouns, and one using gender-neutral pronouns. The interviewer refrained from calling the people in the first two pictures a 'man' or a 'woman' or give their gender away in any other verbal way to not influence the participants. Contrastingly, the only information given about person in the third picture was their gender, namely non-binary, to let the participants choose the gender-neutral

pronouns they wanted to use. The pictures were found online, through Google search. The first two pictures, of a man and woman respectively, were strangers to the researcher or the participants. They were purposely chosen for their appearance, as they looked like a stereotypical man and woman. The third picture was of Thorn Roos de Vries, a Dutch non-binary activist and actor. A picture of them was chosen to ensure that the participants described a real non-binary person. In addition, some of the participants knew De Vries, so they could more easily describe them and use natural speech for it. This was the purpose of adding the pictures, to generate more natural speech including personal pronouns, and thus more data to study. The interviewees that participated before the change were later interviewed on these questions.

After the initial list of questions was set up, participants were approached. Friends and family were asked to participate, as well as requested to ask their friends and family to do so. In addition, messages were posted on several Facebook groups and LGBTQ+ organisations were approached in search for interviewees. 19 people responded positively to being interviewed, through a variety of the mentioned channels. Over two weeks 14 interviews were conducted, some individual ones, and some in small groups of two or four people. It was not a conscious decision to have group interviews of two or four people, the groups formed in the numbers they did coincidentally. In most cases, the interviewees were together in one room, and the interviewer spoke with them online. The group interviews were done to encourage participants to discuss the questions with each other and to promote natural speech. The interviews all took approximately 30 minutes to one hour. The interviews were partially transcribed, to be able to easily count the number of words said and to calculate what the percentage of personal pronouns used was.

2.4.2 Survey Procedure

The first step taken was to set up the list of questions and answers for the survey, as well as find the best survey service to use. Multiple versions of each of these were tried before the final ones were chosen. The best ones were decided upon in discussion with the supervisor and multiple peers. The survey tool that was chosen was ThesisTool Pro. After the final survey was set up, it was distributed. The link to the survey was shared to friends and through email, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, and the interviewees were separately approached to invite them to fill in the survey. The messages included not only the link, but a request to share the link was added as well. As such, more and more responses to the survey came in. The aim was to find 100 respondents to ensure a varied and representative sample. The goal was reached and surpassed, and ultimately 120 people completed the survey.

Chapter 3: Results

To study how gender-neutral pronouns are used in the Dutch language, this research used a twofold approach. 14 interviews with 19 interviewees were conducted, as well as a survey of which 119 results were analysed. In this chapter, the results of the interviews and survey will be discussed.

3.1 Interview results

The interview results will be divided into two sections. Firstly the part of the interview where the participants were asked to describe three pictures will be discussed. In the second part the most striking results from the other interview questions are discussed

3.1.1 Picture descriptions

In one part of the interview, the participants were asked to describe three pictures, one at a time. The first was of a person whose preferred pronouns were *hij/hem* (he/him), the second of a person whose preferred pronouns were *zij/haar* (she/her) and the third and final was a non-binary person. No preferred pronouns were given for this picture, to see which ones the interviewees would use. No more information about the people was given. The participants were asked about the setting of the picture, what they thought the person's character was and what they would think if they saw them walking on the street (See Appendix 1.1).

The total amount of words that were used to describe the picture was counted, as well as how many personal pronouns were used to do so. With this data, the percentages of personal pronouns were calculated. All these results are shown in table 3.1.

Table 3.1 The total amount of words participants used to describe the picture of a person of which the preferred pronouns are he/him, she/her and a non-binary person without specified pronouns respectively

	Picture 1	Picture 2	Picture 3
Total words used to describe picture	2321	2554	3311
Total personal pronouns used	129	109	89
Percentage of personal pronouns used	5.6%	4.3%	2.7%

In the table, it can be seen that the amount of words that were used to describe a person in a picture increased dependent on the preferred pronouns given. Where the description of the first picture (he/him) only necessitated 2321 words, picture 2 (she/her) needed 2554 words and for the final picture (gender-neutral pronouns) even more words were used, namely 3311. However, the table also shows that the use of personal pronouns decreased; for the picture of a person preferring masculine pronouns 129 were used, for the second picture 109 pronouns were used, and for the non-binary person only 89 pronouns were used. So while the amount of words to describe a picture of a non-binary person increased compared to people using gendered pronouns, the personal pronoun use decreased. This can also be seen in the last row of the table, showing the percentages of pronouns used in the description of each picture. Where for the first picture 5.6% of the words were pronouns, this more than halved to only 2.7% for the picture of a non-binary person. This is in accordance with what the interviewees explained about their pronoun usage, which will be discussed later on.

3.1.2 Remaining questions results:

The results of the remaining questions were very varied and ranged across different subjects. While all interesting and in possible need of studying, there were many point irrelevant to this specific research. The most relevant and useful points can be separated into 5 themes; 1. English vs Dutch, 2. Neo-pronouns vs Existing pronouns, 3. The choice to use gender-neutral pronouns, 4. The meaning of the personal pronouns, and 5. Remaining points.

3.1.2.1 English vs Dutch

The first theme, as the title suggests, relates to the differences in gender-neutral pronoun usage between Dutch and English. Many of the participants raised the comparison between the two languages, and argued that using gender-neutral pronouns is a lot more easy and comfortable in English. Using 'they' and 'them', which are the most widely known gender-neutral pronouns in English according to the interviewees, feels easier, both as preferred pronouns for yourself and in your language use. For example, interviewee 10 said that they realised that they preferred 'they/them' over any gendered pronouns in English and as such found out that they were non-binary. From there the search started to find fitting gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch, and they ended up with the so called hybrid form of *die/hen/hun* because it was the least bad option according to them. For this participant, the English language was instrumental in finding their identity, because Dutch did not provide them the possibility to investigate it, even though it is their native tongue. Additionally, interviewee 1b explained that when they² talk about a person that uses gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch, they would switch to say certain sentences in English even when their interlocutor was a Dutch speaker, because 'they' and 'them' roll of the tongue more easily than any Dutch pronouns.

