

**AN ANALYSIS OF NETIZENS' COMMENTS ON GENDER
PRONOUNS IN ELLIOT PAGE'S COMING OUT
INSTAGRAM POST**

THESIS

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM MALANG**

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**AN ANALYSIS OF NETIZENS' COMMENTS ON GENDER
PRONOUNS IN ELLIOT PAGE'S COMING OUT INSTAGRAM POST**

THESIS

Presented to

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
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2022

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **An Analysis of Netizens' Comments on Gender Pronouns in Elliot Page's Coming Out Instagram Post** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, June 30 2022

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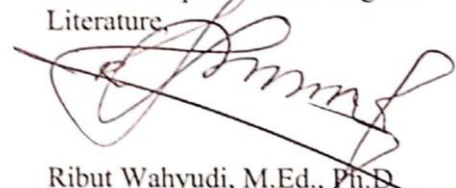
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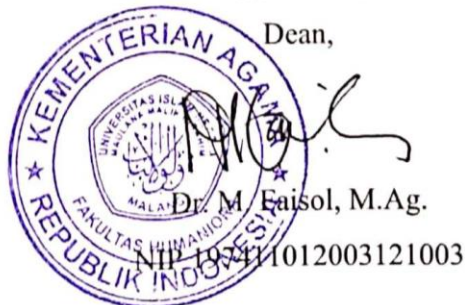
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MOTTO

The decentralized nature of online conversations often makes it easier to manipulate public opinion, both domestically and globally. Regimes that once relied on centralized systems of media control can now deliver ideological messages more subtly, with the help of little-known intermediaries like anonymous commenters on websites.

- Evgeny Morozov

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Alhamdulillah Rabbil Alamin, Gratitude for His grace and guidance so that the writing of the thesis entitled **An Analysis of Netizens' Comments on Gender Pronouns in Elliot Page's Coming Out Instagram Post** could be finished well. We offer prayers and greetings to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who gave us *uswatun hasanah* which guided us from the dark era of ignorance to an era full of knowledge and light of Islam. By always following him, may we be included in his people's ranks and belong to those who are fortunate to receive his intercession. Amen.

The researcher is aware that working on this thesis can be completed with all prayers, motivation, guidance, and assistance from various parties. Therefore, with great humility, the researcher would like to thank you profusely to: Prof. Dr. H.M Zainuddin, M.A., as the Rector of Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang; Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag., as the Dean of Humanities Faculty of Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang; Ribut Wahyudi, M.Ed., Ph.D., as the Head of English Literature Department of Humanities Faculty of Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang; and Staff of Humanities Faculty of Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, who support the implementation of various academic agendas and activities up to the trial of this thesis.

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My parents who always pray for the good for me, and my three little brothers who have helped me survive this far, I hope I can be a good sister and daughter to my family, thank you for being my home; My comrades in arms are Nanda, Endhira, Sinta, Iing, Sri, Uswa, and Adi who always support me with the sense of togetherness that has given me the will to fight and survive. Thank you, a lot, for being friends with me. May goodness and happiness always be with you.

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With the completion of this thesis, hopefully, the knowledge that we have gained during the study can provide benefits for life in this world and the hereafter.

As a human being who never escapes from mistakes, the researcher sincerely hopes for criticism and suggestions from all parties for the perfection of this thesis in an effort to improve it in the future.

Malang, June 30 2022

The Researcher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dara Mela Ayu', with a small dot at the end.

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ABSTRACT

Ayu, Dara Mela. (2022). *An Analysis of Netizens' Comments on Gender Pronouns in Elliot Page's Coming Out Instagram Post*. Thesis, Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Vita Nur Santi, M. Pd.

Key word: Gender pronouns, netizens' comments, engagement system

Concerning gender issues, the use of third-person singular pronouns in English brings up both pros and cons. This research focuses on netizens' comments regarding the use of gender pronouns in Elliot Page's, a transgender actor who comes out, changing his pronouns to 'he/they', in his Instagram on December 2, 2020. This research aims to categorize the netizens' comments based on their views on the gender pronouns used by Elliot. This research applies a qualitative descriptive approach through an analysis of the netizens' comments. The Data are from the commentary column of Elliot Page's coming out Instagram post which has totaled over 140,000 comments at the time of writing. The comments were chosen only those concerned with the issue of gender pronouns, not the general reaction of netizens to the figure of Elliot Page. This research focuses on categorizing the netizens' comments utilizing the engagement system from appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005). Among the many comments, netizens fall into three positions based on their views in this analysis, namely the position of supporting, repudiating, and neutral or being compromised on the use of gender pronouns by Elliot. The research is expected to help people understand, as well as those who are not familiar with gender pronoun issues in English-speaking countries.

مستخلص البحث

أيو، دارا ميلا. (2022). تحليل تعليقات مستخدمي الإنترنت على ضمائر الجنس لدى منشورات الإنستغرام إلبوت بيج. البحث الجامعي، قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرفة: فيتا نور ساتني الماجستير.

الكلمة الأساسية: ضمائر الجنس ، تعليقات مستخدمي الإنترنت، نظام الربط

فيما يتعلق بقضايا الجنس، غالبًا ما يثير استخدام ضمائر الشخص الثالث في اللغة الإنجليزية له إيجابيات وسلبيات. ركز هذا البحث على تعليقات مستخدمي الإنترنت تتعلق باستخدام ضمائر الجنس في منشورات الإنستغرام صفحة إلبوت، هو ممثل متحولين جنسيًا قام بتغيير ضمائره إلى "هو/هم" في التاريخ 2 ديسمبر 2020. يهدف هذا البحث لتصنيف تعليقات مستخدمي الإنترنت بناءً على آرائهم على ضمائر الجنس التي يستخدمها إلبوت. استخدم هذا البحث المنهج الوصفي النوعي من خلال التحليل النقدي لتعليقات مستخدمي الإنترنت. أتت البيانات من عمود التعليقات في منشورات الإنستغرام إلبوت بيج التي يبلغ مجموعها أكثر من 140.000 تعليق في وقت كتابة هذا التقرير. التعليقات المختارة تتعلق بمسألة ضمائر الجنس فقط، وليس رد الفعل العام لمستخدمي الإنترنت على شخصية إلبوت بيج. تركز هذا البحث على تصنيف تعليقات مستخدمي الإنترنت لتحليلها، استخدم نظام الارتباط لنظرية الحكم (مرتين و ويط، 2005). من بين التعليقات العديدة، ينقسم مستخدمو الإنترنت إلى ثلاثة مواقف بناءً على آرائهم في هذا التحليل، يعني موقف الدعم، والرفض، والحيادية أو المساومة على استخدام إلبوت لضمائر الجنس. يتوقع هذا البحث أن يساعد المجتمع على فهم هذه المسألة، خاصة بالنسبة لأولئك الذين لا يعرفون مسألة ضمائر الجنس في البلدان الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية.

ABSTRAK

Ayu, Dara Mela. (2022). *Analisis Komentar Netizen terhadap Kata Ganti Gender di Postingan Instagram Coming Out Elliot Page*. Skripsi, Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Dosen Pembimbing: Vita Nur Santi, M. Pd.

Kata kunci: Kata ganti gender, komentar netizen, sistem keterkaitan

Berkaitan dengan masalah gender, penggunaan kata ganti orang ketiga tunggal dalam bahasa Inggris kerap menimbulkan pro dan kontra. Penelitian ini berfokus pada komentar netizen mengenai penggunaan kata ganti gender pada postingan Instagram Elliot Page, aktor transgender yang mengganti kata gantinya menjadi 'he/they', pada tanggal 2 Desember 2020. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengklasifikasikan komentar netizen berdasarkan pandangan mereka terhadap kata ganti gender yang digunakan oleh Elliot. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan menganalisis komentar para netizen. Data berasal dari kolom komentar postingan Instagram Elliot Page yang berjumlah lebih dari 140.000 komentar pada saat penulisan ini. Komentar yang dipilih hanya yang berkaitan dengan isu kata ganti gender, bukan reaksi umum netizen terhadap sosok Elliot Page. Studi ini berkonsentrasi pada pengelompokan komentar netizen menggunakan sistem keterkaitan dari teori penilaian (Martin & White, 2005). Dari sekian banyak komentar tersebut, netizen terbagi menjadi tiga posisi berdasarkan pandangan mereka dalam analisis ini, yakni posisi mendukung, menolak, dan netral atau kompromi terhadap penggunaan kata ganti gender oleh Elliot. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat membantu pembaca untuk memahami persoalan ini, terlebih bagi yang belum mengetahui isu kata ganti gender di negara-negara berbahasa Inggris.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section contains information about the background of the research, research questions, significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research, definitions of key terms, and the previous studies.

A. Background of the Research

As a language that utilizes gender-specific third-person singular pronouns, *he* and *she*, English is frequently criticized by the native speakers, especially those who repudiate the existence of a gender binary system. For numerous reasons, English authors and speakers have found it difficult with the usage of pronouns for some time (Krauthame, 2021). In history, the use of pronouns has undergone several changes, such as the use of the second-person singular pronouns *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, and *thine* that have been replaced by *you*, *your*, and *yours* which also can be used for the plural forms. Given this precedent, many linguists would not be surprised if one day the use of third-person singular pronouns in English today will change. By reason, pronouns are often a struggle for linguistic autonomy and the right to self-definition (Knisely & Paiz, 2021).

