# Speaking About People of Non-Binary Sex/Gender in Croatian

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#### ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes different language problems connected with speaking about people of non-binary sex/gender in Croatian. Research is based on corpus analysis. One of the authors compiled the Croatian Gender Corpus using the Sketch Engine corpus compiling software for this analysis. The authors analyze these issues connected with speaking about non-binary people: using nouns of masculine, neutral, or feminine gender; using masculine, neutral, or feminine pronouns and verbal forms; ways of addressing a non-binary person, normative problems noticed in the Croatian Gender Corpus. Some issues are compared to the situation in other languages.

Key words: binary, Croatian Gender Corpus, gender, non-binary, sex, linguistics, anthropology

### Introduction

This paper centers on how to use and translate gender-inclusive terminology into Croatian. Gender studies support the idea that sex is a biological category and gender is a social category. They are against sex-based polarisation, which can lead to discrimination<sup>1,2</sup> and decline of human rights<sup>3,4</sup> of people of non-binary gender. Non-binary gender people (also called genderqueer) may, for example, identify themselves as having no gender, fall on a gender spectrum somewhere between male and female, or identify as totally outside binary gender identities.<sup>5</sup>

This view is opposed by those who believe that people need to conform to their sex/gender assigned at birth in a gender-binary system that includes only females and males. They assign the term genderism to the approach supported by gender studies and strongly criticize it as a form of totalitarianism.<sup>6</sup>

Basic Croatian anthropological terminology – *ANTRO-NA* defines *spol* ('sex') as 'a totality of biological features by which men and women are differentiated' and *rod* ('gender') as 'culturally specific shaping of sexes and their interrelations'.<sup>8</sup>

In this paper, we do not express an opinion about this sensitive problem but only offer corpus-based linguistic analysis of the issues that speaking about people of non-binary sex/gender presents for the Croatian language. These

problems are more complicated in Croatian than in English, which is not a gender language and has already developed strategies for speaking about non-binary people.

### Motivation

This paper is motivated by:

- 1. The paper by the two authors on spol and rod from a diachronic and synchronic perspective. In that paper, the analysis was conducted on lexicographic works and general Croatian corpora: Croatian Web Corpus  $-hrWaC^{10}$  and Croatian Language Repository. The authors show how the meaning of the term rod ('gender') has changed due to social changes and the influence of English. They argue that gender should not always be translated as rod and show the difference between the etymological meaning of gender, which is related to birth, and the new meanings of gender, which denote anthropological, social, and psychological features, i.e., everything that is not biologically marked.
- 2. Numerous questions on sex and gender posed to the language advice service at the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics.

However, this research was triggered by a question posed by a Wikipedia contributor writing an article on a non-binary person.

### Methodology

The initial research was conducted using Sketch Engine<sup>12,13</sup> on Croatian general corpora: Croatian Web Corpus -hrWaC and Croatian Language Repository. The analysis showed that these corpora are not relevant for this research, e.g., the lemma *nebinaran* ('non-binary') occurs only four times in hrWaC (Figure 1) while the same lemma occurs only once in Croatian Language Repository.

Further analysis of the obtained results showed that only two examples from hrWaC have the meaning 'gender identity that does not fit into the gender binary of male and female'. The reason for this is that hrWaC has not been supplemented since 2013. The fact that this problem could not be analysed on the two Croatian corpora motivated us to start manually collecting texts on gender non-binary issues.

These texts showed many linguistic problems connected with speaking about non-binary people. That was the reason for compiling the computer Croatian Gender Corpus with the Sketch Engine corpus compilation software.

All Croatian examples cited in this paper are translated into English. As the focus of the paper is on Croatian and not English, the principle of translation is formal correspondence and not translation equivalence. The Croatian term spol is always translated as sex and rod as gender, although this is not always the best translation and often a better translation of Croatian spol would be gender, but then the difference between Croatian spol and rod would be lost. In translations, feminine gender is marked by F, masculine gender is marked by M, and neutral gender is marked by N.

The situation in Croatian is compared to that in other languages if we find the solutions used by other languages interesting and insightful.

### Compiling the Croatian Gender Corpus

The Croatian Gender Corpus was compiled by one of the authors of this paper and is searchable on Sketch Engine. Sketch Engine can be used online and is free of charge for those with an AAI@EduHr account until 1st April 2022. Employees in the Ministry of Science and Education institutions have an AAI@EduHr account, and each institution included in the AAI@EduHr system has its database in which the electronic identities of users from that institution are stored.<sup>14</sup> At the moment, our corpus consists of 1027741 tokens, 828699 words (87403 unique words), 39535 sentences, 5649 paragraphs, and 196 documents. The corpus was compiled using keywords rod, spol, rodni, spolni, nebinarna osoba, nebinarni, and seksualni ('gender, sex, gender, sexual, non-binary person, non-binary, and sexual') on texts available on the Internet. The sources were automatically selected, so texts belong to different genres and do not all belong to the standard language. The approach to this corpus compilation was different from, e.g., the compilation of the Croatian linguistic corpus – Jena<sup>15</sup> as the sources were automatically selected using keywords and not by previously selecting and preparing works that will be included in the corpus and making them machine-readable.

The corpus consists of different documents, newspaper articles, scientific papers, books available on the Internet, and texts from Internet portals, forums, blogs, etc. The topics are primarily LGBT human rights, sex, and gender in Croatian, transsexuality, feminism, transphobia, homosexuality, Istanbul convention, discrimination, political correctness, etc.