Moreover, many of the interviewees used English terms to explain or talk about their gender or sexual identity. 'Vrouw questioning' (woman questioning) and 'gendered pronouns' are just two examples of English terms that were used in the interviews, even though all interviews were conducted in Dutch. Furthermore, 'queer' seems to be a widely accepted sexual and gender identity in Dutch. There is no direct Dutch translation for this word (yet), but even so it is used by Dutch people regardless of the fact that it is not a Dutch word. Five of the 19 people that were interviewed for this research say 'queer' is their sexual identity, which is over 26%. It shows that English is very important to the Dutch LGBTQ+ community.

3.1.2.2 Neo-pronouns vs Existing pronouns

The second theme of topics that were raised frequently was the notion that an entirely new word needs to be invented to be used as the gender-neutral pronoun in Dutch. The gender-neutral pronouns that are taken from the Dutch language are *die/diens* and *hen/hun*, but they are very often criticised because of their original meanings. *Die* and *diens* are originally demonstrative pronouns while *hen* and *hun* are third person plural pronouns. Changing either of those options to singular personal pronouns is not easily accepted. *Die* is argued by

² All participants will be referred to by using the gender-neutral pronouns 'they', 'them', and 'their', to achieve the highest level of anonymity.

the interviewees to be too distant, unfriendly and impersonal, while *hen* is the third person plural pronoun, so to use it for a single person is seen as grammatically incorrect.

To combat this, some interviewees argued for an entirely new word to be introduced, which is known as a neo-pronoun. New options such as *her* and *hze* were suggested by the interviewees themselves, but others exist already as well. The website nl.pronouns.page gives options such as *dee/dem/dijr*, *nij/ner/nijr* and *zhij/zhaar/zhaar*, and other interviewees mentioned pronouns such as *lij/leem* and *xe/xir* (Het 'Raad van Neutrale Taal' collectief, n.d.).

But these words can expect criticism as well. When asked, the interviewees do not like any of these very much either, if they even know them. The participants that argued for a neo-pronoun to be implemented often did not know of the gender-neutral usage of *die/diens* and *hen/hun* or any of the neo-pronoun options. They only offered their own suggestion, and when one participant was asked about another's neo-pronoun suggestion, they did not immediately like it either. The suggested word was *her* (pronounced /ɛ/), and the criticism was that it sounded and looked too much like the English 'her', thus sounding more feminine and not neutral.

A last point in the debate between neo-pronouns and existing ones is that the interviewees that offered their own suggestion for a neo-pronoun were all cisgender. The non-binary participants did not offer their own neo-pronouns, and none of them preferred them for themselves. While anecdotal evidence shows that there are non-binary people that use neo-pronouns as preferred gender-neutral ones, in these interviews no such non-binary person was found.

3.1.2.3 The choice to use gender-neutral pronouns

The third theme is twofold. The first part talks about using Dutch gender-neutral pronouns for yourself or to have others talk about you using gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch. The second part discusses using Dutch gender-neutral pronouns in your own (natural) language when talking about another person.

The interviewees reported to be more hesitant to use gender-neutral pronouns for themselves in Dutch than in English. But why is it so hard to use gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch? One reason that is given by the participants is that gender-neutral pronouns are thought to be much more unknown in the Netherlands, so when you say you prefer gender-neutral pronouns, you are appointed to be an educator as well. Because the pronouns are not widely accepted or known yet, interviewees have experienced people's responses of questions, derision and criticisms. Participant 1a, for example, chooses to use gendered pronouns because they do not want to be the spokesperson for gender-neutral pronouns all the time. Other reasons why gendered pronouns are chosen over gender-neutral ones are the lack of a nice gender-neutral pronoun, as the ones that exist now are either too strange or make the participant feel like a an object, because they were originally used for non-human things, like *het* 'it', or because a non-binary person's gender expression fits so clearly in one of the binary categories, that it is easier for them and others if the corresponding gendered pronoun is used.

This last point coincides with using gender-neutral pronouns in your natural speech. Of all the interviewees, only very few people have managed to fully integrate gender-neutral pronouns in their speech, and they still need to consciously think about using them to be able to do so. Not because they do not want to, but because such a change is hard, they report. However, all participants agree that making mistakes is not a problem, what matters is the way you handle the mistake when you make it. The conscious decision on when and where gender-neutral pronouns are used differs per interviewee, however. While all say they would use the chosen pronouns of a person when they are asked to because it is a matter of respect to do so, how strictly they adhere to it differs. Some say that they would always use preferred pronouns regardless of the situation or the interlocutor they are speaking with, while others would more easily switch to gendered pronouns, for example when talking to people that do not know the person or if it is too much of a hassle. Moreover, only a few of the participants said they use gender-neutral pronouns as a starting point when meeting a new person or when the gender of the person is unclear. Most of the interviewees would start with a gendered pronoun and switch when they are asked to, because they feel that most cisgender people are more insulted when you use gender-neutral pronouns for them than non-binary people are when you use gendered pronouns and switch after they ask you to.

3.1.2.4 The meaning of the personal pronouns

As can be expected, the participants agree that each personal pronoun has a different meaning. But this different meaning is dependent on the frame of reference of the one thinking about its meaning. Each interviewee was asked what they thought was the meaning of masculine, feminine and gender-neutral pronouns, and while there were many similarities, there also were many differences. To start with the similarities, for all the participants the masculine and feminine pronouns called up the societal gender roles and stereotypes for their respective gender. According to the interviewees, *hij/hem* fits with a strong, hard, and powerful man and *zij/haar* fits with a caring, soft, and beautiful woman. Gender-neutral pronouns did not bring such a clear picture to the participants mind. However, there was still an expectation of the person wearing gender-neutral clothes; a mix of both stereotypical feminine and masculine ones. That being said, most participants gave a disclaimer with these descriptions to say that they did believe people that do not follow those stereotypes would be able to use their preferred pronoun as well. For example, a strong, hard, and powerful woman fit perfectly well in the category of *zij/haar*.