Concerning gender issues, utilizing third-person singular pronouns in English provokes pros and cons. People lament that there are no third-person singular pronouns for those who are non-binary or gender undetermined. The use of the generic *he* is even considered bias in the language because mostly it only

applies to men even though it is intended for either women or men. The mixed pronoun is one of the pronominal alternatives recommended for its replacement, for example, *he* or *she* (often *s/he* in written language), the generic use of *she*, new pronouns (e.g. *ze*, *zir*, *zirs*), and singular *they* (Pauwels & Winter, 2006). In addition, one of the recent studies by Stormbom (2020), analyzing pronominal references, shows that the non-gendered singular *they* is the most common third person singular pronoun overall, closely followed by the gendered *he* or *she* forms.

The active promotion of combined pronouns is one example of non-sexist language reform associated, initially, with second-wave feminism in the 1960s-1990s (Paterson, 2020). The growing wave of feminism that swept across the culture, made everyone aware of the sexism inherent in language, including the generic *he* which finally revealed itself as sexist (Krauthame, 2021). This is why many argue that pronouns are not only a part of speech but are also political. As with other sensitive and complex topics, gender terminology changes as ideas about gender change (Baron, 2020). Since terminology will continue to evolve along with our understanding of things, what seems neutral today may not be so someday. Eventually, as is widely known, there is always something beneath what is stated; even if it appears or sounds neutral, there has to be something there.

The issue here is that English is an international language that is taught in schools all around the world as a required subject. Rewriting the grammar book that has become widespread does not seem like a simple thing to do. Not to mention the issue of gender pronouns that not everyone in various countries who study English will be able to relate to the problems or changes that are currently happening.

Consideration of liberal culture and sociolinguistic explanation must be included in language teaching, where most political and ideological problems are overlooked. (Mirhosseini, 2017). Besides that, due to learning is not only about books, especially in this modern era, getting knowledge from the internet is an easy thing, so it is necessary not to be easily influenced.

In our current day, the emergence of social media as a place for expressing, particularly opinions, facilitates the process of globalization. People are unaware of the boundaries they should respect. For example, social media creates the impression that the virtual world is distinct from the actual world, where everything is equal and blended. What individuals see on social media can influence their belief in a spreading discourse, especially if opinion leaders are involved in the discussion. (Dhahir, 2016). The use of language in social media is not only a process of reproducing language but also a process of self-representation, a process of dialogue between capitalism and individual users, and a process of identity construction for social media users (Junus, 2019).

Language variation in communication on social media is a form of representation carried out in order to produce meaning or opinion about objects, events, fellow human beings, or even about oneself. As the nature of an opinion, it can be classified as those that are contradictory, pros and cons, or neutral. Various opinions based on different cultures often lead to debates or arguments. People can debate on social media in a variety of ways, such as insulting each other through their postings or debating in a post's commentary column. One of the social media that is often a place of debate among netizens is Instagram. A post on Instagram

can provoke a lot of opinions that appear from various parts of the world, especially if it is posted by a public figure.

Several research have been conducted on the issue of using gender pronouns in contexts such as education. (LaScotte, 2021; McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018; Pauwels & Winter, 2006), health services (Brown et al., 2019), legal field (Lintner, 2020), online survey (Bradley, 2019), and the other fields (Airton, 2018; Noll et al., 2018; Tavits & Pérez, 2019). While earlier research examined how gender pronouns have been used in various aspects of living through field observation or online questionnaires, the current research will examine what is occurring on social media., in this case is Instagram, where not yet has been researched before. As the basis of the method in this research, there is a study by Liang and Shin (2019) that discusses the reactions of netizens to a language policy in China using critical discourse analysis and appraisal theory. Furthermore, the previously mentioned studies will be reviewed in a special section on previous studies.

This research focuses on netizens' comments regarding the use of gender pronouns in Elliot Page's, a transgender actor, coming out (changing his pronouns) Instagram post on December 2, 2020. This research aims to classify the netizens' comments based on their comments on gender pronouns that are used by Elliot. Due to this subject concerns people's views or opinions, it is vital to explore the pros and cons of using gender pronouns not only academically but also practically. The study is anticipated to assist individuals comprehend, particularly those who are unfamiliar with gender pronoun issues in English-speaking countries.

B. Research Question

This research aims to describe how do netizens comment on gender pronouns in Elliot Page's coming out Instagram post regarding whether the netizens agree or disagree with Elliot Page's use of gender pronouns.

C. Significance of the Research

The views or opinions of netizens analyzed in this study are considered important because social media often generalizes people from various backgrounds. It is important to know the various understandings that exist around the world and be able to make wise choices in responding to them. Academically, since issue such as gender pronouns and the appraisal theory study are considered as relatively new discussed in this faculty, it is intended that it may serve as a reference model for the future student researcher in this topic as well as the theory used.

D. Scope and Limitation

Due to the data in the form of netizens' comments that exceeds 140.000, the researcher only selects some comments that are scrolled from the newest and earliest, which do not cover all of them. However, this does not hinder the grouping process because most comments are the same and repetitive. The comments chosen only concern the issue of gender pronouns, not the general reaction of netizens to

the figure of Elliot Page. To help classify netizens' comments to be analyzed, appraisal theory related to the *engagement system* is needed. The reason why researcher only use the *engagement system* from appraisal theory is because the other two types of appraisal theory, *attitude* and *graduation*, are not in accordance with the research objectives that focus on grouping agree, disagree, and neutral statements. Meanwhile, *attitude* is more focused on the feelings of the writer/speaker, and *graduation* is related to the level of both attitude and engagement.

E. Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions are the terms used in this research:

Gender: A set of social, mental, or emotional characteristics influenced by cultural preconceptions that classify a person as male, female, a blend of both, or neither.

Pronouns: Any of a small set of words that an individual would like others to utilize when conversing with or concerning that person. In English, the singular pronouns have traditionally been *she* and *he*, which can feel uncomfortable to some gender non-conforming, non-binary, or transgender people. Certain individuals lean toward sexually unbiased pronouns like singular *they/their/theirs*.

Coming out: A process by which one acknowledges and shares their sexual orientation and/or gender identity with others.

F. Previous Studies

Several previous studies have been conducted on the issue of utilizing gender pronouns such as those found in education (LaScotte, 2021; McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018; Pauwels & Winter, 2006). LaScotte (2021) analyzes the non-native English learners' use and their understanding of singular *they* by doing some tests in university-level ESL students. McGlashan and Fitzpatrick (2018) investigating how the naming of pronouns both disrupts the articulation of sex, gender, and sexuality and promotes stable gender identities and binaries in their study of how LGBTQ+ adolescents actively negotiate their identities in school. Pauwels and Winter (2006), with reference to third person singular generic pronouns in English, they investigate the possible tension that classroom instructors encounter in their dual positions as 'guardians of grammar' and 'agents of social language transformation.' They study whether the teachers (primary, secondary, and tertiary) perceive tensions between these responsibilities in connection to their own and students' usage of generic pronouns, and how they address the issue if they do.

In the field of health services, Brown et al. (2019) He looks into a critical part of developing youth-provider connections. The study looked at how LGBTQ+ youth talked about personal pronouns (e.g., *he*, *she*, *they*, *ze*) in relation to transgender and gender diverse (TGD) people. In the legal field, Lintner (2020) argues that the legal profession should use "*they/them*" pronouns in law school classrooms, legal academic writing, and legal practice. Lintner further argues that failing to recognize or use such pronouns is a form of oppressive silencing that delegitimizes nonbinary identity. There is also a study by Bradley (2019) that uses

an online survey to assess English speakers' grammaticality evaluations on sentences including a variety of gender-neutral and gender-atypical forms. Then, Airtton (2018) investigates the micropolitics of gender-neutral pronoun usage and user experiences, also known as the negotiation of gender-neutral pronouns in everyday interactions, with a focus on educational institutions.

Tavits and Pérez (2019) They investigate with three large-scale studies in Sweden, which formally adopted a gender-neutral pronoun alongside existing gendered pronouns comparable to *he* and *she*. The trials were carried out using a diverse group of Swedish individuals who completed brief online surveys. According to the study, using gender-neutral pronouns diminishes male mental predominance when compared to masculine pronouns. This tendency is associated with reduced bias in favor of traditional binary gender roles and classifications, as seen by more positive attitudes toward women and LGBTQ+ individuals in public.

Noll et al. (2018) explore the changes in the usage of epicene pronouns such as *they* and *he* that have been used for a long time in previous research that discusses gender pronouns. However, with the passing of time and the emergence of social media, many individuals critique or disagree with *he* as an epicene pronoun or a gender-neutral pronoun, despite the fact that this has long been used, even in academic literature. Two tests have been carried out using a lexical choice task in which participants reacted to gendered terms (e.g., auntie and uncle) upon reading sentences with *he*, *they*, or random epicene pronouns. The two studies found that pronouns influence how gendered objects are handled. However, in Experiment 1,

they sped up the processing of feminine nouns, but in Experiment 2, *he* slowed it down. The report demonstrates how contentious the subject of gender pronouns is.

