

1. STAGE-LEVEL/INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL PROPERTIES AND PREDICATES

The STAGE-LEVEL/INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL PROPERTY and PREDICATE DISTINCTION was initially proposed in Carlson (1977) as a contrast between descriptions of two different sorts of entities: individuals, argued to grammatically function in the same way as kinds or classes of things, and stages, described as temporally bounded manifestations of things. It was concluded that only individual-level properties can modify or predicate bare plurals. Consider, for instance, a classic English example from Kratzer (1995) which is meant to serve as a diagnostic for whether a predicate is stage-level or individual-level.

- (1) Firemen are available.
- (2) Firemen are altruistic.

Here, the likeliest interpretation of 1 is that a select few firemen, bound perhaps by locational context and almost certainly by time constraints, are presently available to fulfill a particular task. On the other hand, the more likely reading of 2 is one where *firemen* is a generic referent. Crucially, however, Carlson argues that what is being predicated in a sentence such as 2 is not the class of firemen overall, but each member of the class individually, hence equating reference to a kind as reference to individuals within this kind and outlining the term individual-level in opposition to stage-level property and predication. Indeed, it would be perfectly reasonable to construe 2 in the sense in 3, but not in the sense of 4.

- (3) Every individual in the category of firemen is an altruistic individual.
- (4) ?? The category of firemen is an altruistic category.

Literature on the stage-level and individual-level predicate distinction (henceforth: SLP/ILP) has been extensive but mostly bound to theoretical considerations. The SLP/ILP distinction has been understood in the field as quite synonymous with a TRANSIENT/STABLE PROPERTY DISTINCTION (Kratzer 1995; Chierchia 1995; Jiménez-Fernández 2012). In addition to SLPs referring to properties that are temporally bounded, ILPs, in turn, are described as referring to properties that are fixed or stable and unlikely to change in the near future at time of utterance. Properties such

as having brown hair, being tall, altruistic, or Canadian are typically given examples of ILPs. In English, the SLP/ILP distinction is not lexically or grammatically marked and so can only be realized in diagnostic tests of grammaticality, such as the BARE PLURAL (1-2) and WHEN/WHENEVER (5-6) tests (Kratzer 1995).

- (5) When Mary speaks French, she speaks it well.
- (6) *When Mary knows French, she knows it well.

On the other hand, several Romance languages, including Spanish (González-Vilbazo & Remberger 2005), Portuguese (Cunha 2015), and Catalan (Crespí 2025) have been noted to express the SLP/ILP distinction lexically with two separate copulas: *ser* (only expressible in ILP) and *estar* (can be expressed in both ILP and SLP). Considering in particular the ambiguity in usage of the *estar* copula as to whether the predicate following it is a SLP or an ILP, Escandell-Vidal (2023) demonstrates a tendency to interpret the combination of *estar* and what is traditionally understood as an ILP, such as *being pretty* in 7 (cf. 8 as rooted in direct experience rather than an inference from multiple such experiences or other forms of information). The permissibility in Spanish of using a copula like *estar*, one that typically predicates temporally bound properties or SLPs, with a property typically construed as an ILP, highlights that properties can be expressed in the same way but take SLP or ILP readings depending on the SENTENCE-LEVEL or DISCOURSE-LEVEL context.

- (7) María está muy guapa
María COP.TEMP/EXP.PRS.3SG very pretty.F
'María looks very pretty (today, right now)'
- (8) María es muy guapa
María COP.PERM.PRS.3SG very pretty.F
'María is very pretty (in general)'

Indeed, the notion of a semantic-theoretically isolated SLP/ILP distinction has been challenged. Jäger (2001), for instance, claims that what gives way to SLP/ILP is a combination of different factors that are independent of each other and which are not all bound to grammar (e.g. the

question of whether a property is permanent or temporary is described as “a matter of world knowledge”). Maienborn (2004) proposes that the SLP/ILP contrast is manifested in the interaction between grammar and pragmatics, particularly in that world knowledge and pragmatic economy principles create a TEMPORARINESS EFFECT in stage-level predication, and the participation of lexical semantics in this contrast is not as salient as previously thought. Among several examples illustrating the importance of the discourse context, she provides the following.