The Sketch Engine program facilitates text analysis of the compiled corpora. When a text is uploaded to Sketch Engine, it marks words by word classes and enables making wordlists, word sketches of the most frequent collocations, and compilation of a thesaurus. "The wordlist tool generates frequency lists of various kinds: nouns, verbs, adjectives and other parts of speech; words beginning, ending, containing certain characters; word forms, tags, lemmas, and other attributes, or a combination of the three options above."16 The most frequent nouns in our corpus are osoba, žena, spol, identitet, muškarac, rod, pravo, godina, dijete, odnos ('person, woman, sex, identity, man, gender, law, age, child, relationship'), the most frequent adjectives are rodan, seksualan, ženski, muški, sav, spolan, društven, velik, ljudski, različit ('gender, sexual, female, male, all, sexual, social, big, human, different'), the most frequent verbs are biti, moći, imati, htjeti, trebati, postojati, koristiti, smatrati, odnositi, željeti ('be, be able, have, want, need, exist, use, consider, relate, desire'). "The thesaurus in Sketch Engine is an automatically generated list of synonyms or words

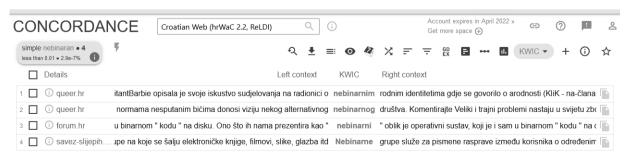


Fig. 1. Lemma nebinaran ('non-binary') in hrWaC.

belonging to the same category (semantic field). The list is produced based on the context in which the words appear in the selected corpus. Only nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs are supported in most corpora."<sup>17</sup>

Table 1 compares the thesaurus of the lemmas *nebinaran* ('non-binary') and *binaran* ('binary').

**TABLE 1**THESAURUS OF THE LEMMAS *NEBINARAN* ('NON-BINARY') AND *BINARAN* ('BINARY').

	nebinaran			binaran			
Word Frequency	uency?	Word	Frequency?				
1 transpolan	101	1 tradicionalan	252	•••			
<sup>2</sup> nenormativan	62	<sup>2</sup> biološki	743	•••			
<sup>3</sup> transeksualan	243	3 zadati	77	•••			
4 transseksualan	188	4 pravni	290	•••			
5 fluidan	45	5 rodni	601	•••			
6 ţenski	98	6 postojeći	131	•••			
7 varijantni	22	7 različit	942	•••			
8 gay	72	8 definirati	96	•••			
9 interspolan	124	<sup>9</sup> cijel	245	•••			
10 interseksualan	95	<sup>10</sup> širok	242	•••			

Table 1 shows that the most common synonyms or words belonging to the same category (semantic field) as nebinaran ('non-binary') are transpolan, nenormativan, transeksualan, transeksualan, fluidan, ženski, varijantni, gay, interspolan, interseksualan ('transsexual, non-normative, fluid, female, variant, gay, intersexual'). The most common synonyms or words belonging to the same category (semantic field) as binaran ('binary') are tradicionalan, biološki, zadani, pravni, rodni, postojeći, različit, definirati, cijeli, širok ('traditional, biological, given, legal, gender, existing, different, define, whole, wide').

The option Keywords (term extraction) compares the Croatian Gender Corpus with the general Croatian corpus hrWaC, and differential word/multi-word expressions are shown in Table 2.

The extracted single-word terms are transrodni, lezbejski, gender, rodno, disforija, transrodnost, nebinaran, lezbejka, tansseksualnost, transeksualan ('transgender, lesbian, gender, dysphoria, transgender, non-binary, transsexuality, transsexual'). In the corpus, the forms lezbejka/lezbijka and lezbejski/lezbijski occur. Lezbejka occurs 271 times, lezbijski 220 times, lezbijka 327 times, and lezbejski 306. The extracted multi-word terms are rodan identitet (mistake in lemmatization, should be rodni identitet), rodna uloga, transrodna osoba, rodna disforija, seksualna orijentacija, rodno izražavanje, trans osoba, rodni identitet, transrodna osoba, promjena spola ('gender identity, gender role, transgender person, gender

**TABLE 2**TERM EXTRACTION FROM THE CROATIAN GENDER CORPUS

Single words		Multi-word expressions		
Word		Word		
1 transrodni	•••	1 rodan identitet	•••	
2 lezbejski	•••	2 rodna uloga	•••	
3 gender	•••	3 transrodna osoba	•••	
4 rodno	•••	4 rodna disforija	•••	
5 disforija	•••	5 seksualna orijentacija	•••	
6 transrodnost	•••	6 rodno izražavanje	•••	
7 nebinaran	•••	7 trans osoba	•••	
8 lezbejka	•••	8 rodni identitet	•••	
9 transseksualnost	•••	9 transeksualna osoba	•••	
10 transeksualan	•••	10 promjena spola	•••	

dysphoria, sexual orientation, gender expression, trans person, gender identity, transsexual person, change of sex').

Sketch Engine also enables the compilation of a oneclick dictionary in Lexonomy, illustrated in Figure 2.

A one-click dictionary does not give a dictionary entry but only selects relevant examples (Good Dictionary Examples, GDEX). GDEX is a tool built into Sketch Engine that enables finding typical, illustrative examples of appropriate size. From it, we can extract the data: 1: synonym genderqueer, 2. definition nebinaran je tko se ne identificira isključivo kao muškarac ili žena ('non-binary does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman'), 3. collocations: osoba, identitet, rod, spol, praksa; rodno ('person, identity, gender, sex, practice; gender adj.').

All these Sketch Engine options are used for linguistic analysis.

### Linguistic Analysis

Linguistic analysis of the corpus centers on these problems connected with speaking about persons of non-binary gender:

- using nouns of masculine, feminine, or neutral gender;
- 2. using masculine, feminine, or neutral verbal forms;
- 3. using masculine, feminine, or neutral pronouns;
- 4. ways of addressing.

It also addresses the issue of whether one can select one's sex or gender (or both). At the end of the paper, some normative advice is given.

#### nebinaran

— Što znači identificirati se kao genderqueer ili nebinarna osoba?

Biti nebinarna osoba znači postojati izvan društvenih granica i očekivanja.

Pojedinci se mogu i identificiraju s **nebinarnim** kao svojim specifičnim identitetom.

Kako govoriti na hrvatskom o **nebinarnim** osobama ili se izražavati kao nebinarna osoba?