Liang and Shin (2019) have previously researched the ideology that is generated in a language policy as well as the response of netizens to it. The authors investigate how the Mandarin-Cantonese association has been ideologically and discursively viewed as well as assembled in China's language policy and planning, as well as the Chinese public's response over time, using critical discourse analysis and the engagement system from appraisal theory. The findings demonstrate that a homogeneity ideology impacts both language policy and authorities. The researchers also found three key categories of conflicting ideologies that underlay the reactions of Chinese internet users.

Based on various previous studies regarding the gender pronouns, and a study that analyzes ideology behind language policy and the netizens' responses, this current study is interested in examining the present problems concerning gender pronouns on social media, i.e., Instagram. While most previous studies have used field observation or online questionnaires to explore how gender pronouns are used in various sectors of life, the current study will look at what is occurring on social media, which has not before been examined. In this day and age, social media is the most extensively utilized and vital to study. Either so that people are less easily influenced or so that they can better grasp the digital world, which frequently impacts us without our knowledge.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section contains theoretical studies relevant to research topics such as discussions on discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics, appraisal theory, and the use of language in social media.

A. Discourse Analysis

The level of discourse is the level at which interdiscursive interactions across genres, discourses, and styles are examined (Fairclough, 2003). The level of discourse is an intermediary level, acting as a bridge between the text and its social setting (social events, social practices, social structures). They are arranged in texts in interdiscursive interactions, in which diverse genres, discourses, and styles can be mixed, articulated, and textured in specific ways as social components in orders of discourse - the language aspects of social behaviors in which language variation is socially regulated. They establish a connection between the text and other social aspects, between the text's internal and exterior interactions.

Discourse Analysis is a set of multidisciplinary methodologies that may be utilized to investigate a wide range of social domains in a variety of disciplines (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018). This means that discourse analysis may be used in any field of study, as a method of analysis that is inextricably bound to its theoretical and methodological basis. The attribution of meaning in discourses helps to shape and change the world (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Language, then, is more than

just a channel for communicating information about underlying mental states and behavior or facts about the world. Language, on the other hand, is a 'machine' that generates and thus constitutes, the social world. This includes the formation of social identities and social relations. It means that changes in discourse are a means of changing the social world. Struggles at the discursive level contribute to both changing and reproducing social reality.

On the one hand, any textual study that seeks to be relevant in social scientific terms must engage with theoretical discourse concerns (e.g., the socially 'constructive' impacts of discourse). On the other hand, understanding the social impacts of speech requires a detailed examination of what happens when individuals talk or write. So, while text analysis is an important component of discourse analysis, discourse analysis is more than just a linguistic study of texts. According to Fairclough (2003), discourse analysis 'oscillates' between a focus on specific texts and a focus on what is known as the 'order of discourse,' which is the relatively durable social structuring of language, which is itself one element of the relatively durable structuring and networking of social practices.

B. Systemic Functional Linguistics

By recognizing the multifunctionality of language in texts, SFL is concerned with understandings the relationship between language and social life (Halliday, 1978). Its textual analysis is founded on immediate situational and broad cultural contexts. It explains how the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions

that are simultaneously embedded in a given text generate experiential, logical, interpersonal, and textual meanings. Texts, for example, function ideationally to represent experience and the world, resulting in differences in people's beliefs (Eggins, 2004). In terms of interpersonal functionality, texts are ideologically influenced and represent various social roles and identities negotiated through language use.

Relations of 'realization' exist between the discourse, semantic, grammatical, and vocabulary levels (Halliday 1994). In other words, interdiscursive interactions across genres, discourses, and styles are realized as semantic relations, which are realized as ('formal') grammatical and vocabulary relations. The proportions of discourse semantic systems are as follows: ideation and conjunction are to ideational meaning, negotiation and appraisal are to interpersonal meaning, and identification and periodicity are to textual meaning (implicating an association of particulate structure with ideation and conjunction, prosodic structure with negotiation and appraisal, and periodic structure with identification and periodicity). This reconfiguration of cohesion as a discourse semantic system and structure, in particular, allowed for the development of appraisal, SFL's model of evaluation.

C. Appraisal Theory

Appraisal is the study of the linguistic resources by which speakers/writers express their evaluation, attitude, and emotion, in other words, the inter-subjective and ideological positions. Appraisal is concerned with linguistic formulations of

conveying emotions and opinions, how writers align their authorial persona with the stance of others, and how they manipulate their writings to convey a greater or lesser degree of strength and conviction in their propositions. The appraisal theory itself is actually rooted in systemic functional language (SFL) which was developed by Martin and White (2005) in their book entitled "The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English".

Evaluative language means that everyone speaks, and, in fact, there is an evaluation of anything transmitted both vocally and in writing behind it. Appraisal theory provides analytical tools to help readers grasp evaluative resources and negotiating intersubjective situations, as well as to open up new areas of interpersonal knowledge. Evaluative vocabulary expresses the opinion of the speaker/writer on positive or negative parameters. Appraisal theory is an entire selection system that can be used to describe potential areas of understanding in a context.

Appraisal Theory, which broadens the interpersonal meaning of SFL, foundationally assesses contentions and positions interpreted when using language by drawing on lexical and linguistic recourses concerning engagement, attitude, and graduation (Martin & White, 2005). The examination hypothesis to plan a structure for evaluation investigation of text. Their structure characterizes each piece of text (for example thing phrase, action word expression or condition) that infers one example of examination as an evaluation bunch. Two significant actors are generally associated with each occasion of examination: the appraiser; and the object of appraisal.

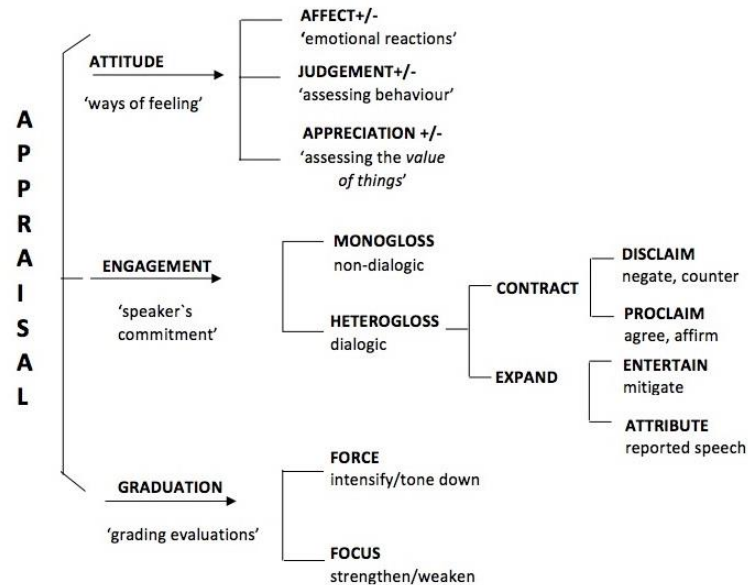


Figure 1. Appraisal Theory Framework

The appraisal theory recognizes three significant viewpoints to evaluation between those two actors:

1. Attitude – Attitude is the embodiment of feeling the appraiser passes on with regards to the item. Love, outrage, dread, desire, energy, antagonism, fulfillment, and so on are feelings or mentalities that can be communicated in examination gatherings, for example, "It's a particularly superb day!".
 - a. Affect: positive or negative attitude related to feelings towards something, or also referred to as "emotions". For example, feeling of wanting/fearing, happy/sad. confident/anxious, disappointed/relieved/satisfied.
 - b. Judgement: both positive and negative judgments related to behavior towards something being discussed. Judgement is concerned with

resources for analyzing behavior in accordance with diverse normative norms, and it is involved with attitudes toward behavior that we like or criticize, laud or condemn. Judgement reworks sentiments in the area of behavioral recommendations - how we should or should not act; some of these ideas get institutionalized as laws and regulations imposed by church and state.

- c. **Appreciation:** Appreciation entails assessing semiotic and natural events based on how they are appreciated or not in a certain field. Appreciation considers resources for determining the worth of things, such as natural occurrences and semiosis (as either product or process). reworks sentiments as propositions about the worth of things – whether they are worth it or not; some of these values are codified in awarding systems. Appreciations may be separated into three categories: our "reactions" to things, their "composition" (balance and complexity), and their "worth" (how innovative, authentic, timely, etc.).

2. **Graduation –** Graduation is about assessing how the statement is expressed in stages, either directly or indirectly, to something that is being discussed. Another type used in the graduation form is modality. Modality is in charge of showing the way (mode) used to express the meaning of a thought or to change the meaning of an expression. Graduation acts on two axes of scalability: grading by intensity or amount, and grading by prototypicality and the precision with which category borders are set. Graduation by intensity/amount

has a natural domain of operation over categories including intrinsically scalar evaluations — for example, the attitudinal assessments already mentioned (gradable along clines of positivity/negativity), but also assessments of size, vigor, extent, closeness, and so on. Graduations of this sort are referred to as 'force'. Graduation based on prototypicality (focus) is most commonly used for categories that, from an experience standpoint, are not scalable. These are the well-defined, either-or categories found in experiential taxonomies where category membership is decided by a combination of sufficient and necessary circumstances.

