

Reshaping personal reference: cross-linguistic strategies in post-binary grammar

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1. Pronominal strategies

- Neopronouns:
 - Norwegian
han/hun (he/she) → hen
 - German
er/sie (he/she) → dey
 - French
il/elle (he/she) → iel (alt. ael, ellui)
 - Spanish
el/ella (he/she) → elle
- Calque of the English singular ‘they’ in languages where such usage is not standard.
- Common in Slavic languages

Russian:

5. Он/она будет
He/she will

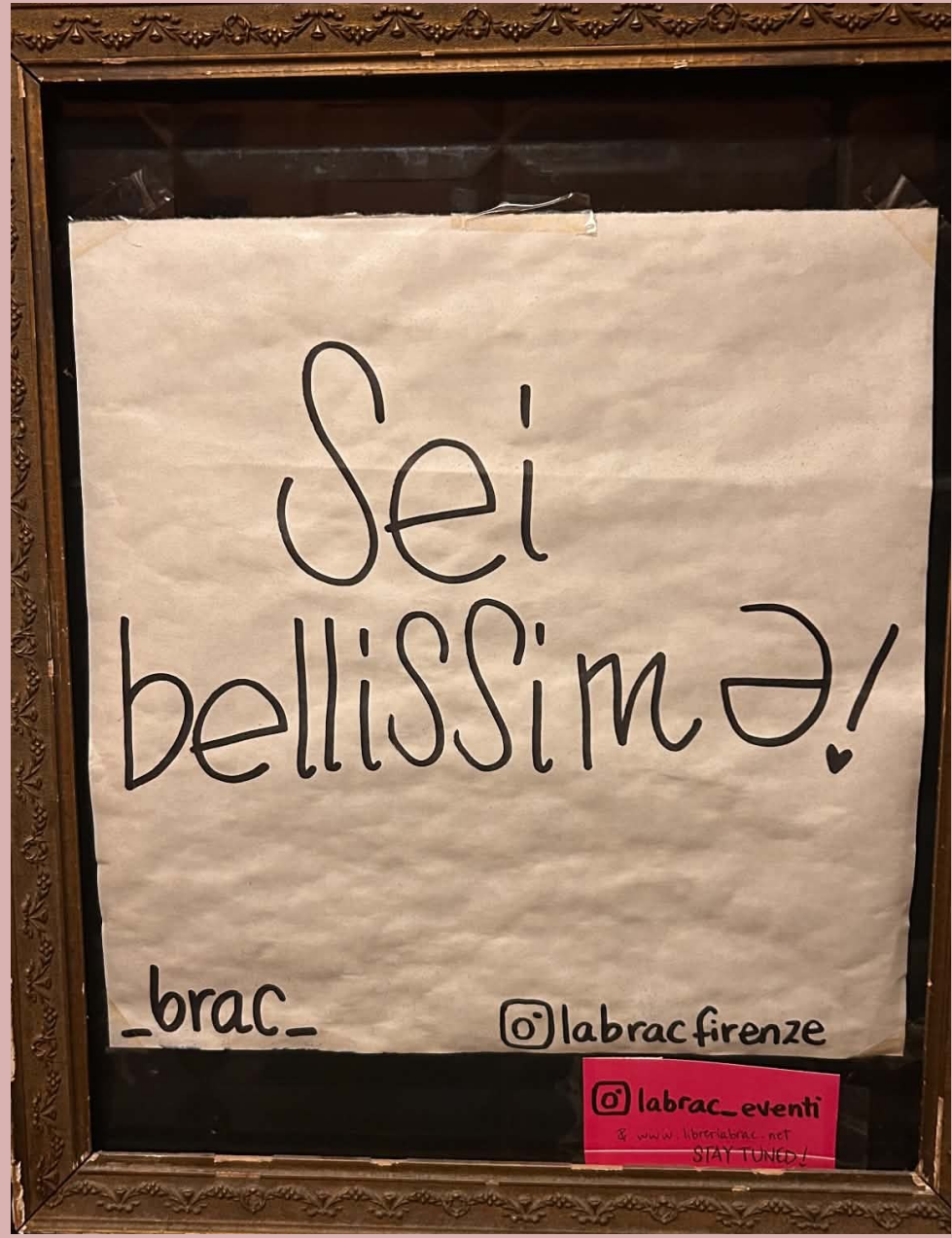
6. *Они будет
They.3PL will.3SG



Pronoun badges in Cornish, including neopronouns

2. Affixal strategies

- Plural construction
 - Similar to examples 5 and 6
- Czech:
7. Byl jsem unavený.
I was tired (masculine)
8. Byla jsem unavená.
I was tired (feminine)
9. *Byli jsem unaveni
Was.3PL I.1SG tired.PL
- Neo-suffix
 - Available vowel (10, 11)
 - Special characters (12, 13).
10. Spanish
Voy con mi amigue
11. Italian
Sono andatu in università
12. German
Ich telefoniere mit dem/der Tierärzt:in
13. French
iel veut que vous soyez tous:tes présenteux



Italian speakers use the Schwa as an available vowel alongside –u. It is often written as *.