Sažetak Nebinarni rodni identitet podrazumijeva da se osoba ne identificira isključivo niti sa ženskim niti s muškim rodnim identitetom.

Nebinarne osobe ne identificiraju se niti kao muškarci niti kao žene, niti su podložni raznim normama oko spolova.

Ako iza rodno nebinarnih osoba stane država, lakše će nas prihvatiti i društvo u kojem živimo.

No, kada govorimo o prošlom vremenu u hrvatskom jeziku onda nebinarne osobe imaju mogućnosti.

Korištenje oznake X u ličnim dokumentima **nebinarnih** osoba je već slučaj u mnogim zemljama svijeta.

Zato valja podsjetiti kako nebinarni identiteti postoje oduvijek, tisućama godina.

Međutim, postoji pojam rodno nebinarne osobe.

Jednostavno rečeno, nebinarna osoba jest netko tko se ne identificira isključivo kao muškarac ili žena.

Međutim, postoji još mnogo trans identiteta koji spadaju u rodno nebinarne identitete.

Stoga, u ranim fazama, nije postojao jezik koji bi mogao opisati privlačnost ka **nebinarnim** spolovima i rodovima.

No, za **nebinarne** se osobe ne može koristiti ONO, to bi bilo uvredljivo.

Ljudi čiji spol nije muški ili ženski koriste mnogo različitih izraza kako bi opisali sebe, a **nebinarni** je jedan od najčešćih.

Ili **nebinarnoj** ženi koja je aromantična?

Kako god, uvijek je najbolje pitati nebinarnu osobu kako ona smatra da bi se o njoj trebalo govoriti i kako joj se obraćati.

Biti nebinarna osoba otvara svijet mogućnosti – moguće načine na koje razumijemo i izražavamo sebe, načine na koje komuniciramo s onima oko nas.

Transgresija te binarnosti otvara mogućnosti za **nebinarne** prakse, a izostanak njihove društvene normaliziranosti umjetnica Ashley Hans Scheirl preispituje u svojem radu.

Fig 2. One-click dictionary entry nebinaran ('non-binary').

Nouns of masculine, feminine, and neutral gender

Unlike English, every noun in Croatian has grammatical gender. So grammatical gender cannot be avoided when speaking about persons of non-binary sex/gender, e.g., the noun osoba ('person') has feminine grammatical gender although it refers to persons of both (all) genders/sexes. This can be illustrated by the concordance of the Croatian Gender Corpus (lemma osoba 'person F') shown in Figure 3 (osobe koja ima, osobu koja ne želi, osobu kojoj

je ('person F who F has, person F who F does not want, person F who F is'), etc.).

In the Croatian Gender Corpus this characteristic sentence can be found *Ako koristiš riječ 'transeksualan/na' (ili 'trans') koristi ju kao pridjev kojim opisuješ osobu, a ne kao imenicu (npr. koristi trans osoba ili transeksualna osoba umjesto transeksualac/ka).* ('If you use the word 'transsexual' (or 'trans'), use it as an adjective to describe a person, not as a noun (e.g., use a trans person or a transsexual person instead of a transsexual M/F)'.) The sugges-

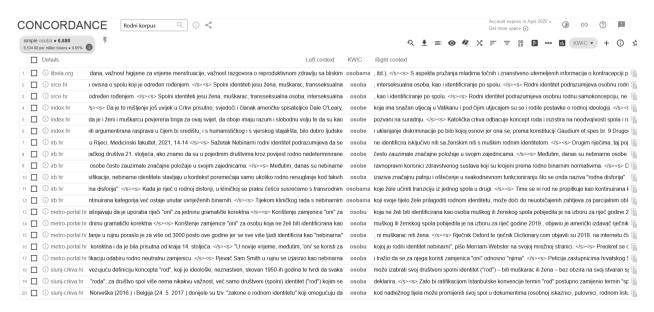


Fig. 3. Concordance of the lemma osoba ('person').

tion is not to use the words *transeksualac* ('transsexual M') because it is of masculine gender and *transseksualka* ('transsexual F') because it is of feminine gender but to use *transeksualna osoba* ('transsexual person'). However, the Croatian word *osoba* ('person') is of the feminine gender, although it refers to both masculine and feminine sex/gender persons.

The use of nouns of masculine and feminine gender and the difference between Croatian and English is illustrated by a Croatian newspaper article in Table 3.

If an actor and actress (glumac and glumica) are changed to a performer ( $izvoda\check{c}$ ), gender neutrality is achieved. However, in Croatian izvođač M (as opposed to izvođačica F) is gender-marked in the same way as glumac and *glumica*. Although this view is often criticized, corpus analysis shows that the masculine plural glumci frequently refers also to females (To je bio početak za naše glumce na kazališnim daskama, a po prvi su se puta iskušenju izložile Katarina Šimunić, Marija Varošanec, Draženka Hutinec, Andreja Trupković, Liljana Jambrošić, Simona Cvetković, Dragica Tarandek, Ana Novosel, Tamara Korušić, Gordana Varošanec i Željka Jambrošić. 'This was the beginning for our actors M on the stage, and for the first time Katarina Simunić, Marija Varošanec, Draženka Hutinec, Andreja Trupković, Liljana Jambrošić, Simona Cvetković, Dragica Tarandek, Ana Novosel, Tamara Korušić, Gordana Varošanec, and Željka Jambrošić.'). Also, izvođači ('performer M pl.') refers to persons of both sexes/ genders (Udruženje hrvatskih arhitekata, Hrvatsko društvo likovnih umjetnika, Hrvatsko udruženje likovnih umjetnika primijenjene umjetnosti, Udruga umjetnika izvođača, Hrvatsko društvo dramskih umjetnika, Hrvatsko društvo baletnih umjetnika, Hrvatsko društvo glazbenih umietnika. Društvo hrvatskih književnih prevodilaca. Hrvatsko društvo filmskih djelatnika, Društvo hrvatskih književnika. 'Association of Croatian Architects M, Croatian Society of Fine Artists M, Croatian Association of Fine Artists M of Applied Arts, Association of Performers M, Croatian Society of Dramatic Artists M, Croatian Society of Ballet Artists M, Croatian Society of Music Artists M, Society of Croatian Literary Translators M, Croatian Society of Film Workers M, Society of Croatian Writers M'). It is interesting that all the actors in the above example are women.