3. Engagement – Martin and White (2005) are interested in the extent to which speakers/writers acknowledge the positions of others and the ways in which they engage with others. As to whether they present themselves as standing with, as standing against, as undecided, or as neutral with respect to other speakers and their value positions. Whether a value position is presented as something that can be taken for granted to others, as one that is in some ways new, problematic or controversial, or as one that may be questioned, challenged or rejected. The engagement system of appraisal theory is divided into:
 - a. Monogloss: A statement is monogloss if the speaker/writer has straightforwardly communicated the evaluation, for example "The President has no clue about the thing he is discussing". Monogloss is when they do not refer to other sounds or points of view, do not open up dialogue space for alternative positions.

- b. Heterogloss: It is heterogloss if the speaker/writer has either ascribed to another source, or has attempted to utilize different techniques to make the statement or make it more sound, for instance "Liberals condemned his proposition" or "Information from past examinations show there's little expectation that his system will work". Heterogloss is when they provoke or allow dialogical alternatives. Heterogloss is divided into two:
- 1) Contract: the speaker/writer seems to limit, ward off, or challenge other alternatives (dialogical contraction). There are:
 - (a) Disclaim, the textual voice positions itself as opposing or rejecting some opposing viewpoint, i.e. deny and counter.
 - (b) Proclaim, the textual voice sets itself against, suppresses, or rules out alternative positions by representing the proposition as highly warrantable (compelling, valid, plausible, well-founded, generally agreed, reliable, etc.), i.e. concur-concede, concur-affirm, pronounce, and endorse.
 - 2) Expand: the speaker/writer makes allowances for alternative positions and voices dialogically (dialogical expansion). There are:
 - (a) Entertain, the authorial voice represents the proposition as one of a range of possible positions by explicitly presenting it as grounded in its own contingent, individual subjectivity - it thus entertains or invokes these dialogic alternatives, e.g. 'rhetorical' or 'expository' question.

- (b) Attribute, the textual voice entertains or invokes these dialogic alternatives by representing the proposition as grounded in the subjectivity of an external voice, i.e. acknowledge and distance.

The framework outlined, then, is aimed at providing a systematic explanation of how such positioning is achieved linguistically through engagement systems. When speakers/writers acknowledge their own stance, they are not only expressively 'speaking their own mind', but simultaneously invite others to support and share their feelings, tastes, or normative judgments with what they are conveying. Thus, their statement is dialogically directed to harmonize shared values and beliefs. The communality into which the writer/speaker aligns the reader can be one in which variety of perspective is regarded as natural and genuine, rather than on concerns of agreement/disagreement.

Appraisal is concerned with the negotiation of meanings among real or potential interlocutors, such that each utterance enters into processes of alignment or misalignment with others, thereby assisting us in understanding the levels and types of ideological solidarity that authors maintain with their potential readers/listeners. All meanings are realized as dialogic and ideological choices, since "as language users, we make certain choices over others based on social relationships, social roles performed in a specific situation, and relationships with other interlocutors" (Oteíza, 2017).

In this research, what was taken from the appraisal of the theory was the engagement system to classify the comments of netizens and in addition to help

determine the ideology of netizens. The speaker's/writer's level of involvement in the argument being delivered to the audience/readers is referred to as engagement. The engagement system is concerned with the “negotiation of alignment/disalignment” (Martin & White, 2005), in the spoken/written interaction. Individuals voice their position through contractive or broad articulations in four unique ways: disclaim, proclaim, entertain, and attribute. The engagement system was effective in analyzing how language users introduced their contentions or arguments in elective positions (Liang & Shin, 2019).

D. Language in Social Media

Researching the language used in the context of social media is a growing area of interest, it draws attention to the ways in which social networking sites allow people to interact with one another. The variety of semiotic sources used sometimes makes it difficult to find the right words to describe how people interact on social media sites. Given the extent of the Internet and the use of social media in many societies, Page et al. (2014) feel that linguists who ignore social media run the risk of scathing themselves. However, it is true that a linguist who is not an active user of social media, may find it difficult to see its relevance as a medium of communication, and thus may not be inclined to regard it as a useful site for academic research.

The gradual awakening of interest in a particular discourse community has often occurred in the history of linguistics, for example with regard to women's

language, gay and lesbian language, adolescent language, or language in the workplace. Building on previous research in computer-mediated communication (CMC), various linguistic studies exploring social media platforms are rich and broad, including analyzes of how elements of language systems are reconfigured in online contexts and how the dynamics of interpersonal communication are managed.

The semiotic mode as well as the tools and technologies used to communicate through social media sites are important influences on the choices people make when communicating with one another. For example, the absence of facial expressions and tone of voice when using the written word in a message may require people to create other resources to convey pragmatic emphasis or nuance (e.g. through emoticons). Identifying, explaining, and assessing the appropriate marking process at work in a particular speech, object, event, or performance has traditionally been the task of rhetorical criticism (Ott & Dickinson, 2019). The enabling and limiting nature of fashion and media is sometimes described as its affordability.

Instagram is one of social media that has the most users. On Instagram, people can capture moments in their lives by posting them on their account. not only photos or videos, but also in the form of writing, to share information with other users. Instagram can also provide inspiration for its users and can also increase creativity, because Instagram has features that can make photos more artistic and better (Damayanti, 2018). The place that netizens usually use to communicate via Instagram is the commentary column on a post. People can communicate or exchange opinions and thoughts there as if they were chatting.

Language can be analyzed at different levels. Page et al. (2014) categorizes in slightly different ways, partially overlap, the common units of analysis are: Linguistic practices about what people do with language; Texts/utterances that have been purposefully ordered in a structure with a clear communication function; Clauses and sentences, which is commonly referred to as syntax or grammar; Lexemes or words, meaning units made up of one or more morphemes; and Morphemes, the smallest units of meaning. Contextual elements found in previous types of computer-mediated communication (CMC) that continue to be relevant for assessing language on social media sites include: Participants, Imagined context, Extra-situational context, Behavioral context, Textual context, and Generic context.

A person's particular language choices when writing comments on a social media site could be located in broader cultural practices of language use (Page et al., 2014). In order to establish the relevance and credibility of the commentaries, a reviewer will need to continue using a variety of linguistic resources in constructing an identity (Sergeant & Tagg, 2014). As a result, countless understandings and views might be unwittingly promoted by netizens, where what appears to be superficial to the most morally charged remarks can be ideological and political. Commentaries may include concepts and beliefs in the form of discourses on how to carry out a community's duty, what to prioritize, how to communicate, and give an appraisal of identity and actions (Bouvier & Way, 2021).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

This section contains research design, data and data sources, data collection, and data analysis techniques.

A. Research Design

This research is conducted with a descriptive qualitative approach by analyzing netizen comments on an Instagram post belonging to a public figure, Elliot Page. Analyzing data in the form of netizen comments inductively by understanding and exploring the meaning related to gender pronouns issue. This research is qualitative because the researcher aims to analyze by describing the situation in-depth in presenting the data. By using a qualitative approach, it also builds its own patterns, categories, and themes by organizing the data in the form of netizens' comments through an inductive process. This is what makes the qualitative method suitable for this research because it requires in-depth analysis with the help of the necessary theories.

B. Data and Data Source

The Data are in the form of propositions expressed by netizens in the commentary column of Elliot Page's coming out Instagram post on December 2, 2020, that totaled more than 140,000 comments by netizens at the time of this writing. Data can be accessed via the following link on Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CIQ1QFBhNFg/>. Some of the comments from the netizens of the post will be selected to be analyzed.

Hi friends, I want to share with you that I am trans, my pronouns are he/they and my name is Elliot. I feel lucky to be writing this. To be here. To have arrived at this place in my life.

I feel overwhelming gratitude for the incredible people who have supported me along this journey. I can't begin to express how remarkable it feels to finally love who I am enough to pursue my authentic self. I've been endlessly inspired by so many in the trans community. Thank you for your courage, your generosity and ceaselessly working to make this world a more inclusive and compassionate place. I will offer whatever support I can and continue to strive for a more loving and equal society.

I also ask for patience. My joy is real, but it is also fragile. The truth is, despite feeling profoundly happy right now and knowing how much privilege I carry, I am also scared. I'm scared of the invasiveness, the hate, the "jokes" and of violence. To be clear, I am not trying to dampen a moment that is joyous and one that I celebrate, but I want to address the full picture. The statistics are staggering. The discrimination towards trans people is rife, insidious and cruel, resulting in horrific consequences. In 2020 alone it has been reported that at least 40 transgender people have been murdered, the majority of which were Black and Latinx trans women. To the political leaders who work to criminalize trans health care and deny our right to exist and to all of those with a massive platform who continue to spew hostility towards the trans community: you have blood on your hands. You unleash a fury of vile and demeaning rage that lands on the shoulders of the trans community, a community in which 40% of trans adults report attempting suicide. Enough is enough. You aren't being "cancelled," you are hurting people. I am one of those people and we won't be silent in the face of your attacks.

I love that I am trans. And I love that I am queer. And the more I hold myself close and fully embrace who I am, the more I dream, the more my heart grows and the more I thrive. To all trans people who deal with harassment, self-loathing, abuse and the threat of violence every day: I see you, I love you and I will do everything I can to change this world for the better.

Thank you for reading this.