(9a) At the disco, Maria was drunk.

(9b) ?? At the disco, Maria was a smart linguist.

(10) At the disco, Maria was a really smart linguist who was, unfortunately, a terrible dancer.
At the institute, though, she was a terrible linguist who was, at least, a great dancer.

Here, Maienborn contrasts the temporal reading of the properties of *being drunk* in 9a and *being a smart linguist* in 9b, the latter of which is odd without context, with a much more plausible epistemic reading of the sentence in 9b after the discourse context in 10 is provided. It may not make sense for Maria to only be a smart linguist while she is at the disco (temporal), but it would make sense for Maria to only be seen as a smart linguist by the people she interacts with at the disco (epistemic). This notably contrasts with the account in Chierchia (1995), which emphasizes the formation of inherent genericity in the predicated referent as a necessary component of ILP.

It is not this paper’s aim to argue against the notion of a semantically driven SLP/ILP contrast entirely, especially considering persistent and fruitful attempts to explicate this distinction and relate it to other concepts on the SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE, including INFORMATION STRUCTURE (Jiménez-Fernández 2012), RESULTATIVENESS (Crespí 2025), EXPERIENTIALITY (Escandell-Vidal 2023), PHASE STATES (Cunha 2015), and INALIENABILITY (Ogawa 2001). What is critical for the present study, however, is that examples abound of discourse, world knowledge, and pragmatic inference being able to convert a SLP interpretation of a property into an ILP interpretation, and vice versa. The SLP/ILP contrast, then, arises not merely from temporal boundedness of a property in isolation, but from the construal (Langacker 2019) of property predication in a given social context.

This paper argues further that the packaging and construal of a property as an ILP rather than a SLP can be an act of identity construction, as demonstrated in trans communities' use of the lexeme *dysphoric* on social media.

2. INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND TRANSMEDICALISM

A theorization of identity widely applied in the field of language, gender and sexuality regards identity as INTERSUBJECTIVELY constructed (Bucholtz & Hall 2004) as opposed to being a property of individuals in isolation from each other. Critically, under the intersubjectivity framework, what gives way to identity is a process of discursive negotiation; identity as a phenomenon does not preexist this process. As posited in the original framework, TACTICS OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY can be divided into three pairs of opposite processes.

- 1) ADEQUATION and DISTINCTION, where adequation establishes sufficient similarity to the target identity, and distinction establishes social differentiation and, ultimately, separation
- 2) AUTHENTICATION and DENATURALIZATION, where authentication is a process of constructing an identity that is verified and “true,” while denaturalization casts doubt on the truthfulness or authenticity of an identity
- 3) AUTHORIZATION and ILLEGITIMATION, where authorization concerns the use of institutional power to recognize certain identities as intelligible and existent, and its opposite, illegitimation, withholds or removes entirely such recognition and validation from identities

With the advent of TRANS LINGUISTICS as its own, distinctly articulated discipline within the broader field of sociocultural linguistics (Zimman 2018), the identity-as-intersubjectivity framework has become ever more relevant to analyses of trans community practices in different spheres of linguistic and social practice. THE CISGENDER LISTENING SUBJECT has been highlighted and, to a degree, problematized as a perceiving figure that participates in linking voices and realization of sibilants to gender identity as much as trans and queer folk do themselves (Calder & Steele 2025), terms pertaining to transgender identity have been demonstrated as varied and

actively debated within the context of Hong Kong trans communities (Tao 2025), and relations between trans and cis positionalities in the context of efforts to authorize trans people's identities and lived experiences, such as pronoun sharing, have been complicated (Brown 2025). The focus of analysis in the trans linguistic field thus far, however, has been on two distinct linguistic structures: phonetic realizations and discursive practices. Part of the argument in this paper is that trans intersubjectivities can be realized at the lexical, grammatical, and constructional levels, particularly through conversion of properties from stage- to individual-level.