A big difference between the participants was their relation to the pronouns, however. While some felt the feminine pronouns were more constricting, others felt that the masculine were more narrow. And while some felt immense freedom with gender-neutral pronouns, others felt the feminine ones provided the most freedom. Interestingly, this was not dependent on the gender of the participant. It was not the case that all non-binary people viewed the pronouns the same or that men looked at their masculine pronouns as most restricting. Each individual person had their own perception of the pronouns, due to their specific frame of reference.

3.1.2.5 Remaining points

The last theme pertains to some interesting points that do not fit in one clear theme. Some of these points were mentioned by a few interviewees, others by most of them, but they were all striking enough to be necessary to include. The first of these is the tendency of people to play detective with someone's body to 'guess' which gender the person 'really' is. For example, participant 11 said "*de adamsappel is wel een verklikker*," meaning "the Adam's apple really is a tell-tale". They were actively looking at the person's body to identify their gender, even when the person identified as non-binary, therefore saying their assigned biological sex is not the same as their gender identity. Regardless, people mentioned being able to guess what their 'real' gender was or as which gender they were born. Additionally, more mistakes in pronouns were made when describing the non-binary person's picture when their physical features were taken into account.

This also relates to the second point, because the older participants were more likely to focus on such things than the younger ones. While some younger interviewees approached the picture description similarly, there is a clear difference between the older participants and the younger ones. For example, some of the older interviewees interpreted the question "which personal pronouns do you use for yourself" as "when you talk about yourself, which personal pronouns do you use for yourself" instead of "which personal pronouns do you want others to use when they talk about you", which all of the younger participants understood. Additionally, an older participant used some words that for the younger interviewees might be seen as very offensive, such as 'transvestite' and 'transsexual', because when that participant was young, those were the words that were used to describe drag queens and transgender people.

The last point of this theme relates to the terminology when talking about gender-neutral pronouns for non-binary people. Some interviewees argued against calling the pronouns gender-neutral. It was argued that gender-neutral is not the right terminology, because people are not neutral. This word has the connotation that it is in the middle of something, or that it is lacking in expressiveness. Interviewees felt that neutral sounds like you have men on one side of the gender spectrum, and women on the other side, while non-binary people are in the middle of it. This is not the case, however. Non-binary people exist all over the spectrum, if it even is one. Other ways of thinking of gender is as a circle or a nebula. The preferred term for those interviewees is gender-inclusive pronouns, because it covers all genders instead of implying they are all the middle between men and women.

3.2 Survey Results

In this section of the chapter, the results of the survey will be discussed. In total 121 people participated in the questionnaire, however, two were excluded. The first was exempt because they did not complete the survey and the second because the respondent used the survey to complain about the topic instead of filling it in properly. Their exclusion ensures the results are not skewed. Each of the following tables thus has an N of 119.

In table 3.2 it is shown how often each personal pronoun is used dependent on the social variant of the respondents. For example, female respondents chose *die/diens* as a way to refer to someone on the street 7.8% of the time. The table is divided into gender variants and sexuality variants.

Table 3.2 The effect of the social variants on use of pronouns

Variable	Variants	Gendered	Die/diens	Hen/hun	Die/hun	Hen/diens	Other
Gender	Man	79.4%	9.2%	2.8%	4.5%	1.2%	2.9%
	Woman	79.5%	7.8%	4.5%	3.9%	2%	2.3%
	Non-binary	76.2%	7.8%	1.7%	7.8%	0.6%	5.9%
	Unknown	71.4%	14.3%	9.5%	0%	0%	4.7%
Sexuality	Heterosexual	80.5%	8.5%	3.6%	3%	2.4%	2.1%
	Pansexual / Bisexual	78.3%	6.4%	4.2%	7.2%	1.2%	2.6%
	Queer	70.5%	11.9%	2.4%	10.5%	1%	3.8%
	Gay	81.6%	9.2%	3.2%	5.1%	0%	1%
	Asexual	70.5%	5.7%	2.9%	1%	0%	20%
	Unknown	82.1%	10.7%	3.6%	0%	0%	3.6%

The table shows that all respondents use gendered pronouns to refer to people they see on the street between 70% and 80% of the time. Interestingly, even non-binary people do so. It could have been expected that non-binary people use gender-neutral pronouns to refer to others. This table shows that most of the time, they do not. Additionally, they use the pronouns *hen/hun* the least of all gender variants, their preference being *die/diens* or *die/hun*.

The next few tables show which pronouns the respondents use to refer to certain categories of people. Table 3.3 shows which pronouns are used to refer to heterosexual cis-men and heterosexual cis-women, table 3.4 shows which pronouns are used for LGBTQ+ men and LGBTQ+ women, and table 3.5 shows which pronouns are used for non-binary people.

Table 3.3 Which pronouns are used to describe hetero cis-men or hetero cis-women

	Hij/zijn	Zij/haar	Die/diens	Die/hun	Hen/diens	Other
Men	93.9%	0.3%	2.2%	0.8%	0%	2.7%
Women	0%	94.7%	0.8%	1.7%	0.3%	2.5%

Table 3.4 Which pronouns are used to refer to LGBTQ+ men or LGBTQ+ women

	Hij/zijn	Zij/haar	Die/diens	Hen/hun	Die/hun	Hen/diens	Other
Men	87.7%	1.3%	4%	1%	2%	0.8%	3.2%
Women	1.5%	90%	1.7%	1%	1.8%	1%	3%

Table 3.5 Which pronouns are used to refer to non-binary people

	Gendered	Die/diens	Hen/hun	Die/hun	Hen/diens	Other
Non-binary	34.8%	27.2%	12.8%	14%	4.2%	7%

What is interesting to see is that none of the pronouns is ever used 100% of the time. For hetero cis-men and hetero cis-women, it could be expected that the respective gendered pronoun would be used 100% of the time. This is not the case, however, for men *hij/zijn* was only used 93.3% of the time and for women *zij/haar* was only used 94.7% of the time. Moreover, the difference between table 3.2 and 3.3 shows that being LGBTQ+ does change

the usage of pronouns. As can be seen, both LGBTQ+ men and LGBTQ+ women are less often referred to with their expected gendered pronoun than hetero cis-men or hetero cis-women. For men it decreases from 93.9% to 87.7% and for women it decreases from 94.7% to 90%. Clearly, being LGBTQ+ influences people's perception of which pronoun is the right one.