The situation in Croatian can be compared to that in Spanish. In Spanish, it was suggested to use the vowel e instead of the vowels o for male and a for female forms. e.g., compañere ('companion, partner, coworker') instead of male compañero or female compañera. Another suggestion was to substitute male o and female a by X or @. However, the Royal Spanish Academy (Real Academia  $Espa\tilde{n}ola - RAE$ ) criticized this intervention into the morphology of the Spanish language as a violation of the morphological system and found it unnecessary since the male grammatical gender already refers to both sexes/genders.<sup>20</sup> This opinion was criticized, especially by the members of the LGBTQ+ community, who stressed the importance of the correct usage of socially sensitive and inclusive language. To make the language less sexist, the Government of Chile promotes the conscious choice of words by avoiding using the masculine form to refer to people in general. For example, their guide for inclusive language Guía de lenguaje inclusivo de género<sup>21</sup> suggests using phrases like la población beneficiaria ('the target population') instead of los beneficiarios ('the beneficiaries M'), los expertos y las expertas ('the experts M/F') instead of just los expertos ('the experts M'), la gente nominada ('the nominated people') instead of los nominados ('the nominees M'), las personas pertenecientes al estamento directivo y personas funcionarias ('the people belonging to the management team and civil servants') instead of directivos y funcionarios ('managers and officials M'), coreógrafas y coreógrafos chilenas/os ('Chilean coreographers M/F') instead of coreógrafos chilenos ('Chilean coreographers M'). Some Spanish sources<sup>22</sup> stress that for some transgender or non-binary people, language is key to their self-identification and inclusion in society. Some non-binary people may express their identity through the feminine or masculine

#### TABLE 3

### CROATIAN GLUMAC, GLUMICA, IZVOĐAČ AS OPPOSED TO ENGLISH ACTOR, ACTRESS, AND PERFORMER

Croatian English

# Ovaj rodno nebinarni izraz su organizatori Emmyja uveli u svoje kategorije

ORGANIZATOR dodjele nagrade Emmy, Television Academy, donio je značajnu promjenu u načinu na koji se tretiraju rodno nebinarne osobe.

Na službenoj stranici Emmyja objavljeno je da <u>nominirani</u> i/ili <u>pobjednici</u> u bilo kojoj kategoriji mogu zatražiti da njihova potvrda o nominaciji i statua nosi rodno neutralni izraz <u>'izvođač'</u>, umjesto dosadašnjih 'glumac' ili 'glumica'.

Kako kaže Dillon, dosadašnje dodjele Emmyja isključivali su nebinarne osobe, odnosno one koji se ne identificiraju isključivo kao muško ili žensko.

Nagrade MTV Movies & TV awards i TCA Awards već imaju kategorije i nominacije koje nisu rodno određene.<sup>19</sup>

### The Emmy organizers introduced this gender non-binary term into their categories

The ORGANIZER of the Emmy Awards, Television Academy, has brought about a significant change in how non-binary people are treated.

It was announced on Emmy's official website that <u>nominees</u> and/ or <u>winners</u> in any category could request that their nomination certificate and statue bear the gender-neutral term '<u>performer</u>' instead of the current '<u>actor</u>' or '<u>actress</u>'.

According to Dillon, previous Emmy awards have excluded nonbinary people, i.e., those who do not identify exclusively as male or female.

The MTV Movies & TV awards and TCA Awards already have categories and nominations that are not gender-specific.

grammatical gender. In contrast, others are not comfortable with these constructions and may choose other ways of self-expression.

Following the Spanish example, in Croatian, the neutral form could be used in some cases, e.g., gledateljstvo ('audience' N) instead of gledatelji ('spectators') or gledatelji i gledateljice ('spectators M and spectators F') and slušateljstvo ('audience' N) instead of slušatelji ('listeners' M) or slušatelji i slušateljice ('listeners M and listeners F'). However, this can apply only to a small number of nouns.

Verbal forms and adjectives showing feminine, masculine, and neutral gender

Unlike English, every adjective and some verbal forms in Croatian show gender, as seen in Table 4. Table 4 compares two Croatian texts on non-binary persons born as girls who now declare themselves as non-binary. In the first text, Eminem's child is spoken about in the masculine gender: naglasio, mu, napisao, pokušavao, je rođen, etc. ('stressed M, him, wrote M, tried M, was born M'). This is probably due to the name Stevie, which can be male and female but is mainly perceived as male, especially by native speakers of Croatian. The use of the form rođen ('born'

M) is especially interesting as Stevie was born as a girl (rođen 2002. godine kao biološka kći 'born M in 2002 as a biological daughter'). In the second text, Demi Lovato is referred to in the feminine gender nebinarna, otkrila, postigla, gledala, sretna, presretna ('non-binary F, discovered F, achieved F, watched F, happy F, overjoyed F'), etc.

Texts also show different use of pronouns that will be discussed in the next chapter.

It is often suggested that when speaking about non-binary people in Croatian, the verbal forms of aorist and imperfect should be used. This can be seen from the concordance of the lemma *aorist* in the corpus (Figure 4) and the site Habric<sup>25</sup>.

However, the drawbacks of such an approach are: 1. aorist and imperfect are not often used in contemporary Croatian, 2. they sound archaic and bookish, and using them would sound unnatural to most native Croatian speakers, 3. for some words, even native speakers of Croatian have a problem when faced with the task to write the correct aorist and especially imperfect (e.g., pecijah, sijecijah from peći 'to bake', sjeći 'to cut'), 4. there are other verbal forms to which such an approach cannot be ap-

#### TARLE 4

### GENDER MARKED VERBAL FORMS AND ADJECTIVES

Croatian English

### Eminemovo 19-godišnje dijete objavilo da je nebinarna osoba: Zovite me Stevie

EMINEMOVO 19-godišnje usvojeno dijete <u>izjasnilo</u> se kao nebinarna osoba te je <u>zatražilo</u> da ga se od sad zove Stevie, umjesto Whitney.