A critical component of both the data and the analysis presented in this paper is the ideology of TRANSMEDICALISM, which can be defined as a stance where in order to be considered trans, one must experience GENDER DYSPHORIA (Hendrie 2022) and/or desire MEDICAL TRANSITION (Konnolly 2023). Gender dysphoria as a condition is encoded in DSM-5, the latest version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, as “clinically significant distress or impairment related to a strong desire to be of another gender” (American Psychiatric Association 2013). Broadly, negotiation and identity construction tactics within medical institutions (Toman 2021; Martynyuk 2021) as well as on social media (Webster 2019) have recently gained interest in studies of trans language and practice. Currently, the most extensive exploration of transmedicalist ideologies within the domain of sociocultural and sociopolitical linguistics has been done by Lex Konnelly. Through interviews with nonbinary participants regarding their strategies in conveying their identities to medical establishments in Canada (Konnolly 2021), as well as investigation into gatekeeping and self-defining practices by posters in the transmedicalism-aligned page r/truscum on the popular social media platform Reddit, Konnelly hypothesizes that the concept of gender dysphoria is not uniformly defined and is seen by some as needing to be negotiated both within community and with institutional structures. The present paper attempts to further investigate and reanalyze the notion of gender dysphoria, particularly by way of examining the use of *dysphoric* as a property.

3. DATA

The corpus constructed and used in the present study was entirely sourced from Reddit, as, when compared to other prolifically used platforms such as Twitter (now also known as X) or Bluesky, was deemed a convenient platform to gather data from for two distinct reasons. One is that Reddit can produce imagined communities in a way where a user can self-select to be included in a particular group by merely posting a submission or comment to a particular topically defined SUBREDDIT. The other reason is that Reddit incentivizes long-form, textually-oriented content, often in the form of a narrative or complex argument, or otherwise in the form of a direct question that is expected to be read and answered by members of the community, which makes Reddit a rich resource for analysis of discourse structure as well as social dimensions of lexical and compositional semantics. Furthermore, there has recently been an increase in usage of Reddit for corpus-assisted trans and queer discourse analysis, between Kannelly (2023) and Youngquist (2023). The latter of these studies demonstrated a co-construction of binarity of terms in a corpus based on the r/LGBT subreddit, finding a divergence between perspectives of submitters (posters) compared to commenters on the subreddit, where the former group conceived of transness, queerness, and straightness in terms of strict binaries, while the latter group aligned more with the perspective of queerness as a scale.

The data analyzed in this paper were gathered between October 2024 and June 2025 from Reddit, into comparably sized corpora, one of which, henceforth the GENERAL TRANS CORPUS (2.4 million words), was sourced from the subreddits r/trans and r/asktransgender, and the other, henceforth the TRANSMEDICALISM CORPUS (1.7 million words), was sourced from r/truscum. Official descriptions of the subreddits as of the submission date of this paper are provided in TABLE 1. It can already be observed from these descriptions that r/trans explicitly includes and invites people on all ends of the trans and gender non-conforming (GNC) spectrum and keeping instead a distance from cis people's input ("not the place for questions or statements of opinion from outside of the community"), while r/truscum adds the caveat of "as long as you show the respect that everyone deserves," where *everyone* is somewhat ambiguous, and crucially, orients itself around "those who have been cast out of mainstream trans subreddits," indicating an internal sense of victimhood on the one hand and undergroundness on the other.