Table 3.5 shows that the most common pronouns that are used to refer to non-binary people are gendered pronouns, namely 34.8%. However, 65.2% of the time, gender-neutral pronouns are used, even though they are different pronouns. This means that more than half of the time, the respondents chose a gender-neutral pronoun instead of a gendered pronoun, which is fairly surprising. It could have been expected that people use gendered pronouns most of the time, as that is what still happens in real life.

Tables 3.6 and 3.7 look further into the pronouns used for non-binary people. Table 3.6 shows which pronouns respondents thought that the gender variants and sexuality variants used. For example, respondents thought that queer people use gendered pronouns 30% of the time to refer to non-binary people.

Table 3.6 Usage of pronouns to refer to non-binary people

Variable	Variants	Gendered	Die/diens	Hen/hun	Die/hun	Hen/diens	Other
Gender	Man	36.4%	28.2%	11.8%	3.6%	4.1%	5.6%
	Woman	34.8%	27.7%	14.8%	13.5%	5.2%	3.9%
	Non-binary	34.1%	28.2%	7.05%	17.6%	1.2%	15.3%
	Unknown	20%	20%	40%	0%	0%	20%
Sexuality	Heterosexual	37.9%	29.3%	11%	10%	5.9%	5.9%
	Pansexual / Bisexual	32.6%	17.8%	17.8%	20.7%	5.2%	5.9%
	Queer	30%	28%	10%	24%	4%	6%
	Gay	30.7%	36%	13.3%	18.7%	0%	1.3%
	Asexual	40%	24%	12%	4%	0%	20%
	Unknown	35%	35%	15%	0%	0%	15%

The main tendency in this table is that regardless of the variant, gendered pronouns were thought to be used between 30% and 40% of the time, excluding the unknown gender variant. The other pronouns are also fairly evenly thought to be used between the variants, however, it decreases when you move further right in the table. *Hen/diens* is used a lot less than *die/diens*.

In table 3.7 the respondents are divided into the same categories as the imagined people of the questionnaire instead of the previous variants of gender and sexuality. In the survey, the participants were asked to fill in what pronouns they would use when they fit the category that was asked. So for example, when a LGBTQ+ man filled in the survey, he answered what pronouns he would use when asked what he thought a LGBTQ+ man would use. This table shows what pronouns are used by the respondents for non-binary people.

Table 3.7 Respondent category are matched to survey categories to see per category which pronouns are used.

Respondent	Gendered	Die/diens	Hen/hun	Die/hun	Hen/diens	Other
Hetero cis-man	60%	25%	0%	5%	5%	5%
Hetero cis-woman	59.5%	13.5%	2.7%	10.8%	2.7%	10.8%
Non-binary	0%	41.2%	11.8%	35.3%	0%	11.8%
LGBTQ+ woman	9.5%	33.3%	28.6%	19%	4.8%	4.8%
LGBTQ+ man	22.2%	27.8%	22.2%	27.8%	0%	0%

It can be seen in the table that hetero cis-people use gendered pronouns for non-binary people lot more than LGBTQ+ people do. Hetero cis-people use gendered pronouns around 60% of the time, while the other respondent categories use it maximum 22.2% of the time. Moreover, non-binary people stand out in this table, as they do not use gendered pronouns for non-binary people ever. Their preference for the gender-neutral usage of *die/diens* is in accordance with LGBTQ+ people. Non-binary people use those pronouns 41.2% of the time, which is their highest percentage, and for LGBTQ+ people *die/diens* is also used most frequently. These gender-neutral pronouns are also the ones most frequently used by hetero cis-people, with 25% for hetero cis-men and 13,5% for hetero cis-women. *Die/hun* is also a popular choice for the LGBTQ+ people; non-binary and LGBTQ+ men use this option the second most, while LGBTQ+ women have *hen/hun* as their second choice. For hetero cis-people *die/hun* has a preference over *hen/hun* regardless of gender.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This thesis has analysed the current use of gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch to help solve the issues surrounding them. Presently, non-binary people are not able to use the Dutch language to fully be themselves, and this needs to be solved. Through studying previous literature, it was established that there has not been any substantive research into Dutch gender-neutral pronouns, and this thesis has tried to be a first step to create more academic interest. Interviewing Dutch LGBTQ+ people as well as conducting a survey amongst Dutch speakers has provided insight into the situation and issues surrounding the usage of gender-neutral pronouns.

4.1 Main results

The results of the interviews and survey were multitude. During the interviews it became apparent that using gendered pronouns is a lot easier and unconsciously done than using gender-neutral pronouns. Considerably more words were used to describe a non-binary person using gender-neutral pronouns than to describe a man or a woman using gendered pronouns. In answering other questions, the interviewees themselves mentioned that this was purposefully done. It was reported by multiple people that they often make an effort to talk around using gender-neutral pronouns by rethinking a sentence or using the first name of the person they were talking about. Moreover, talking around gender-neutral pronouns took off the pressure of using them, which multiple participants said increased the difficulty of using them. This 'talking around' can be seen by the differences in total words. It seems that people rather use more words than use gender-neutral pronouns.