All my love,

Elliot

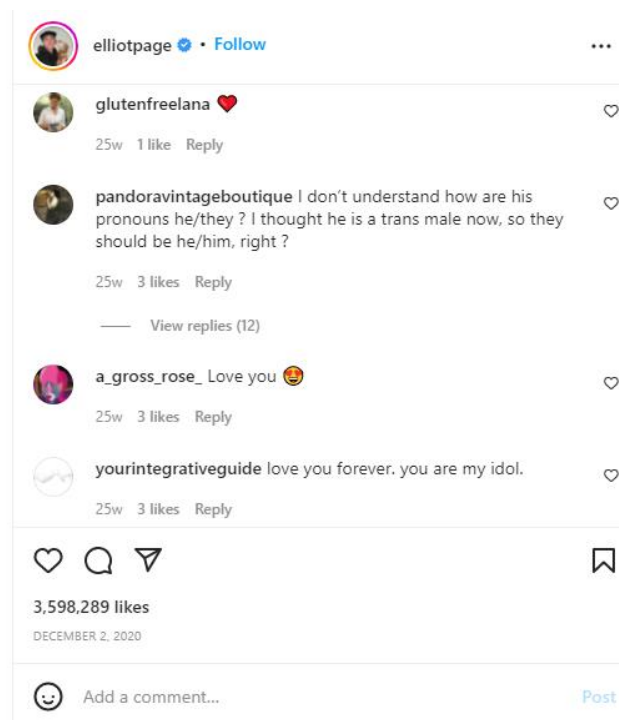


Figure 2. Elliot Page's coming out Instagram post on December 2, 2020

C. Data Collection

Comments are selected based on netizens who mention the use or change of Elliot Page's gender pronouns in the post, due to many only comments with emoticons that are not analyzed in this paper. That the data in the form of netizen comments on a post that exceeds 140,000, the researcher only selects some comments that are scrolled from the newest and earliest. The data taken is only 22

of the many comments because most comments are repetitive with proposition meanings that tend to be the same.

D. Data Analysis

This research concentrates on the views of netizens in the commentary column of one of Elliot Page's Instagram posts to classify the netizens' positions into supporting, repudiating, and neutral or being compromised on Elliot's use of pronouns. For the analysis stage, the first is by collecting the netizens' comments discussing the gender pronouns in Elliot Page's coming out post. Then, categorizing the comments based on the engagement system of appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005) into monogloss and heterogloss which will then be further divided into contracts and expands. In the discussion section, it will be discussed how the position of the netizens towards Elliot's decision, which will also be related to several factors or facts surrounding the phenomenon of replacing pronouns and gender.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides answers to the research question, a summary of the findings related to theories and previous studies, as well as interpretation of the findings based on the research question in the discussion section.

A. Findings

The following presents the findings for the research question through data analysis carried out by grouping based on the engagement system of appraisal theory (Martin and White, 2005).

1. Monogloss

Monogloss is when the speaker/writer does not refer to other positions or points of view, they have straightforwardly communicated their evaluation. The data in the form of netizens' comments found below are the monogloss type of engagement system. Each monogloss data will be coded in the form of "[mon]" along with the sequence number after it.

Datum 1







@maxzipyy

Ahhh! Yes! So proud of you for being you! I'm also trans(he/they), and I find it wonderful that you're embracing your identity! It can be really hard to be happy about being trans, but know that it's ok, that people love, accept, and understand how you feel! [mon 1]

In congratulating Elliot who coming out, many netizens shared their similar experiences in the commentary column. One of them is netizen [mon 1] who has the same experience as Elliot as a transgender person and also shares the same pronouns, 'he/they'. The type of engagement system used is *monogloss* because the comment only contains congratulations and shares his own experience, which does not contain any opinion or expression that allude alternative positions. The choice of words used by [mon 1] shows that he agrees with Elliot where it relates to the issue of LGBT, more specifically transgender because they are the same. The words represent his pro side to LGBT include 'trans', 'identity', 'love', and 'accept'. These words can be said to be related because these are things that the LGBT community struggles for gender equality and acceptance of various genders.

Datum 2

@colorfulkrypton

Thanks for coming out! Makes me feel less alone to know that someone like you could face the same problems as me. I'm He/They as well so thanks       [mon 2]

In the comment [mon 2] above, the netizen also shared his story which is preceded by thanks to Elliot who coming out. He says that he has the same problem as Elliot, even though he does not mention that he is also transgender, only saying that he does share the same pronouns as Elliot. The *monogloss* form is also visible because he is not trying to mention any other positions that might disagree with his propositions. In the comment, netizen [mon 2] uses the phrases "as me" and "as well" to refer to the meaning that he agrees with Elliot's decision. With him saying

that he uses the same two pairs of 'he/they' pronouns as Elliot, it shows his supportive position towards non-binary gender, at least being pro-LGBT, as his view on the importance of using gender pronouns that is promoted by the LGBT community.

Datum 3

@miomousefanpage

Hi Elliot ❤️👍❤️👍 I'm trans too and hope people respect you and your pronouns good sir:)) [mon 3]

Similar to the previous two comments, here a netizen on [mon 3] says that s/he is also a transgender like Elliot, the difference is that s/he does not mention what her/his pronoun is. The *monogloss* form is seen when s/he only focuses on commenting on Elliot's coming out post, not reacting to other comments. In her/his comment, s/he says her/his hopes that everyone will appreciate both Elliot and his pronouns. Explicitly s/he does seem to allude to alternative positions as s/he does not open up a dialogic space for those alternative views which makes her/his comment a *monogloss* type of the engagement system. The choice of words used by the netizen above, [mon 3], is also a form of siding with LGBT. The word "too" refers to both s/he and Elliot who are transgender fellows. At the end of her/his statement, s/he adds the word "sir" which indicates that s/he approves that Elliot is a man, moreover at the beginning of the comment, s/he calls Elliot by his new name. Her/his expectation of others to respect Elliot's pronouns could be based on other people's denial of the existence of transgender people.

Datum 4

@amxssi

You're a woman [mon 4]

In disproving Elliot's decision, not a few netizens bluntly express their disagreement. The use of *monogloss* by netizen [mon 4] who says that Elliot is a woman, closes all dialogical aspects from other alternative views, not only Elliot, but also those who claim that Elliot is a man. Elliot who declares himself transgender with him coming out by changing his name and pronouns to 'he/they' should be clear that now he wants to be considered as a man. However, a netizen on [mon 4] rejected this in the form of a present tense sentence which means for her/him Elliot is a woman all his life. As a result, those who may hold different views are excluded because not only is s/he very clearly opposed to Elliot, but also s/he disagrees with those who defend Elliot's decision. [mon 4]'s rejection of this issue is due to her/him believing that gender cannot be changed. Her/his rejection of transgender also means that s/he does not side with the LGBT people. Since her/his view is fixated on the gender binary system and rejection of transgender, it suggests that s/he is on the anti-LGBT side.

Datum 5

@ayabaderz

Hahaaaa hi everyone I'm a cat. My pronouns are pspops and it. I'm so lucky to be here [mon 5]

Apart from bluntly expressing their disagreement with Elliot's decision to change his pronouns, many netizens also stated it implicitly with various types of sarcastic statements. The way netizens made fun of Elliot was like by imitating what Elliot had written in his coming out post, but they changed the words according to their own will. For example, Elliot says that he changes his pronouns to 'he/they', then, there is a netizen who imitated him with mocking elements that is [mon 5] who comments that s/he is a cat and the pronouns are "pspsps" and "it". Almost all the ridicule or sarcasm aimed at Elliot's post are in the form of an engagement system of *monogloss*, simple clauses without additional modalities that do not open up dialogue space for other alternatives. The form of sarcasm in her/his comments illustrates her/his disagreement with Elliot's beliefs or in other words s/he is on the anti-LGBT side for booing like that.

Datum 6

@forgivemefather420

Your pronouns are re/tard [mon 6]

In addition to repudiate by imitating what Elliot says, repeating what he has written in his coming out post, there is also a netizen who immediately insults what Elliot says. A netizen on [mon 6] above, says that Elliot's actual pronouns are "re/tard", which is clearly an insult to Elliot's coming out post. The expression form is *monogloss* because the statement does not refer to other views or recognize alternative positions which are interpreted as not opening up space for dialogue.

S/he rejects the use of gender pronouns that could be used at will by insulting Elliot who changes his pronouns to 'he/they'.

Datum 7

@bhank103

Yeah just refer to me as the royal We since we are all picking our pronouns now [mon 7]

Another form of sarcasm is seen in the netizen's comment [mon 7] above which is also a *monogloss* type of the engagement system. It is said to be a *monogloss* because s/he does not open up dialogue space for other alternatives even though s/he implicitly clearly intends to satirize Elliot and his supporters. By imitating Elliot's words in his coming out post, netizens [mon 7] imitated Elliot's proposition by saying that her/his pronoun is "the royal We". Apart from that, s/he also adds to the fact that now people can choose their pronouns as they please regardless of gender. Moreover, at the beginning of her/his proposition s/he also seems to command others to call her/him "the royal We", where the declarative sentence itself is a type of *monogloss* sentence that focuses on its own evaluation, does not open dialogue for alternative positions. The netizen's satire comment can describe her/him being anti-LGBT for insinuating Elliot who is a transgender.