All Reddit data were scraped using the PYTHON REDDIT API WRAPPER (PRAW). Included in the broader corpora were posts selected according to Reddit's HOT FEATURE, which includes posts which are both relatively recent and have gained the most UPVOTES, as well as five of the most upvoted comments per each scraped post. This skewing of the data towards content with the highest levels of ENGAGEMENT and AGREEMENT was to ensure that any stances taken in the posts and comments were as representative and reflective as possible of the opinions of the respective subreddits' usership.

Sentences containing the character sequence *dysphoric* were further selected from the corpora using the SPACY SENTENCIZER LIBRARY, after which 296 sentences featuring *dysphoric* from each corpus were randomly sampled as conditioned by four chronological categories, where 74 sentences were chosen from the first chronological quarter of each corpus, 74 from the second quarter, and so on. This sample size was selected as an approximation of the total number of instances of *dysphoric* in the General Trans Corpus, which had overall fewer such instances than did the Transmedicalism Corpus. *Dysphoric* is operationalized here as a character sequence or stem rather than a full word, due to the presence of and need to account for forms like the negative *non-dysphoric* and the adverbial *dysphoricly*. Of the sampled sentences, 30 included the stem *dysphoric* twice, and 3 additional sentences included the stem *dysphoric*.

TABLE 1. Official descriptions of subreddits from which the data was sourced.

r/trans	r/asktransgender	r/truscum
<p>Welcome to r/trans! This is a safe space for transgender people to discuss their lives and issues that surround them, find affirmation, and discover community. This is a radically inclusive subreddit for everyone under the trans umbrella; if you are binary, non-binary, genderqueer, agender, GNC, questioning, or any combination, this space is for you. You don't need to be trans to comment here, but this is not the place for questions or statements of opinion from outside of the community.</p>	<p>Questions and discussions about, for, to, or from the Reddit transgender community. Open to anyone with a question.</p>	<p>Welcome to r/truscum, a respectful place for those who have been cast out of mainstream trans subreddits. Men, women, and nonbinary people, trans and cis, truscum and tucute, are welcome as long as you show the respect that everyone deserves.</p>

3.1. ANNOTATION

Each instance of the *dysphoric* sequence was annotated by two linguistics graduate students along four axes pertaining to use of *dysphoric*, based on an earlier trial annotation of a smaller sample of fifty sentences, in which some constructional variation of *dysphoric* emerged. The sentences provided in the following examples were constructed and included in the annotation guidelines for the purpose of illustrating the differences between the two readings along each axis.

(1) ADJECTIVAL (a) VS. NOMINALIZED (b):

- (a) We need to organize a support group for all the **dysphoric people** in the chat.
- (b) We need to organize a support group for all the **dysphorics** in the chat.

- (2) PREDICATIONAL (a) VS. MODIFYING (b):
- (a) If you **feel/are dysphoric**, try a different dress style.
 - (b) **Dysphoric people** typically feel better after transitioning.
- (3) CHARACTERIZING AN ANIMATE (a) VS. INANIMATE (b) PARTICIPANT:
- (a) Skirts make **him** (feel) **dysphoric**.
 - (b) **Skirts** are **dysphoric** for him.
- (4) STAGE- (a) VS. INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL (b):
- (a) I've been very **dysphoric lately**.
 - (b) **People who are dysphoric** should stick together.

We should note here a few guidelines according to which the values on some axes were selected, and how those values interacted. Firstly, the predicational use of *dysphoric*, for the purposes of this annotation, encompassed not only its function as a property predication construction (*I am dysphoric*, where *dysphoric* is the head of the predicate), but also as a component of any predicate which does not also modify a nominal phrase, particularly in the case of an experiential event such as *I feel dysphoric*. Thus, as can be seen in 2a with *feel* and *are* being, to some degree, interchangeable for the purposes of this study, the primary interest of this axis was to separate the modifying *dysphoric* from other functions of this lexeme.