Other results of the interview concerned the question if neo-pronouns are the solution for gender-neutral pronouns, or that existing pronouns from the language should be adapted and used. There are multiple neo-pronouns already in use in Dutch, such as *lij/leem*, as reported by an interviewee, or *nij/ner/nijr* as 'Het 'Raad van Neutrale Taal' collectief' claims. However, neither they nor any other neo-pronouns are used by the non-binary interviewees, and often neither they nor the other interviewees knew of them. Nonetheless, the request for a new word to be established came multiple times. Interestingly, these requests most often came from cisgender people. The currently most often used gender-neutral pronouns of *die/diens* or *hen/hun* or a combination of those did not meet their approval, so they asked for the establishment of a new word. Which new word, however, they did not agree on. While some interviewees came up with their own word, others criticised those again. However, there was agreement that non-binary people should bring forward the pronouns they want to be used, instead of cisgender people enforcing their choice.

The survey results showed that in most cases, people use gendered pronouns when the preferred pronouns are unknown. Surprisingly, even non-binary people choose to do so. In accordance with the interviews, the survey showed it is unlikely that any person refers to another with gender-neutral pronouns, unless specifically asked. Contrastingly, not all respondents used the correct gendered pronouns to refer to hetero cisgender people, so there are some people who use gender-neutral or incorrect gendered pronouns for them. This increases when the person being referred to is LGBTQ+; for both men and women the percentage of people using their correct personal pronouns declined. To refer to non-binary people, most people used gender-neutral pronouns, but there was no clear agreement on

which pronouns to use. The pronouns which were used the most often were gendered ones (though less than half of the time), with *die/diens* being the second most used. Non-binary people never use gendered pronouns for other non-binary people, but also did not fully agree on which ones were best. However, *die/diens* and *die/hun* were the two most frequently used options, so the survey showed that *die* is the preferred third person singular pronoun in subject position.

4.2 Literature comparison

Besides the interviews and the survey, a literature review was performed to analyse what previous research exists on the topic of Dutch gender-neutral personal pronouns. As it turned out, not many studies have been done on this topic before. One example of a study that looked into Dutch gender-neutral pronouns was done by Kleiboer in 2019, where they translated the gender-neutral English rules of roller derby into Dutch. In that study, the author chose to translate ‘they’ and ‘them’ into *hen* and *hun*, their literal translations respectively. This was chosen on account of the survey results of Transgender Netwerk Nederland from 2016, where *hen/hen/hun* was the most popular gender-neutral option. This contrasts with the results from this study, where *hen/hun* was never the most frequently used option in the survey, and most interviewees criticised it as well. Moreover, in this study’s survey, *die/diens* and *die/hun* were most popular with non-binary people, suggesting that *die* is a more preferred personal pronoun in the subject position than *hen*. The difference between the result of the TNN and the current survey might be explained by the five year difference. It is possible that in these years, opinions have changed on which pronoun is preferred. In addition, it is also possible that the difference is caused by the respondents. The Transgender Netwerk Nederland had a wider range to circuit their survey than this thesis had. It is possible that the survey conducted for this thesis reached only those who preferred *die* over *hen* by coincidence.

Other research on the gender of Dutch pronouns has not focussed on gender-neutrality, however. Audring (2006), Kochari and Flecken (2019), Kraaikamp (2012) and Otten and Van Berkum (2009) all studied Dutch pronouns or the Dutch gender system, but ignored a third gender-neutral personal pronoun. Contrastingly, research on other languages and their gender-neutral pronouns has happened more often. Swedish and its addition of *hen* for example, has been studied by researchers such as Vergoossen et al. (2020) and by Gustafsson Sendén et al. (2015). The former studied the processing cost of the new gender-neutral pronoun versus the known gendered pronouns, and found there was no significant difference between them. The latter studied the attitude and behaviour of Swedes towards the new gender-neutral pronoun and how it changed over time. In their study Gustafsson Sendén et al. found that the attitude towards *hen* improved between 2012 and 2015, and it was used more often in 2015 as well. While these studies are not very comparable to the current one, they do give inspiration for further research into the Dutch gender-neutral pronouns.

4.3 Answers to the Research Questions

Although the literature review has shown that there have not been many comparable studies to this one conducted, the results from the interviews and the survey do help answer

the research questions. The first sub-question that can be answered is “The first sub-question that can be answered is “How and when do Dutch LGBTQ+ people use gender-neutral third person singular pronouns?” The interviews have shown that gender-neutral pronouns are most often used when people specifically asked for them. If that happens, all interviewees reported to be willing to use them. However, not all interviewees would adhere to the request as strictly. Cisgender LGBTQ+ people are more likely to stray from the preferred pronouns in certain situations than transgender people. An example of a situation where a cisgender person might use gendered pronouns even though gender-neutral pronouns are preferred is when the person they are talking to does not know the person they are referring to. Additionally, most interviewees would not use gender-neutral pronouns to refer to people of which they did not know the preferred pronouns. They would talk around using personal pronouns to avoid having to mention any.

The second sub-question that will be answered is “Which pronouns do Dutch speakers use when discussing strangers on the street?” This question was answered by the results of the survey. Most often, people use gendered pronouns to refer to people on the street, regardless of gender and sexuality. However, the survey showed that LGBTQ+ people are less often referred to with their correct pronouns than cisgender heterosexual people. Moreover, the data suggest that non-binary people (when recognizable as such) are most often referred to by using gender-neutral pronouns, and non-binary people only use gender-neutral pronouns for other non-binary people. However, there is not one clear favourite set of gender-neutral pronouns. While *die* is most often used as the gender-neutral subject, *diens* and *hun* are both popular as the gender-neutral possessive pronoun.