Datum 8

@njrno

Congrats on coming out. I want to come out too. I am a pizza. My pronouns are, it/yummy and my name is cheesy. [mon 8]

Not too different from the previous comment, here netizen [mon 8] satirizes Elliot's coming out post as well. The *monogloss* form is seen because the proposition contains only one-way expressions about her/himself, by saying "*I am . . .*", "*I want . . .*", "*My pronouns are . . .*", and "*my name is . . .*." S/he does not open up dialogue space for other alternatives because s/he only focuses on providing her/his own evaluation of Elliot's use of pronouns. This form of satirical commentary is clearly an anti-LGBT form, in which it is the pro-LGBT who promote the free use of pronouns regardless of gender. By imitating this but changing it to the context of food, namely "pizza" and "yummy", netizen [mon 7] clearly does not mean to side with Elliot even though at the beginning s/he congratulates him as if s/he supports Elliot's decision.

2. Heterogloss

Heterogloss is when the speaker/writer provokes or opens up dialogistic alternatives. Heterogloss is divided into two, first, where the speaker/writer seems to limit, ward off, or challenge other alternatives (*contract*) that will be coded as “[con]”, and second, the speaker/writer makes allowances for alternative positions (*expand*) that will be coded as “[exp]” along with the sequence number after it.

a. Contract

Datum 9

@_s_noor__

You don't have to be "he" for having a mind of he [con 1]

Netizen's comment [con 1] above is an engagement system type of *contract: disclaim* in the form of *deny* which is marked by the use of words "*don't*", "*no*", and "*not*". This kind of *deny* comment is often found in Elliot's coming out post as a form of disapproval that Elliot is transgender and changing his pronouns. Repudiation is directed at Elliot's post because the netizen [con 1] showed her/his disapproval of Elliot's decision. S/he conveys this by providing argumentative material in the form of the word "*don't*" in her denial saying that Elliot does not need to be 'he' just because he thinks so, or about being a man in this case. This netizen's disagreement with Elliot's decision to change his pronouns, can also mean that s/he does not agree that Elliot is a transgender. For her/him, gender cannot be changed and this illustrates that s/he does not support the freedom to choose gender which according to LGBT community that is the right of everyone to choose their own gender, let alone the pronouns. Netizens who have an understanding like in [con 1] are anti-LGBT because they believe that one cannot change one's gender, especially if it is only based on one's own mind or ego. Writing "*he*" twice in her/his statement is the way of reinforcing her/his point that Elliot does not need to be a man just because he thinks he is man.

Datum 10

@socialistsarentpeople

They is plural, don't steal that from us [con 2]

Furthermore, another form of repudiation of Elliot's coming out post is that there are netizens who agree that the pronoun 'they' is only for the plural use. They do not believe in the use of the singular 'they'. For example, there is a netizen, [con 2], who writes her/his opinion in the form of an engagement system type of *contract: disclaim, deny* by using the word "don't". This kind of engagement system type of *contract: disclaim* acknowledge the existence of opposing positions, but clearly deny those alternative views. Which means here [con 2] admits that there are other views that may be opposite from her/his but limits the dialogue space for those alternative views. Netizen [con 2] thinks that Elliot, as well as those who support his decision, have stolen the pronoun 'they' which should only be plural. For her/him, it can only be used to refer to a group of people who number more than one, not a third person singular pronoun. S/he does not agree with the modern views or opinions of the LGBT people who consider pronouns to be an individual's right to choose.

Datum 11

@alonki_17

In that case, your pronouns are "he/him" not "he/they" [con 3]

Continuing from the previous commentary analysis, netizens who do not support the use of the singular 'they', netizen [con 3] says that Elliot's pronoun is only "he/him", not "he/they". The netizen's opinion closes the possible thoughts of Elliot using two pairs of pronouns and should only using a pair of "he/him" which

s/he thinks is the right one. The form of engagement system used is *contract: disclaim, deny*, with the word "no" as an affirmation of disapproval. In her/his comment, [con 3] uses the phrase "in that case" as an expression that is coercive because s/he considers that is the fact or truth that everyone should accept. S/he does not want to admit that there are other views who might reject her/his statement but s/he is sure that there are the people, namely those who are pro-LGBT.

Datum 12

@ryanpdeveau

No actually your a female whose very confused. Pronouns don't change biology. It's simple science @elliottpage [con 4]

In the position of repudiation, some netizens emphasize that pronouns do not change biology, to oppose the view that says biology has nothing to do with gender and gender is a social construct (Butler, 1990). That presumption is disputed by netizen [con 4] who believes that biology and gender are inextricably linked, emphasizing that simply changing a pronoun will not change a person's gender. Her/his refusal is in the form of the engagement system type of *contract: disclaim, deny*, marked by the use of the words "no" and "don't" that is aware of alternative positions but clearly rejects them. In her/his comments, netizen [con 4] says that Elliot is a "female". S/he denies that Elliot had changed his gender, became a man. In strengthening her/his opinion, s/he also adds an argument by mentioning the words "biology" and "science" assumed that Elliot and his supporters does not understand what should be called "simple", based on 'simple science' that should

be taught in school where there are only two genders. S/he states that pronouns do not change biology, which according to pro-LGBT that gender has nothing to do with biology.

Datum 13

@naimaoh

Ok great, but why 'they'. He is only one person, right? [con 5]

In the form of questions like the netizen [con 5]'s comment above, the position of her/him cannot directly be determined on which side, whether s/he agrees with Elliot's use of pronouns, because literally s/he only ask about the use of the singular 'they'. The form of engagement system used is *contract: proclaim, concur-concede*. The *concur-concede* category of *contract: proclaim* involves a formulation that explicitly states that the speaker may agree or share knowledge of some alternative views. This relationship is conveyed through locutions such as "*of course*", "*certainly*", "*not surprising*", and what is shown in the example above is "*OK great*". Followed by a rhetorical or 'leading' type of question – questions the author/speaker asks with the assumption that no answer needs to be given to a particular question because the answer is so 'obvious'. In the example above the question begins with the conjunction "*but*" and ends with "*right?*" which is clearly a leading or rhetorical question. These parallel formulations, then, are dialogical in nature because they present the speaker/writer as 'in dialogue' with various

alternative positions (Martin and White, 2005). The netizen's cannot be categorized as being pro or contra with LGBT, so that can be categorized in a neutral position.

Datum 14

@captaincharliejerkoff

sorry, I don't buy into other peoples fantasies and delusions. You can go by any pronouns you choose, but don't expect me to believe in what you pretend to be. Your business is acting though, so pretending to be something you're not is just something you do all the time. [con 6]

Another netizen's comment that is on the *contract* type of the heterogloss in the engagement system is in the data [con 6] above where a netizen comments that Elliot is just fantasizing and being delusional. The form of *contract* in the comment is a *disclaim, deny*, where netizens [con 6] use the word "don't" twice and "not" once. There is also a form of *disclaim, counter*, where he uses the word "but". *Counter* is usually conveyed through connectives and conjunctions such as "though", "however", and "but". As has been explained previously, *contract: disclaim*, both *deny* and *counter*, is where the author/speaker acknowledges the existence of another position, but restricts the dialogue space by rejecting the alternative opinions that are different from theirs. The repudiation of a netizen in the data [con 6] above against Elliot's decision to change his pronouns, was conveyed quite long compared to other comments because s/he includes an allusion to the figure of Elliot. The phrases he used to quip Elliot who is just pretending includes "*fantasies and delusions*", "*believe in what you pretend*", "*Your business*

is acting”, and “*pretending to be something you're not*”. Her/his proposition clearly rejects Elliot by being anti-LGBT, not accepting the existence of transgender.

Datum 15

@krunojanjic

You are not a he. [con 7]

Almost the same as in [con 1], here netizen [con 7] also does not approve Elliot as someone who pronouns 'he'. S/he rejects this by using the form of a *contract: disclaim, deny*, which is marked by the use of the word "not". S/he acknowledges and is aware of alternatives that may be offended by her/his proposition, but s/he limits the space for dialogue. This form of rejection is against Elliot who is transgender which means netizen [con 7] is anti-LGBT.

Datum 16

@theaceofspader

Do what makes you happy but, do not force it upon others to call you what you want to be called!
Life just doesn't work that way, Elliot! [con 8]

In addition, there is also netizen [con 8] who says that it is up to Elliot what he wants to do, but do not expect others to follow what he says because life does not work like that, as Elliot wants netizens to respect and call him by his new name and pronouns. The form *contract: disclaim, deny*, is seen since s/he uses the phrases “*do not*” and “*doesn't*”. The netizen [con 8]’s opinion limit the dialogue space for

other alternatives, as well as for Elliot since s/he reacts directly to Elliot's coming out post.

b. Expand

Datum 17

@deleted_11__22

I think that He/They is such a clown thing 🤡🤡🤡🤡 [exp 1]

The comment above is included as *expand: entertain* in the form of an opinion by a netizen which refers to Elliot's own use of pronouns. That is @deleted_11__22 who says that the use of the pronouns 'he/they' is a ridiculous thing that is likened to a "clown thing". The comment above is categorized as an opinion because the netizen [exp 1] uses the word "think" which presenting the proposition as based on her/his own opinion, individual subjectivity. Her/his opinion represents one of the various positions which will thereby entertain or provoke alternatives dialogical. Commonly the phrases used in *entertain* are: "in my view", "I suspect that", "I believe it is", "perhaps", and in the comments above is "I think". Then, the form of sarcasm used by netizen [exp 1] above is a metaphorical form because what Elliot does is equated with a ridiculous thing, namely the "clown thing" by using the word "is" to equate the two. The netizen's form of repudiation illustrates her/his anti-LGBT because s/he does not agree with any beliefs that s/he thinks is being spread by Elliot through his coming out post. In

this case the use of two pairs of pronouns 'he/they' simultaneously, which is one of the things that are being developed or struggled by the LGBT people.