Nominal *dysphoric* was identified according to cues such as being preceded by an article (e.g. *She did not seem like a dysphoric*) or, more often, pluralization, as in 1b. Nominalization also necessarily prohibited any selection on Axis 2, due to there being no possibility of a nominal form being used as a modifier. Possibilities was left open for the nominal form *dysphoric* to still refer to an inanimate object (e.g. in 3a), there could have been an exemplar of a skirt being described as *a dysphoric* and the nominal *dysphoric* could plausibly still be labeled as stage-level, if there were any discussion of someone or something turning from a dysphoric to a non-dysphoric or vice versa). However, in practice, all nominal instances of *dysphoric* in the sample referred to an animate participant and constituted an individual-level property of that participant.

The *dysphoric* that characterizes an inanimate object has a rather different sense from the *dysphoric* that characterizes a person or (unattested) a nonhuman animate being, where the latter can be paraphrased as “experiencing gender dysphoria” and the former can be described as “inducing gender dysphoria.” This can be seen as parallel to two related lexemes realized differently on the morphological level: *depressed* (of a person) and *depressing* (of an object or event). Part of the issue for the annotation process was that *dysphoric* is realized the same morphologically regardless of sense, hence forming the justification for including Axis 3. Since much of the labeling of an object or event as *dysphoric* can be construed as assigning it an inherent or stable property (e.g. 3b), most of the instances of *dysphoric* as characterizing an inanimate object or event were annotated as individual-level properties of this object or event. One notable exception is when the event itself is necessarily temporally bounded and cannot be fully duplicated (e.g. *I had a dysphoric day today* or *Sometimes they get hit with dysphoric waves*; cf. *Dysphoric thoughts are hard to navigate* or *Hearing my birth name is dysphoric*).

Corpus identifiers were hidden from the annotators up until the annotation was finished in order to reduce bias. Notably, some sentences were found to take an explicit stance, especially those sourced from the Transmedicalism Corpus, so guesses of the source or position considering the sentence example could not be eliminated entirely.

Considering solely the portion of the annotation completed after the initial practice annotations, interannotator agreement was strong for the SLP/ILP axis ($\kappa = 0.818$) and near-perfect for all three other axes ($\kappa = 0.950$ for the adjectival/nominal axis, $\kappa = 0.947$ for the modifying/predicational axis, $\kappa = 0.951$ for the animacy axis). Due to the rather high proportion of the data on which annotators agreed along all four axes (88.69%, or 557 of 628 instances of *dysphoric*), only the instances which yielded agreement along all four axes were part of the final analysis, a total of 557 instances of *dysphoric*.

4. RESULTS

Statistical interactions between axes of annotation as well as CORPUS IDEOLOGY are shown in TABLE 2. Across both corpora, the clear dominant combination of values of use of *dysphoric* under the four axes was adjectival, predicational, animate, and stage-level (321 of 557 instances, or 57.63%). In particular, non-nominalized adjectival use of *dysphoric* constituted 517 (92.82%) instances, predicational use constituted 408 (73.25%) instances, animate-characterizing use constituted 518 (93.00%) instances, and stage-level use constituted 362 (56.21%) instances. As can be readily observed from this result, it is in the stage- vs. individual-level axis that the function of *dysphoric* was most contested, while the distribution of *dysphoric* along the other three axes was somewhat uniform. However, the ways in which all four axes correlated with each other as well as with the CRITICAL CORPUS IDEOLOGY VARIABLE warrants a discussion.

There were 33 (5.92%) instances of nominalized *dysphoric* present in the sample. All such instances were also animate-referring (i.e. no dysphoria-inducing objects were called *dysphorics*), while in some cases, dysphoria-experiencing individuals were and all took individual-level readings. Furthermore, all nominalizations of *dysphoric* originated in the TRANSMEDICALISM SUBCORPUS. This is notable since nominalization of adjectival forms has been found to be an act of either PEJORATION (Wierzbicka 1986; Palmer et al. 2017; Castillo & Pineda 2025) or broadly ESSENTIALIZATION (Ritchie 2021). This points to a process of raising gender dysphoria and the property of being *dysphoric* (and, as we will see in Section 4.4, the property of not being *dysphoric*) to the status of an identity or an essential characteristic, and to this process indexing transmedicalist stances on dysphoria and transness.