“What is the opinion of Dutch LGBTQ+ people about gender-neutral third person singular pronouns?” is the third sub-question that is discussed. Important to mention is that all options for gender-neutral pronouns have received criticism. *Die/diens* are thought to be too distant, unfriendly or impersonal, *hen/hun* are originally plural pronouns and thus argued to be grammatically incorrect when used for only one person, and neo-pronouns are seen as strange or ugly. That being said, no interviewee was against the usage of a gender-neutral pronoun and all reported that they would respect and use whichever pronoun someone would ask them to use. Furthermore, all interviewees said they would or did find it hard to use gender-neutral pronouns, and probably would or did make mistakes in their usage of them.

The last sub-question that will be answered is “What do Dutch LGBTQ+ people think the meaning of Dutch third person singular pronouns is?” The short answer to this question is that the Dutch LGBTQ+ people understand gender-neutral pronouns to refer to people who are not a man or a woman. The longer answer is that these gender-neutral pronouns raised certain expectations of the people who use them. Overall, the notion of gender-neutral pronouns brought up a less clear stereotype than gendered pronouns did. This, however, does not mean that there are no expectations of people who use gender-neutral pronouns at all. Supposedly, people who use gender-neutral pronouns dress gender-neutrally as well, with a mix of masculine and feminine clothing and features, and their personality is outspoken and extravagant.

All in all, these four sub-questions have helped answer the main research question of this study “How are Dutch gender-neutral third person singular pronouns used, evaluated and understood by Dutch speakers, especially LGBTQ+ people?” The conclusion that can be drawn from the sub-questions is that while people are willing to use gender-neutral pronouns, there is no one agreed upon pronoun that is used yet. There are some strong contenders, such as *die* in subject position, but even that one receives a lot of criticism. While finding one set of gender-neutral pronouns that everybody agrees on might not be possible, currently the situation is too vague for many people to use any gender-neutral pronouns.

4.4 Limitations

Although this thesis has found valuable data that gives us new insights into the usage of gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch, there are some limitations. The first is that fairly little natural speech analysis has been done for this study. While during the interviews three questions generated natural speech regarding the use of personal pronouns, all other results come from participants reporting on what they think they (would) say. While this is not inherently bad, it is the case that people often think they behave differently than they actually do. So, while for example most interviewees reported that they would use gender-neutral pronouns to refer to a person regardless of the situation, natural speech analysis would show if this is actually the case. There is a chance that this is not true, which this study cannot show. In addition, natural speech analysis gives an extra set of tools to study the semantics of gender-neutral pronouns, as it helps study how the words are actually used. It is possible that participants report one meaning to the researcher, while using it in different ways unconsciously. If natural speech were analysed more, the study could address the actual meaning of gender-neutral pronouns versus what people think they mean.

A second limitation is the phrasing of the questions of the survey. Respondents stated that the survey was very confusing at some points, and that it felt like a reading test more than a survey. Additionally, the type of questions strongly influenced the results. The questions were phrased in such a way, that the respondent was asked to answer which personal pronouns they thought other people might use. While this is valuable information, the answers of the respondents are not the truth of what people actually do. So, for example, in certain cases, the results might show which pronouns 119 people think LGBTQ+ men use instead of what they actually use. It is not certain that these pronouns are the same as what is genuinely used by LGBTQ+ men, even though the results have been analysed as such. This could have caused skewed results.

A last limitation of the study is the consequence of using the snowball method to find participants, especially for the interviews. The snowball method entails asking a participant that is also a gatekeeper to provide other participants. In the case of this study, friends and family of the researcher were asked to participate in the survey and interviews, as well as requested to find other participants. While this enabled the researcher to find many participants, especially for the survey, this also led to a fairly unvaried group of participants. For the survey this was less problematic, as many more people participated, ensuring variability. Additionally, the survey was conducted anonymously, so it is unclear how representative the respondents were. For the interview, however, it was clear that there were some issues with variability. All interviewees were white and most were university

students or had already received a university education. White highly educated people is clearly only one part of the LGBTQ+ community, and one could argue that it is even an elitist representation of the community. That the results of this study were based on this group of people could have skewed the results, as it is very well possible that the Dutch LGBTQ+ community as a whole has a very different way of using gender-neutral pronouns that is not shown by this study, due to the representation of only one part of the community.

4.5 Further research

This thesis has taken a first step in studying the usage of gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch, but more research is necessary. A few directions in which this further research can go will be discussed here. The first recommendation will help combat one of the limitations of this study by advising to study more natural speech in which gender-neutral pronouns are used. A truer insight into how and when Dutch speakers use gender-neutral pronouns will be gained by doing so. Additionally, a wider survey can find what the opinions of 'regular' Dutch people on gender-neutral pronouns are. The study by Gustafsson Sendén et al. (2015), where attitudes and behaviours of Swedes towards the new gender-neutral pronoun *hen* were analysed, could be replicated or adapted for Dutch to do so. Another way could be to do a corpus analysis of natural speech corpus.

Another direction a study could take is to do an analysis of attitude and usage of Dutch gender-neutral pronouns by linguistic experts. As these pronouns are currently developing and a research gap concerning them exists, it is highly possible there are studies being conducted in present time. It will be interesting to see what scholars in the linguistics field are studying, and a meta-analysis of their research might bring new insights in Dutch gender-neutral pronouns. In addition, it is pertinent to understand what organisations such as *Taalunie* 'Language union' and *Genootschap Onze Taal* 'Society Our Language' think of gender-neutral pronouns. These organisations give advice on Dutch language use, so their opinion and usage of gender-neutral pronouns could be crucial in accomplishing wider acceptance of them. Although it is possible they are against the usage of them, as both, but especially *Genootschap Onze Taal*, are generally very conservative and traditional in their opinions on how Dutch should be used, it will be interesting to see what they think.

A last recommendation for further research, while not very linguistically minded, is very important for the usage of gender-neutral pronouns. Namely, the number of non-binary people in the Netherlands should be researched. Some studies from across the world found that about one third of transgender people identify as non-binary, and the most recent one from Belgium about 22% of transgender people reported to identify as genderqueer (*Transgender Infopunt*, n.d.). However, clearer numbers about how many people use Dutch gender-neutral pronouns do not exist. A better view on this would help raise awareness of this group of people, as well as encourage the establishment of a gender-neutral pronoun.