3. Syntactic strategies

- Gerund
- German:
14. Die Studenten/Studentinnen gehen in die Uni
The Students.M/F go.3PL to the university
15. Die Studierenden gehen in die Uni
The Students.GER go.3PL to the university
- Agreement relegation
 - introducing or changing an element in a sentence to change the direction of the agreement.
 - Example 17, the lexically feminine noun *personne* (person) is introduced
 - the adjective becomes feminine
- French:
16. Tu es intelligent/intelligente
You are intelligent.M/F
17. Tu es un-e personne intelligent-e
You are a-F person.F intelligent-F
You are an intelligent person
- Example 19 modifies the auxiliary verb from *essere* (to be) to *avere* (to have)
 - participle no longer agrees with the subject,
 - Common in Romance languages

Italian:

18. Sono andat-o da Marco
Be.1SG gone.PPART-M to Marco
I visited Marco

19. Ho visitato Marco
Have.1SG visited.PPART Marco
‘I visited Marco’

- The passive voice
- Main syntactic strategy
- participants report feelings of awkwardness when using it in daily life
- have the potential to sound odd or unnatural in a lot of circumstances.

Polish:

20. Nie zauważyłam tego
NEG noticed.1SG.FEM this
‘I didn’t notice it’

21. Umknęło mi to
Escaped.3SG me this
‘It escaped me’

The sample

Participant geographical distribution



- 130 participants
- 44 languages
- 17 genetic branches
- 2 constructed languages
- 1 extinct language
- 37 countries

Genderedness rating across the sample

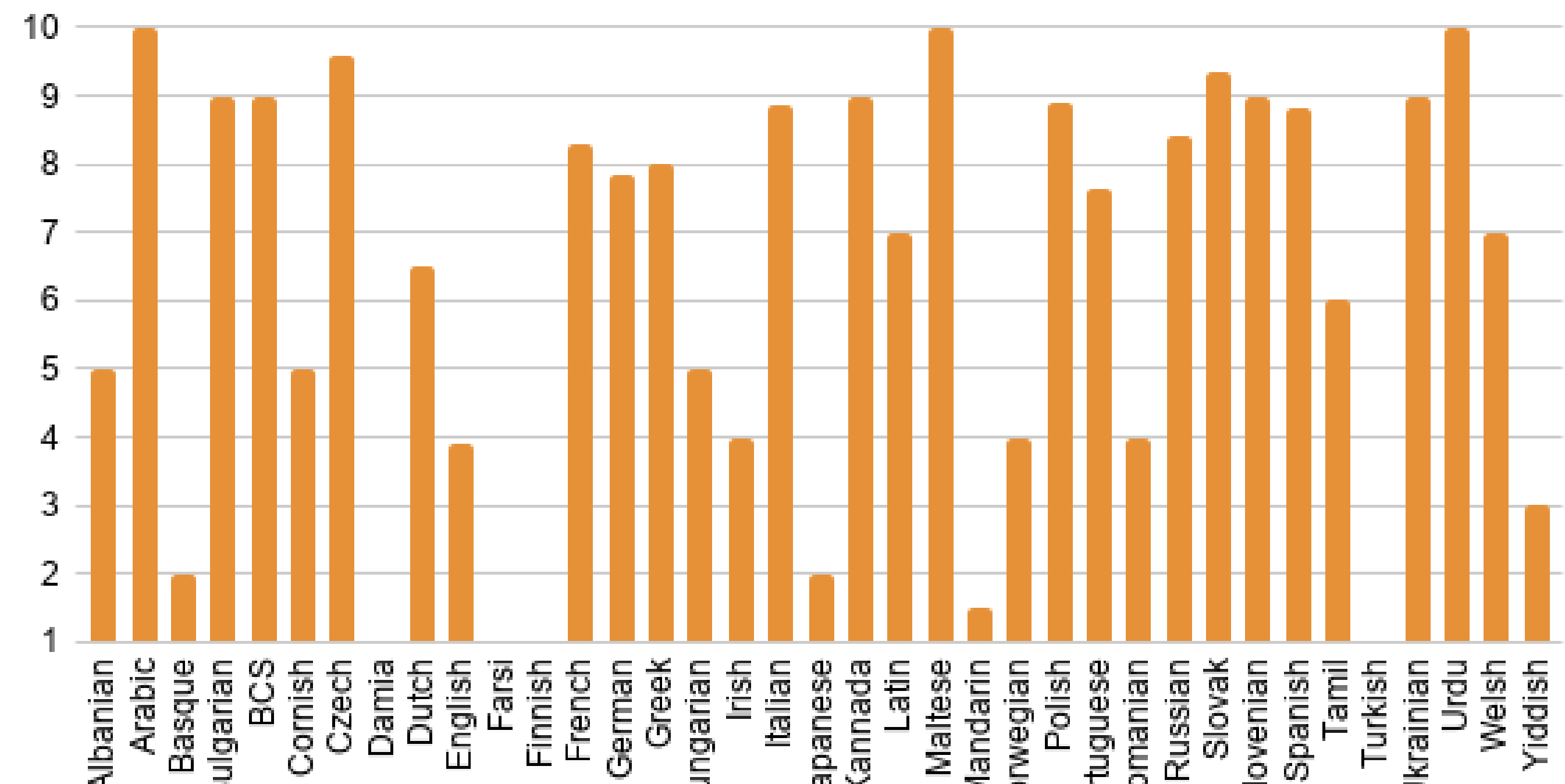


Fig. 2: Participants were asked to rate the genderedness of their languages on a scale of one to ten based on how often they use gender in conversation based on the standards of the language, i.e. disregarding the strategies. Fig. 2 shows the average genderedness rating for each language in the sample.

Slovak:

21. Šla som na stanicu
Went.FEM 1SG to station
‘I went to the train station’

22. Podarilo sa mi ísť na stanicu
Managed.3SG itself me to.go to station
‘I managed to go to the train station’