U TikTok videu koji je <u>objavio</u>, Stevie je <u>naglasio</u> kako će sada koristiti zamjenice on/ona ili oni te je <u>rekao</u> da je svoju priču <u>odlučio</u> podijeliti sa svijetom kako bi mu\_bilo ugodnije u vlastitom tijelu. 'Moj izgled se godinama mijenjao. Zauvijek rastem i mijenjam se', <u>napisao je</u> uz video.

Stevie je otkrio i kako se odlučio za novo ime.

'Dugo <u>sam pokušavao</u> izabrati ime s kojim bi mi bilo najugodnije, a to ime je Stevie', <u>rekao</u> je i <u>dodao</u>da radi na službenoj promjeni imena.

Stevie <u>je rođen</u> 2002. godine kao biološka kći Eminemove bivše supruge Kim Scott, a reper ga je usvojio 2005. godine, kada se nakratko pomirio s njegovom majkom. $^{23}$ 

### Rodno <u>nebinarna</u> Demi ponosna na svoju prvu seks scenu u životu

Nedavno <u>je otkrila</u> da se identificira kao nebinarna osoba. Kako je i sama <u>rekla</u>, prilagodba i dalje traje i trajat će, ali ni to je ne sprječava da živi punim plućima

'Napokon se osjećam slobodno. To je najljepše što <u>sam</u> ikada <u>osjetila'</u>, ovako je nedavno <u>rekla</u> za svoj život pjevačica i glumica Demi Lovato. Iako joj je tek 28 godina, <u>postigla je</u> velik uspjeh, ali i nekoliko puta <u>gledala</u> smrti u oči. Danas je <u>sretna</u> jer se uspješno <u>izborila</u> s ovisnostima, <u>oporavila</u> se od moždanog udara i nedavno <u>objavila</u> hvaljeni album, a nedavno <u>je otkrila</u> da se identificira kao nebinarna osoba. Kako je i sama <u>rekla</u>, prilagodba i dalje traje i trajat će, ali ni to je ne sprječava da živi punim plućima. Štoviše, sada <u>je otkrila</u> da <u>je presretna</u> što je <u>snimila</u> svoju prvu seks scenu u životu.<sup>24</sup>

## Eminem's 19-year-old child announced he was a non-binary person: Call me Stevie

EMINEM'S 19-year-old adopted child <u>declared</u> N himself a non-binary person and <u>requested</u> N that his name from now on be Stevie instead of Whitney.

In a TikTok video he <u>posted</u> M, Stevie <u>stressed</u> M that he will use pronouns he/she or they and <u>said</u> M that he <u>decided</u> M to share his story with the world to make him more comfortable in his body. 'My appearance has changed over the years. I am growing and changing forever,' he <u>wrote</u> M alongside the video.

Stevie also <u>revealed</u> M how he <u>decided</u> M on a new name. 'I've <u>been trying</u> M for a long time to choose the name I would be most comfortable with, and that name is Stevie,' he <u>said</u> M, adding M that he is working on an official name change.

Stevie <u>was born</u> M in 2002 as a biological daughter of Eminem's ex-wife Kim Scott, and the rapper adopted him in 2005 when he briefly reconciled with his mother.

### Gender <u>non-binary</u> F Demi proud of the first sex scene in her life

She recently <u>revealed</u> F that she identifies as a non-binary person. As she <u>said</u> F, the adjustment is still going on and will continue, but that doesn't stop her from living life to the fullest.

I finally feel free. It's the most beautiful thing I've ever felt F', singer and actress Demi Lovato said F about her life recently. Although she is only 28 years old, she has achieved F great success, but she has also looked F death in the eyes several times. Today, she is happy F because she has successfully battled F addictions, recovered F from a stroke, recently released F an appreciated album, and recently revealed F that she identifies as a non-binary person. As she said F, the adjustment is still going on and will continue, but that doesn't stop her from living life to the fullest. Moreover, she has now revealed F that she is overjoyed F to have recorded F the first sex scene in her life.

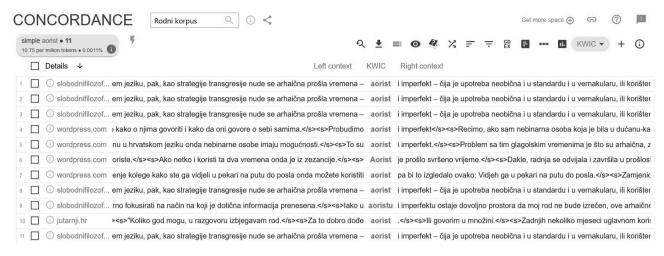


Fig 3. Concordance of the lemma agrist.

plied (conditional I and II, future II). Also, the problem of adjectival forms is not solved by such an approach.

### Pronouns referring to non-binary people

In English, it is suggested to address a non-binary person by the pronoun 'they' to avoid using feminine or masculine pronouns. 'US linguists have picked the gender-neutral pronoun 'they' as their word of the decade. The term beat a list of contenders that included 'meme', '#Black-LivesMatter', and 'MeToo' to win the crown.'<sup>26</sup>. In English, the pronoun 'they' could be used for a person of unspecified gender, e.g., Ask a friend if they can help you.<sup>27</sup>

Marta Špoljar<sup>28</sup> wrote a master's thesis on the translation of the pronoun 'they' in the expression of non-binary persons. The thesis presents interviews with 11 Croatian-speaking non-binary persons. In addition to using the pronoun oni M and one F (and mixing them) they also mentioned the pronoun onie (a merge of oni and one)<sup>28</sup>. The results show that non-binary people have different opinions on using the pronoun oni. They also use the strategy of mixing gendered terms to express their identity. The study stressed the need for more academic research on non-binary language in Croatia.