4.6 Final notes

All in all, this research has tried to help make the Dutch language a little bit more inclusive. By studying the usage of gender-neutral pronouns, space has been made for not only men and women to use Dutch to its fullest extent, but also for non-binary people of other genders to do so. Through this research, more awareness has been raised for this issue, as

participants, friends, and family of the researcher and those who read this thesis will have gained a little more knowledge and understanding of it. In addition, the study encourages the faster establishment of a gender-neutral pronoun that can be widely accepted, as more insight has been gained in which pronouns are most popular and which are seen as more problematic. The thesis has also helped create understanding on how to use the pronouns, as the interviewees were able to ask the researcher questions on how to do so. The interviews were exercises in two-sided information sharing, as the interviewer gained insight in the usage of gender-neutral pronouns, and the interviewees gained knowledge on topics such as gender-neutral pronouns, but also LGBTQ+ information in general. A last important feature of the study is that it will help spark academic interest in this field. As it stands, gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch have been analysed very little. By studying the topic, a first step has been taken in bridging this gap, and by raising awareness of the topic in general, academic interest will have increased.

To finish the thesis, here are some final thoughts. Something that came up during the interviews was that learning how to use gender-neutral pronouns is like learning a new language. These new pronouns are words you do not fully understand or know how to use, and when you make a mistake, there is a high possibility of being offensive. Moreover, you do not use the language every day, so it is very hard to become fluent in it. Making mistakes is therefore only natural. While they can indeed hurt the person you misgender, by realising your mistake and changing your language use, no real harm is done. Learning new things is always hard, especially when you have to change your old habits to do so. This is something most people do not understand yet, it seems. The fear of making mistakes with using gender-neutral pronouns was greater than the urge to practice using them, so people would rather talk around the pronouns than actually use them. Another issue with using gender-neutral pronouns that came up is that because the meaning of gender-neutral pronouns is often not fully clear, for example, *hen* is plural, the communicative purpose of language is undermined. Language exists to be able to communicate with others. If the meaning of certain words is changed, or new words are added, the ability to communicate with others might decrease. This is why it is important to establish one set of gender-neutral pronouns, so that it is easiest to learn for those that do not use the words every day. One option for all people who choose gender-neutral pronouns is a lot easier to learn than one option per person. While non-binary people might enjoy the freedom and individuality they obtain when choosing their own words to use as gender-neutral pronouns, the likelihood of acceptance decreases.

That being said, criticism against gender-neutral pronouns will always exist in one way or another. If it is not transphobia that causes people to argue against them, it will be language purists that want the language to go against itself and stay stagnant instead of ever-changing. Unfortunately, criticism and judgement are not new to people from the LGBTQ+ community, but this essay has tried to help in diminishing it a little bit by generating insight into the usage of gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch. While a first step might be taken by doing so, more needs to be done before non-binary people and their pronouns are fully accepted in the Netherlands. But if there is something the LGBTQ+ community is good at, it is fighting for acceptance, and it will be interesting to see where the road to accepted gender-neutral pronouns will lead next.

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Appendix

1. The Interview

1. **Wat is je gender identiteit?**
What is your gender identity?
2. **Wat is je seksuele identiteit?**
What is your sexual identity?
3. **Wat is je leeftijd?**
What is your age?
4. **Welke persoonlijk voornaamwoorden gebruik jij voor jezelf?**
Which personal pronouns do you prefer for yourself?
5. **Welke Nederlandse gender-neutrale voornaamwoorden ken jij?**
Which Dutch personal pronouns do you know?
6. **Welke van die voornaamwoorden heeft jouw voorkeur en waarom?**
Which of these pronouns has your preference, and why?
7. **Wanneer gebruik jij gender-neutrale voornaamwoorden, niet als iemand vraagt, maar vanuit jezelf?**
When do you use gender-neutral pronouns in situations other than when someone has asked you to?
8. **Wat is voor jou de betekenis van de voornaamwoorden 'hij/hem'? Wat zijn de karakteristieken van iemand die deze voornaamwoorden gebruikt?**
What do you think is the meaning of the personal pronouns 'he/him'? What are the characteristics of someone who uses these pronouns?
9. **Deze persoon gebruikt 'hij/hem' voor zichzelf. Omschrijf deze foto en de persoon.**
This person's chosen pronouns are 'he/him'. Describe the picture and the person on it.



10. **Wat is voor jou de betekenis van de voornaamwoorden 'zij/haar'? Wat zijn de karakteristieken van iemand die deze voornaamwoorden gebruikt?**
What do you think is the meaning of the personal pronouns 'she/her'? What are the characteristics of someone who uses these pronouns?
11. **Deze persoon gebruikt 'zij/haar' voor zichzelf. Omschrijf deze foto en de persoon**
This person's chosen pronouns are 'she/her'. Describe the picture and the person on it.



- 12. Wat is voor jou de betekenis van gender-neutrale voornaamwoorden? Wat zijn de karakteristieken van iemand die deze voornaamwoorden gebruikt?**

What do you think is the meaning of the personal pronouns 'she/her'? What are the characteristics of someone who uses these pronouns?

- 13. Deze persoon gebruikt gender-neutrale voornaamwoorden voor zichzelf. Omschrijf deze foto en de persoon.**

This person's chosen pronouns are gender-neutral. Describe the picture and the person on it.



- 14. Is er voor jou een waardeverschil tussen de persoonlijk voornaamwoorden? Waarom?**

Do you feel there is a difference in value between the personal pronouns? If so, why?

- 15. Wanneer zou je de gekozen persoonlijk voornaamwoorden van iemand niet gebruiken, en waarom?**

When would you choose to not use the chosen personal pronouns of someone, and why?