Datum 18

@gypsy_soul2368

How can you call yourself a "they"? The word "they" implies MORE than 1 person! Are you schizophrenic, too? [exp 2]

@gypsy_soul2368 expresses her/his opinion in the form of a rhetorical question, which is more satirical and does not really need an answer. Not only asks, but s/he also emphasizes a point that the pronoun 'they' is specifically used only for the plural. The statement is *expand: entertain* that make room for alternative voices or positions on the issue being discussed. The *entertain* category also includes certain types of 'pseudo' questions that are often used in non-interactive texts that are constructed singly to entertain rather than to affirm some proposition. The words by which the author/speaker's voice indicates that his position is only one of a number of existing positions, which creates a dialogic space for the possibilities. In the comment above, instead of questioning something, netizen [exp 2] adds an insult to it with the last question he asked, "Are you schizophrenic, too?" which means s/he thinks that Elliot is just making it up like a schizophrenic person who often has delusions. In the comment [exp 2], the netizen contends that 'they' should only be used as a third person plural pronoun, not singular. S/he does not accept the modern understanding spread about the use of the singular 'they' which is currently being promoted by the LGBT people.

Datum 19

@richardohughes

How can you be a he and a they? [exp 3]

In the [exp 3], s/he asks something in the form of expository question that belongs to the type of engagement system *expand: entertain* that opens the dialogue space for other alternatives to answer her/his question. Here, the netizen is asking why Elliot uses the pronouns 'he/they'. The expository question is used to play the proposition as one of the possible views. This type of question is included as *expand* because it accepts answers in any form and does not limit them. The ideology of the netizen [exp 3] above cannot be determined as to whether s/he supports Elliot's decision to change his pronouns. The netizen [exp 3] can be classified as those who do not take a side of being pro or anti LGBT because from her/his own statement it does not show her/his bias in taking sides, and seem willing to accept whatever answer s/he will get.

Datum 20

@fuck_clivesdale

Hi hi, I love you, quick question, do these pronouns mean that you would like to be referred to as he/him or they/them, or is it specifically he/them? Am I dumb? [exp 4]

Just like the previous types of netizen comments, here, a netizen is also asking how Elliot uses the pronouns 'he/they'. Netizen [exp 4] is grouped into a

neutral or a compromise position because s/he asks something where the question is an expository question that belongs to the type of engagement system *expand: entertain* that opens a dialogue space for other alternatives, even though in starting her/his question, s/he gives a glimpse of her/him congratulates Elliot. Netizen [exp 4] cannot be grouped into those who agree with Elliot's decision because s/he her/himself does not understand why Elliot has done that. The question is considered neutral in nature even though it shows a bit of support at the beginning so that it does not come across as criticizing. S/he seems to willingly accept all the differences by expecting an answer from any alternative that might be entertained or engaged by her/his question.

Datum 21

@fightingbeard

Im not native English speaker. When do you use the pronoun them? Do I use him still? I'm not joking, I really want to know [exp 5]

Just like the previous types of comments, here too a netizen seems neutral with her/his expository questions that expect answers from any party who is entertained or interested in her/his questions. Comment [exp 5] is on the type *expand: entertain* because s/he opens up a dialogue space for various alternatives that might appear. Even in completing the question so as not to appear criticizing or supporting netizens [exp 5] gives additional firm statements such as "*Im not native English speaker*", "*I'm not joking*", and "*I really want to know*". Her/his question is considered neutral because it shows some strong statements as

confirmation that s/he is not siding with any side and purely just wants to ask his confusion as s/he is not a native English speaker.

Datum 22

@vanecolemanm

Soooo? This means that the English language must be changed? I mean who's gonna change the language? And you gonna teach that to kids the new pronouns? I mean to learn how to use the pronouns in 2020. [exp 6]

For the last comment to be analyzed, comment [exp 6] above is a form of rhetorical question that is asked with the aim of opening up a dialogical space for various alternatives, which is why it is also categorized as an engagement system type of *expand: entertain*. The form of the question in the comment [exp 6] above is a rhetorical question because no one can answer it for sure. However, the thing that s/he discusses clearly touched on what Elliot has posted. Knowing English is an international language that has even become a compulsory subject in almost all schools in the world, making her/him wonder how to distribute the new knowledge of this language trend. Some questions that raised by netizen [exp 6] can be said to contain a form of satire against Elliot or people who spread the latest or modern understanding about the use of gender pronouns. The series of offensive questions focus on what, who, and how the knowledge in English language will be disseminated considering it is a universal language. The netizen does not seem to support Elliot's side or try to appear neutral. With her/him who mentions the words "*teach*", "*kids*", and "*learn*" which focuses on learning English activities in schools around the world, that are already using books with grammar rules that are spread

out evenly, netizen [exp 6] can be said to be anti-LGBT which brings their new understanding of gender pronouns.

B. Discussion

The opinions of netizens in this research varied from those that are contradictory, supporting and repudiating, as well to the neutral ones to the use of gender pronouns by Elliot Page, a transgender actor. The various opinions of netizens imply the ideologies adopted by the netizens. The more the netizens' ideology leads to an extreme direction the more likely they are to use language that closes or limits the dialogical space (Liang and Shin, 2019). Through the applications of the engagement systems from appraisal theory such as *monogloss* and *heterogloss*, netizens' positions can be classified by their comments on gender pronouns in Elliot Page's coming out Instagram post.

In supporting positions, many netizens use the *monogloss* type of the engagement system because the comments contain congratulations and the netizens share their own experiences, which do not contain any opinion or expression that allude to alternative positions. Like netizens [mon 1], [mon 2], and [mon 3] who congratulate and thank Elliot for coming out as a transgender person by changing his name and pronouns. Those who tend to side with Elliot's decision are grouped into pro-LGBT, moreover, they share the same experience as Elliot. In addition to congratulating or thanking, there are also netizens who support Elliot's decision by

explaining to other netizens in the comments column how for example the singular 'they' is used in everyday life.

In the repudiating position, almost as many netizens use *heterogloss contract* types of the engagement system. This form of dialogical contraction is marked by netizens' statements that seem to deny, limit, fend off, and even challenge other alternatives that are not in line with them (Martin and White, 2005). Types of *contracts* include *disclaim* (deny and counter) and *proclaim* (concur-affirm, concur-concede, pronounce, and endorse). In connection with Elliot's decision to change his pronouns to 'he/they', netizens repudiate his decision mostly by statements utilizing the words "no", "not", "don't", and so on, as in netizens' comments in [con 1], [con 2], [con 3], [con 4], and [con 6].

Apart from repudiating Elliot's decision or other alternatives that support Elliot in the *contract* type of the engagement system, netizens also do not even open up a dialogue space by using the *monogloss* type of the engagement system which closes other alternatives to break through their statements as in [mon 4] that claim Elliot is a woman, and the rest are mostly in the way they mocking on Elliot's post as in netizens' comments [mon 5] and [mon 6] by their sarcasm that bring up sentences contain negative connotations towards Elliot such as by saying “*My pronouns are pspsp*” and “*Your pronouns are re/tard*”. Then, netizens also use the engagement system type of *expand: entertain* to deny the opposing views, both Elliot's decision and his supporters, as in netizens' comments [exp 1] and [exp 2] which sequentially they say, “*I think that He/They is such a clown thing*” and “*Are you schizophrenic, too?*”.

All forms of netizens' repudiation of Elliot's decision either netizens disagreeing with the use of the singular 'they', denying the use of pronouns 'he/they' at once, or rejecting people who change their gender pronouns. Their refusal was based on disagreeing with the change in the use of the little part of speech in English, gender pronouns, because they were used to the old grammar rules they learned during school in English class. Changes in the use of gender pronouns will certainly trigger the anti-LGBT who tend to be bound by the already existing rules. The changes brought by LGBT activists in this modern era are certainly something they cannot take for granted.

The last, the neutral or compromise position. Many netizens in the neutral position use the *expand: entertain* type of the engagement system because the majority of them ask questions, either rhetorical or expository questions, that show their confusion about all things related to gender pronouns. The form of *entertain* creates a dialogue space for other possibilities as in netizens' comments [exp 3], [exp 4], [exp 5]. The netizens' utterances are arranged in such a way as to allow for debate or just a dialogue about whether that is the case (Martin and White, 2005). In some situations, *entertain* can be used to convey a sense of uncertainty or lack of commitment to the truth of the netizens themselves. That is why this type of 'pseudo' or rhetorical question belongs to this category, where the reader of the comment can provide certain answers.

There is a neutral netizen's comment that is in the *contract* type, namely *proclaim, concur-concede*. The *concur-concede* category of *contract: proclaim* involves a formulation that explicitly states that the speaker may agree or share

knowledge of some alternative views. As in [con 5] where the netizen starts her/his statement by saying “*OK great*” followed by the connective “*but*”. The propositions or questions raised by these confused netizens make them not belong to either the pro or con side of LGBT. They do not belong to the two opposing views, so they can be grouped into neutral or impartial groups.