However, if we translate English 'they' as Croatian *oni*, the point is missed as *oni* is the third person masculine plural pronoun. It can refer to persons of mixed gender the same as masculine nouns, especially in the plural, can refer to persons of mixed gender (see the example of *glumac* ('actor') and *izvođač* ('performer') above). Table 5 shows examples of pronoun usage in Croatian.

The analyzed texts suggest that non-binary people choose their pronouns and can be addressed with 'they, he/she, or even he/they'. Different non-binary people may use different pronouns. Many non-binary people use 'they' while others use 'he' or 'she', and still others use other pronouns or mix different pronouns. Asking whether someone should be referred to as 'he, she, they', or another pronoun may feel awkward at first, but is one of the simplest and

most important ways to show respect for some one's identity.  $^{31}$ 

In Croatian, 'they' is the masculine plural pronoun. Using singular on/a creates confusion and problems when used in a longer text on/a je bio/la ('he/she was'). The neutral pronoun ono as English 'it' is considered by some non-binary people as offensive and disrespectful and a form of infantilizing the person it refers to as it usually denotes someone young and immature or something inanimate. However, the word  $\check{celjade}$  (person, N) is of neutral gender, and it is the synonym of osoba (person, F), but is considered obsolete.

In Swedish, a new pronoun hen as an alternative to the pronouns hon ('he') and han ('she') has been introduced.<sup>32</sup> In German, the pronoun xier (xieser, xiem, xien, xies, xiese, xiesem) instead of sie and er has been suggested.<sup>33</sup> In Spanish, the pronoun elle has been suggested instead of él as the male pronoun ('he') and ella as the female pronoun ('she').<sup>34</sup> In French, the pronoun iel was suggested instead of male il or female elle.

A new pronoun could be introduced in Croatian following the Swedish, German, Spanish, and French model. The pronoun *onie* has been suggested. Also, pronouns *onu* or *onx* (following the English model) could be suggested. However, inventing a new pronoun has probably little chance of being accepted in Croatian.

### How to address a non-binary person?

In Croatian, we address a male person with gospodin (short gosp. or g.) ('Mr.') and a female person as gospođa (gđa) ('Mrs.') or gospođica (gđica) ('Miss.'). The difference between gospođa and gospođica is that gospođa is a married woman and gospođica is a, usually young, unmarried woman. However, as it has been considered incorrect and sexist to stress the marital status and age of a woman and not of a man, gospođica is avoided in formal communication regardless of her age and marital status, e.g., on the website of Hrvatska katolička mreža<sup>35</sup> this advice is given:

#### TABLE 5

### THE USE OF THE PRONOUN ONI ('THEY')

Croatian

English

### Demi Lovato objavila da je nebinarna osoba. Sad će se oslovljavati s 'oni'

Pop zvijezda Demi Lovato objavila je u srijedu da se smatra nebinarnom osobom i da će se odsad oslovljavati s 'oni', rekavši da je 'do toga došla nakon dubokog suočavanja sa samom sobom'. Još uvijek učim i spoznajem samu sebe i ne tvrdim da sam stručnjak ili nečiji glasnogovornik. Podijelivši ovo s vama postala sam ranjiva na jednoj drugoj razini', napisala je pjevačica na društvenim mrežama.

'Molim vas živite u istini, znajte da vas volim'.29

'Za muške se osobe koristi ON. Za ženske ONA.

No, za nebinarne se osobe ne može koristiti *ONO*, to bi bilo uvredljivo.

U engleskom jeziku se koristi THEY za nebinarnu osobu. To bi na hrvatskom bilo – ONI.

Interesantno je da su kraljevi u prošlosti za sebe koristili množinu, pa bi umjesto- ja proglašavam- koristili: mi proglašavamo.

I danas u hrvatskom jeziku kada se obraćate drugoj osobi koja vam nije u rodu, recimo to može biti poslodavac ili majčina prijateljica, tada se osobi obraćamo sa **VI**. Dakle, kažemo: *Vi ste sljedeći*. Iako se radi o jednoj osobi.<sup>25</sup>

### 'Rodio sam sina, ali ja mu nisam majka, taj me izraz jako smeta!'

Trebamo odvojiti pojmove ženstvenosti i majčinstva. To jednostavno ne stoji. Nisu svi ljudi koji nose djecu majke. Iako sam imao bradu i 'muška prsa', iako je u mojem kartonu stalo da su moje zamjenice <u>he/they</u>, i dalje su mi prilazili i oslovljavali me s 'mama' ili gospođo – požalio se Bennett.<sup>30</sup>

Demi Lovato announced on Wednesday that she considers herself a non-binary person and will subsequently be addressed as 'they'

On Wednesday, pop-star Demi Lovato announced that she considers herself a non-binary person and will henceforth be addressed as 'they', saying she 'came to this after a deep confrontation with herself'. 'I'm still learning and getting to know myself, and I'm not claiming to be an expert or someone's spokesperson. By sharing this with you, I have become vulnerable on another level', the singer wrote on social media.

'Please live in the truth, know that I love you.'

ON (he) is used for males. For women ONA (she).

However, ONO (it) cannot be used for non-binary persons; that would be offensive.

In English, THEY is used for a non-binary person. That in Croatian would be – ONI (M pl.).

It is interesting that kings used the plural for themselves in the past, so instead of – I proclaim – they would use: we proclaim.

Even today, in the Croatian language, when you address another person not related to you, let's say an employer or a mother's friend, then we address the person with VI (you). So we say: You are next. Although it refers to one person.

### 'I gave birth to a son, but I'm not his mother; that expression bothers me very much!'

We need to separate the notions of femininity and motherhood. It is just not the same. Not all people who carry children are mothers. Even though I had a beard and a 'man's chest', even though my medical chart said that my pronouns were he/they, they still approached me and addressed me as mom or ma'am – Bennett complained.