- 16. Heb je nog opmerkingen of gedachten die je over dit onderwerp kwijt wilt?**

Do you have any comments or thoughts left that you want to share about this topic?

2. The Survey

Beste deelnemer, bedankt dat je mij wilt helpen door het invullen van deze enquête! Voor mijn Master Taalwetenschappen aan de Universiteit Leiden doe ik onderzoek naar het gebruik van gender-neutrale voornaamwoorden in het Nederlands. De antwoorden van deze vragenlijst zullen mij hier heel erg bij helpen. De verzamelde gegevens worden anoniem geanalyseerd. Bovendien is je deelname volledig vrijwillig. Onderin het vragenformulier is er de mogelijkheid vragen, opmerkingen en aanmerkingen te schrijven.

Een kleine uitleg van de termen die genoemd worden in de vragenlijst:

Cis-man/cis-vrouw: Iemand die cis is, heeft bij de geboorte het juiste gender aangewezen gekregen. Bijvoorbeeld een man die bij zijn geboorte als jongentje werd erkend, of een vrouw als meisje.

Non-binair persoon: Dit is iemand die niet in de binaire verdeling van gender past. Deze persoon is niet man óf vrouw, en is ook niet cis.

LHBTQ+ man/vrouw: Dit is een persoon die niet hetero of cis is. Non-binaire personen zijn wel onderdeel van de LHBTQ+ gemeenschap, maar zijn geen LHBTQ+ mannen of LHBTQ+ vrouwen (omdat zij dus geen man of vrouw zijn).

De enquête vraagt je om aan te geven welke voornaamwoorden jij denkt dat een bepaalde categorie mensen gebruikt voor een andere categorie mensen. Het is de bedoeling dat je bij de vragen uitgaat van de gemiddelde persoon in de genoemde categorie, wat denk je dat diegene zou zeggen? Val jijzelf in de genoemde categorie? Vul dan in wat je zelf zou doen in de geschetste situatie.

Er zijn 26 vragen, en het invullen duurt zo'n 5 minuten.

Disclaimer Ik ben mij ervan bewust dat je aan een vreemdeling op straat niet kan zien wat diens gender of seksualiteit is. Voor deze enquête worden situaties geschetst waarin dat wel gebeurt. Dit is een versimpelde werkelijkheid zodat de vragen makkelijker te beantwoorden zijn, niet omdat ik denk dat iedereen op hun uiterlijk gecategoriseerd kan worden.

1. Wat is je gender identiteit?

Gender identiteit draait om het gevoel dat zegt of je bijvoorbeeld man, vrouw, beide of geen van beide bent. Het antwoord kan bijvoorbeeld zijn man of vrouw, maar ook non-binair, trans masculien of weet ik niet.

2. Wat is je seksuele identiteit?

"Seksuele identiteit verwijst naar hoe iemand over zichzelf denkt (zelfbeeld) als seksueel wezen en dat al dan niet deelt met [diens] omgeving."

<https://www.tijdschriftdepsycholoog.nl/wetenschap/seksuele-identiteit-en-genderidentiteit/>

Het antwoord op deze vraag kan bijvoorbeeld zijn: biseksueel, aseksueel, queer, hetero of weet ik niet.

3. Wat is je leeftijd?

4. Welke persoonlijk voornaamwoorden wil je dat anderen gebruiken voor jou?

- a) Hij/hem
- b) Zij/haar
- c) Die/diens
- d) Hen/hun
- e) Anders, namelijk

5. Op welke manier zou een hetero cis-man een non-binair persoon op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas./ Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- b) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- c) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- d) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- f) Anders, namelijk

6. Op welke manier zou een hetero cis-man een LHBTQ+ man op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

7. Op welke manier zou een hetero cis-man een LHBTQ+ vrouw op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

8. Op welke manier zou een hetero cis-vrouw een non-binair persoon op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas./ Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- b) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- c) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- d) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- f) Anders, namelijk

9. Op welke manier zou een hetero cis-vrouw een LHBTQ+ man op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

10. Op welke manier zou een hetero cis-vrouw een LHBTQ+ vrouw op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

11. Op welke manier zou een non-binair persoon een hetero cis-man op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

12. Op welke manier zou een non-binair persoon een hetero cis-vrouw op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

13. Op welke manier zou een non-binair persoon een non-binair persoon op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas./ Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- b) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- c) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- d) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- f) Anders, namelijk

14. Op welke manier zou een non-binair persoon een LHBTQ+ man op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

15. Op welke manier zou een non-binair persoon een LHBTQ+ vrouw op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

16. Op welke manier zou een LHBTQ+ man een hetero cis-man op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

17. Op welke manier zou een LHBTQ+ man een hetero cis-vrouw op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

18. Op welke manier zou een LHBTQ+ man een non-binair persoon op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas./ Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- b) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- c) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- d) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- f) Anders, namelijk

19. Op welke manier zou een LHBTQ+ man een LHBTQ+ man op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

20. Op welke manier zou een LHBTQ+ man een LHBTQ+ vrouw op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

21. Op welke manier zou een LHBTQ+ vrouw een hetero cis- man op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

22. Op welke manier zou een LHBTQ+ vrouw een hetero cis-vrouw op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

23. Op welke manier zou een LHBTQ+ vrouw een non-binair persoon op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas./ Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- b) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- c) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- d) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- f) Anders, namelijk

24. Op welke manier zou een LHBTQ+ vrouw een LHBTQ+ man op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

25. Op welke manier zou een LHBTQ+ vrouw een LHBTQ+ vrouw op straat omschrijven, volgens jou?

- a) Hij loopt daar met zijn tas.
- b) Zij loopt daar met haar tas.
- c) Die loopt daar met diens tas.
- d) Hen loopt daar met hun tas.
- e) Die loopt daar met hun tas.
- f) Hen loopt daar met diens tas
- g) Anders, namelijk

26. Heb je nog vragen, opmerkingen of aanmerkingen?