This research reveals that the less dialogue space is open to alternative views, especially those that are contradictory, the greater their belief in their opinions or views which reflect the strength of their ideology or understanding. From the results of this research, the two opposing ideologies emanating from netizens' comments regarding gender pronouns are pro-LGBT and anti-LGBT. Their views are contradictory to gender in any way. As an example, for pro-LGBT, gender is not only a biological but also a sociological category that is the result of social construction (Butler, 1990), as the assumption is from the queer theory. Meanwhile, for the anti-LGBT, they certainly view gender and sex as the same thing in terms of biology.

Regarding the reactions of netizens who support Elliot's decision, in changing his gender, name, and pronouns, they can be grouped as pro-LGBT. This is because they provide all forms of defense, support, and justification for Elliot's decision. There are those who promote the use of the singular 'they', agree in the use of two pairs of pronouns 'he/they' at once, say that pronouns are not equal to gender, to discuss religious and biological issues. Their opinions are in line with the opinion of pro-LGBT people who fight for gender equality, in which they also

believe that gender is different from sex, and not only divided in two. In that case, they are also called as non-binaries.

By the 14th century, the use of the singular 'they' had appeared, about a century after the plural 'they'. Since then, it has become common in everyday English and has earned the currency in official contexts. Since the mid-18th century, prescriptive commentators have criticized the singular 'they' as an error. With the shift towards a gender-neutral language, its continued use in modern standard English is becoming more common and formally accepted. Although some early twentieth century style guides described their singulars as colloquial and less appropriate in formal writing, as of 2020, most style guides accept them as personal pronouns.

The singular use of 'they' with known individuals emerged in the early twenty-first century for people who did not identify as male or female, such as, for example, "Jay is my friend. I met them at work." In this context, 'they' were named Word of the Year by the American Dialect Society in 2015 and Merriam-Webster in 2019. The American Dialect Society named it Word of the Decade for the 2010s in 2020. Compared to the results of this study it seems clear that there are still netizens who reject the use of the singular 'they', but not a few also accept and have applied it in their daily lives.

LGBT is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. The initialism, as well as some of its common variants, has been in use since the 1990s as an umbrella term for sexuality and gender identity. The term LGBT is an

abbreviation of the initialism LGB, which began to replace the term gay in reference to the larger LGBT community in the mid-to-late 1980s. When transgender people are not included, the shorter-term LGB is used instead of LGBT. LGBT people's rights vary greatly by country or jurisdiction, ranging from legal recognition of same-sex marriage to the death penalty for homosexuality.

Notably, 29 countries recognized same-sex marriage as of January 2021. In comparison, excluding non-state actors and extrajudicial killings, only one country is thought to have the death penalty for consensual same-sex sexual acts: Iran. The death penalty is officially legal in Mauritania, Nigeria (in the northern third of the country), Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and the United Arab Emirates, but it is rarely used. LGBT people are also subjected to extrajudicial killings in Afghanistan under Taliban rule and in the Russian region of Chechnya. Sudan abolished the death penalty for anal sex (hetero- or homosexuality) in 2020. Although stoning is legal in fifteen countries as a punishment for adultery, including gay sex, it is not enforced by Iranian authorities.

In Indonesia, there are many obstacles that limit the movement of LGBT people, especially from religious circles. Not only Muslims but even the Catholic Church in Indonesia also reject the legalization of LGBT as is the case in other countries. However, until now Indonesia has not officially stipulated homosexual acts as a crime unless committed with minors. Compared to the results of the study, where the comments of netizens were examined, these netizens can come from anywhere and it is not known with certainty whether their backgrounds are from regions that support or reject the existence of LGBT.

Based on several previous studies that discussed the use of gender pronouns as happened in the world of education (LaScotte, 2021; McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018; Pauwels & Winter, 2006), health services (Brown et al., 2019), law (Lintner, 2020), online surveys (Bradley, 2019), and other fields (Airton, 2018; Noll et al., 2018; Tavits & Pérez, 2019), there are significant differences, especially in research results. This is because most of these studies carry out some kind of field observation or in the form of online surveys to examine how or to what extent gender pronouns are applied or even understood. Meanwhile, the current research focuses on the same problem but takes place on social media in the form of netizen comments. The results of the previous studies mentioned above tend to be in the form of quantitative data because they tend to assess people's knowledge of the development or in the use of gender pronouns in English.

In addition, there is also a study by Liang and Shin (2019) which discusses netizens' reactions and ideologies towards language policy in China using critical discourse analysis and the engagement system from appraisal theory. The results of this current study differ in grouping the data, which focus on the division of the engagement system, The big difference in the results of this study compared to previous studies is clearly visible because neither the topic nor the purpose of this research is discussed quite often, especially regarding a problem that only occurs in a few places so that few people are sensitive to this problem, namely the use gender pronouns in English.

Although this current research and Liang and Shin's research (2019) both analyze netizens' comments in social media, in which the use of language in social

media has certain characteristics, the difference from previous research is that they use local media which only contains the opinions of local people in China, moreover they also focus on discussing about the use of their local language and the national language of their country. While in this current study the media used is Instagram which can be used by all people in the world who have internet access and permission to use Instagram. Although the problem discussed is English, people who are not native English speakers can also contribute in expressing their opinions, moreover English is the language used as the language of international communication.

Talking about the dominant ideology that appears in this study, there are two opposing ideologies, namely pro-LGBT and anti-LGBT. Of the two, it cannot be seen who is more dominant due to the large number of comments, and netizens or even Elliot can report or delete comments they do not want. Due to the case, it could be that now and then what will be seen in the post are the comments of those who are pro against Elliot's decision only. But what is certain is that the neutral or compromised comments are clearly fewer than the two types of comments with clear ideologies.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This section contains conclusions and suggestions. Conclusions contain substantive findings that are directly related to the formulation of the problem and research objectives, and formal findings related to theoretical contributions. While the suggestions are sourced from the results of the analysis associated with the scope of the research.

A. Conclusion

In this research, for substantive findings, netizens demonstrated various views from supporting, repudiating, and neutral on Elliot's decision to change his pronouns. Those who support Elliot's decision are classified as pro-LGBT because their way of commenting is by congratulating and thanking Elliot for coming out without mentioning other alternatives where this includes as *monogloss* type of the engagement system that does not open up alternative dialogue spaces. On the other hand, those who repudiate Elliot's decision are categorized as anti-LGBT because they view gender as a binary system and deny all forms of LGBT views using all types of engagement systems both *monogloss* and *heterogloss: contract* and *expand*. For those who are neutral and compromise with Elliot's decision, their ideology cannot be determined because the majority of their comments only contain questions that represent their confusion about the phenomenon that occurs, namely about the use of gender pronouns by Elliot, by using the *heterogloss: expand* of the engagement system. Elliot's post that provoked netizens both anti and pro LGBT is

the result of what is the spread of his own ideology as a transgender, where he changed his name and pronouns and then posted it on his personal Instagram account. For formal findings related to theoretical contributions, the use of the engagement system from appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005) to classify the types of netizens' comments proved useful in this research.

B. Suggestion

This research has several limitations, such as the object of research being limited to only one public figure, namely Elliot Page who is an American actor where the country itself adheres to a liberal understanding where LGBT is not a strange thing for them. The hope for further research on this topic is to be able to take other contexts such as the same phenomenon that occurs in other regions where LGBT is a taboo subject. In addition, the other systems of appraisal theory, attitude and graduation, can also be used, since here the researcher only focuses on the engagement system. This research is expected to increase the reader's knowledge about what is currently developing regarding the use of gender pronouns in English and can determine how to address this issue wisely.

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CURRICULUM VITAE





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APPENDIX

Supporting comments


 **miousefanpage** hi elliot ❤️❤️ im trans too and hope people respect you and your pronouns good sir :))
74w Reply


 **morningstxr @jo_anna5586** they use he/they pronouns and identify as a male! Yes their assigned gender at birth was "female" but he is actually a man
60w Reply


 **gothguy_jai** I'm so proud of him/them and it makes me so happy and excited to see someone who uses my pronouns in this sort of positive light. Seeing another nonbinary person who uses he/they pronouns in such incredible roles like Vanya in umbrella academy and seeing them so accepted with love and open arms is incredible. Elliot is easily one of the biggest inspirations for me as a nonbinary teen, and I can't wait to see where he goes from here on.
72w Reply


 **m.formigaa @pandoravintageboutique** hi! actually pronouns have nothing to deal with gender! u just use whatever u feel comfortable with
33 ming 60 suka Balas

Repudiating comments


 **theaceofspader** Do what makes you happy but, do not force it upon others to call you what you want to be called! Life just doesn't work that way, Elliott!
67w 3 likes Reply


 **ayabaderz** Hahaaaa hi everyone I'm a cat, my pronouns are pspsp and it. I'm so lucky to be here
74w 5 likes Reply


 **_s_noor_** You don't have to be "he" for having a mind of he
74w Reply


 **notnicpriest** Pronouns don't change Biology
74w 4 likes Reply

Compromising comments

 **goldbondmyballs** They? Isn't they more than 1 person?
72w Reply

 **loker_jonny** Isn't everyone's pronoun "they"?
72w Reply

 **abigailchupp** Wait, im confused. With the pronouns He and They. Is it non binary or identifying as a man?
74w 1like Reply

 **finbar.osullivan** What are pronouns? He/they?, I don't know anything about LGBTQ and all dat stuff
74w 1like Reply