The word *gospođica* ('Miss.') is used less and less often in addressing, so it can be considered obsolete, a young female person in formal communication is also addressed with gospođa ('Mrs.') because emphasizing the marital status and age of a woman is not considered correct. However, there are also different opinions as can be seen from Habric<sup>25</sup>: In the last few years, there have been changes, so gospođa ('Mrs.') as a term is dying, and only gospođica ('Miss.') survives because it is considered more correct. Namely, gospođa ('Mrs.') was used for married women or women who gave birth. This was considered socially desirable and necessary, so those unmarried women who did not realize themselves as mothers were addressed with gospođica ('Miss.'). As society develops in the direction that it is no longer considered that the main role of a woman is to be a wife and a mother, the term gospođa ('Mrs.') is rejected, and only *gospodica* ('Miss.') is accepted.

In English, 'Ms.' does not indicate a woman's marital status. The title came into use in the 1950s and grew in popularity during the women's movement of the 1970s. 'Mx.' was added to Merriam-Webster Unabridged in 2016. The honorific 'Mx.' is generally pronounced as *mix* and functions as a gender-neutral alternative to gendered honorifics 'Mr.', 'Mrs.', 'Miss.', and 'Ms.' Similar to 'Ms.', it does not indicate marital status. As with the other titles included here, 'Mx.' is typically used in conjunction with a per-

son's name as a sign of respect. According to Merriam-Webster, 'Mx.' is often used by individuals who identify outside of the gender binary.<sup>36</sup>

It was suggested that for non-binary persons, the word *gosp.*, and the abbreviation *gsp.* could be used. However, *gosp.* is the abbreviation of *gospodin* ('mister'), which could create confusion. Following the English model, the honorific *gx* could be suggested. This suggestion has never been made so far, the problem remains how to read this honorific, and it is a question of whether it would be accepted.

We can also address a person by his/her title doktor/doktorica ('doctor' M/F), profesor/profesorica ('professor' M/F), kolega/kolegica ('collegue' M/F), akademik/akademikinja ('member of the Academy' M/F), etc. In English, this form of address is genderless and solves the problem of choosing between 'Mr./Mrs./Miss./Ms./Mx'. In Croatian, all these nouns are gender-marked. Following the Spanish suggestion<sup>22</sup>, only names could be used. However, the problem of adjectives preceding names remains, e.g., poštovani/poštovana ('respected'M/F).

Can one choose/change one's sex or gender (or both)?

Although a lot has been written about the relation between sex and gender (mostly in the linguistic context Lewis<sup>37</sup>, Tafra<sup>38</sup>, Pišković<sup>39</sup>; but also in the social context Breglec<sup>40</sup>, Mihaljević<sup>41</sup>, Mihaljević and Mihaljević<sup>9</sup>), the analysis performed on the Croatian Gender Corpus enables new insights. In the corpus, these collocations occur: društveni spol, biološki spol, psihički/psihološki spol, socijalni spol, tjelesni spol; antropološki rod, društveni rod, psihološki rod ('social sex, biological sex, psychological sex, social sex, physical sex; anthropological gender, social gender, psychological gender'). If we compare the English enTenTen corpus<sup>42</sup> with the Croatian hrWaC and Gender Corpus, we get the numerical data given in Table 6.

Suppose we accept the definition that *spol* ('sex') is a biological category and *rod* ('gender') is a social category (and Table 6 shows that it is not always so). In that case, one can decide about one's gender, but not about one's sex. However, if one undergoes an operation, one can change one's biological characteristics and thus change one's sex. This suggests the possibility of marking sex with an *X* until the child can choose its sex. However, if we accept the difference between *spol* ('sex') and *rod* ('gender') the child gets its *spol* ('sex') at birth and can choose its *rod* ('gender') or change its *spol* ('sex') by an operation. An interesting example is given in Table 7.

The answer to the question: Can one choose/change one's sex or gender? is that it depends on the definition of these terms. If sex is biologically defined and gender is a social category, one gets one's sex at birth and can change it only by an operation, and one can choose one's gender. According to this definition, in Table 7 the word rod ('gender') should be used instead of spol ('sex') (dok sam ne odluči kojega je roda 'until he decides what gender he is').

### Language advice

Some orthographic and language problems were detected by searching the Croatian Gender Corpus which were not recorded in Croatian orthographic and language manuals.

ne-binarni or nebinarni ('non-binary'):

In the Croatian Gender Corpus there are 12 occurrences of *ne-binaran* and 1 *ne-binarni* and 234 occurrences of *nebinaran*, and 58 of *nebinarni*. As in this word, the prefix *ne*- is added to an adjective; the correct spelling should be (indefinite) *nebinaran* / (definite) *nebinarni*. The spelling *ne-binarni* probably occurs under the influence of English. *rodno-nebinarna osoba* or *rodno nebinarna osoba* ('gender non-binary person'):

In the Croatian Gender Corpus the spelling *rodno-ne-binaran* occurs. As in this phrase, *rodno* is an adverb; the correct spelling is *rodno nebinarna osoba*.

transseksualni or transeksualni ('transsexual'):

In the Croatian Gender Corpus the lemma transeksualni occurs twice, transeksualan twice, transseksualni

 ${\bf TABLE~6} \\ {\bf NUMERICAL~DATA~ON~SOME~COLLOCATIONS~OF~} {\it ROD~(`GENDER')~AND~SPOL~(`SEX')} \\$ 

English term	tokens	Croatian term	hrWaC tokens	Gender Corpus tokens
anthropological gender	1	antropološki rod	0	1
biological gender	<b>75</b> 3	biološki rod	2	1
psychological gender	132	psihički rod	-	-
		psihološki rod	-	1
physical gender	334	tjelesni rod	-	-
social gender	572	društveni rod	2	1
physical sex	138	tjelesni spol	-	1

**TABLE 7**MARKING SEX/GENDER WITH AN X

Croatian English

Svog najmlađeg sina što ga je dobio s kanadskom glazbenicom **Grimes** (33) odlučio je nazivati zamjenicom 'oni' <u>sve dok sam ne odluči kojeg je spola</u>. Dječak nesvakidašnjeg imena **X** Æ **A-Xii** nedavno je proslavio prvi rođendan, a njegovi roditelji u međuvremenu su pojasnili zašto su ga tako nazvali. Naime, X je nepoznata varijabla u matematici, Æ je vilenjačka varijanta od Ai (ljubav i/ili umjetna inteligencija), A-12 je preteča SR-17 (omiljeni zrakoplov para), a A početko slovo od Archangel, kako se zove omiljena pjesma dječakove mame.<sup>23</sup>

He decided to refer to his youngest son, whom he got with the Canadian musician Grimes (33), with the pronoun 'they' until he decides what sex he is. The boy with the unusual name X  $\not$ E A-Xii recently celebrated his first birthday, and his parents explained why they called him that. Namely, X is an unknown variable in mathematics,  $\not$ E is an elven variant of Ai (love and/or artificial intelligence), A-12 is the forerunner of SR-17 (the pair's favorite aircraft), and A is the initial letter of Archangel, the favorite song of the boy's mother.

occurs five times, and *transseksualan* 188 times. In this word, *trans*- is a prefixoid and should be written together with the stem to which it is added. Although two letters *s* occur in contact, according to the orthographic rule, one is not omitted as can be seen from these examples in the Croatian Orthography Manual<sup>43</sup>: *transsaharski*, *transseksualac*, *transseksualka*, *transseksualčev*, *transseksualkin* ('trans-Sahara, transsexual M, transsexual F, adj., transsexual M, transsexual F, adj., transsexual M, transsexual F.').

transspolni or transpolni ('transsexual')

In the Croatian Gender Corpus the lemma transpolan occurs 102, transpolni 6, transspolan 9, transspolni 1, trans-spolan 1 time. It should be written transspolni for the reasons stated above.

biološki spol ('biological sex') or spol ('sex')

Language advice depends on the definition of *spol* ('sex'). If *spol* is defined as a biological category, *biološki spol* ('biological sex') is a pleonasm, and only *spol* ('sex') should be used. However, if we use *društveni spol* ('social sex') instead of *rod* ('gender'), *biološki spol* is not a language mistake as it denotes one of the hyponyms of the hyperonym *spol*.

društveni/socijalni rod ('social gender') or rod ('gender')

Društveni/socijalni rod ('social gender') is a pleonasm as rod ('gender') is defined as a social category, and only rod should be used. Only in the context where it could be mistaken for rod as a grammatical category or where social gender is opposed to psychological, anthropological, etc. gender the term društveni rod can be used. Socijalni, in this meaning, is a false friend of the English social and should always be replaced by društveni.

### Conclusion

The changes in society have many implications on language:

1. The creation of new terminology. Our corpus analysis has shown these non-binary categories: nerodni, bezrodni, oslobođeni od roda, neutrois, arodni, birodni, transrodni, panrodni, polirodni, rodno neutralni, genderqueer, rodno fluidni ('non-gender, genderless, free of gender, neutros, agender, bigender, transgen-

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- der, pangender, polygender, gender-neutral, genderqueer, gender fluid');
- New meanings of the existing words, e.g., rod ('gender'), oni ('they');
- 3. Problems of language usage (pragmatic problems), e.g., how to address a non-binary person (*gospodin*, *gospođa*, *gospođica*, *x...*, 'Mr., Mrs., Miss., Ms., Mx.'), which pronouns and verbal forms to use, when to use feminine/masculine nouns:
- 4. Need for language advice on terms not yet included in language manuals, e.g., the spelling of Croatian equivalents of *non-binary*, *transsexual*;
- 5. Onomastic and legal problems connected with naming and renaming of non-binary persons.

Croatian usually cannot follow English strategies to find answers to language challenges connected with speaking about and addressing non-binary people. Unlike Croatian, English is primarily a non-gender language. Data from other gender languages and corpus analysis can give some guidelines for solving these complex and highly sensitive problems. Interviews with non-binary people can also provide valuable information.

The analysis of language issues connected with speaking about non-binary persons also has interesting onomastic (and legal) aspects: change of names (e.g., the change of the name Whitney to Stevie), using invented names like X, using names that could be both masculine and feminine (e.g., Stevie). On the Portal of Personal Names<sup>44</sup>, a list of Croatian names that can be both masculine and feminine is given: Andrea, Borna, Denis, Đuka, Ivica, Loren, Ljube, Matija, Mika, Nikica, Noa, Pave, Pera, Perica, Saša, Sava, Stane, Toma, Tomica, Tone, Vanja. Corpus analysis shows that the phrases promjena imena i promijeniti ime ('name change and change a name') often occur in the Croatian Gender Corpus. Some examples indicate that names Vanja and Saša are popular in the non-binary population, e.g., Uspješno sam promijenila ime, te sam Vanja zauvijek. ('I have successfully changed F my name and I am Vanja forever.'). This is an interesting topic for further research.

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### KAKO GOVORIMO O NEBINARNIM OSOBAMA

### SAŽETAK

U radu se analizira nekoliko problema povezanih s govorom o nebinarnim osobama. Provedeno istraživanje temelji se na korpusnoj analizi. Za potrebe ovoga rada jedan od autora sastavio je Hrvatski rodni korpus s pomoću alata dostupnoga u Sketch Engineu. Analiza je usmjerena na probleme povezane s uporabom imenica muškoga, ženskoga ili srednjega roda; uporabom zamjenica, pridjeva i glagolskih oblika; načine oslovljavanja nebinarnih osoba te normativne probleme uočene u kopusu. Navode se i onomastički problemi povezani s nebinarnim osobama (promjena imena, izmišljena imena, imena koja označuju i mušku i žensku osobu). Stanje u hrvatskome uspoređuje se sa stanjem u drugim jezicima.