TABLE 2. Overall results and interactions of semantico-grammatical and ideological variables in the annotation project of the lexeme *dysphoric*.

Variable / axis	nominal ?	pred / mod	animate?	SLP/ILP	corpus
nominal?	517 (92.82%) adjectival	nominal → n/a (100%)	nominal → animate (100%)	nominal → ILP (100%)	nominal → medicalist (100%)
pred / mod		408 (73.25%) pred	inanimate ⇔ modifying ($\chi^2 = 49.687, p = 1.804 \times 10^{-12}$)	modifying ⇔ ILP ($\chi^2 = 199.524, p = 2.652 \times 10^{-45}$)	modifying ⇔ medicalist ($\chi^2 = 63.503, p = 1.601 \times 10^{-15}$)
animate?			518 (93.00%) animate	inanimate ⇔ ILP ($\chi^2 = 28.768, p = 8.157 \times 10^{-8}$)	ns
SLP/ILP				362 (56.21%) SLP	ILP ⇔ medicalist, SLP ⇔ general ($\chi^2 = 129.945, p = 4.212 \times 10^{-30}$)

To examine other interactions between variables, Pearson's CHI-SQUARE TEST was used (Pearson 1900), as all variables involved, including corpus ideology and the four axes along which the instances of *dysphoric* were annotated, were categorical. Inanimate-referring *dysphoric* was strongly associated with modifying use ($\chi^2 = 49.687, p = 1.804 \times 10^{-12}$) as well as individual-level use ($\chi^2 = 28.768, p = 8.157 \times 10^{-8}$) but did not significantly interact with corpus ideology. Use of *dysphoric* as a modifier was also strongly associated with individual-level use ($\chi^2 = 199.524, p = 2.652 \times 10^{-45}$). This was not surprising, since prenominal modifiers in particular have generally

been documented as more likely to refer to permanent or individual-level properties (Jacobsson 1996; Coppock 2009, p. 188). Modifying use was also associated with the transmedicalist subcorpus ($\chi^2 = 63.503, p = 1.601 \times 10^{-15}$).

Finally, and most critically for this study, the SLP/ILP axis was strongly associated with corpus ideology ($\chi^2 = 129.945, p = 4.212 \times 10^{-30}$), with stage-level uses associated with the general trans subcorpus and individual-level uses associated with the transmedicalist subcorpus. This last finding may yield a hypothesis that dysphoria is conceptualized differently in the two different intra-community understandings of transness and pro-trans advocacy. However, of note regarding the distribution of SLP/ILP readings between the two subcorpora is that the degree of data skewing was found to be uneven. Most instances of dysphoric in the general trans subcorpus were stage-level (222, or 84.41%), while most instances of dysphoric in the Transmedicalism Corpus were individual-level (183, or 62.24%). Similarly, most stage-level uses of dysphoric originated in the general trans subcorpus (68.10%), while most individual-level uses of dysphoric originated in the transmedicalism subcorpus (81.70%). There is a rather notable portion of stage-level uses of dysphoric in the transmedicalism subcorpus: 104 instances, which is 31.90% of all stage-level dysphoric uses, 35.37% of all instances of dysphoric in the transmedicalism subcorpus, and 18.67% of all instances of dysphoric across the two corpora.

4.1. DYSPHORIC AND NON-DYSPHORIC AS OPPOSING IDENTITIES

The act of characterizing oneself as a dysphoric person, as opposed to merely a person who experiences dysphoria or who feels dysphoric at different points in their life, however often, can be described as an elevation of a stage-level property to an individual-level one. Compare the following two sentence examples from the data.

Reddit Example 1

r/astkransgender, December 9, 2024

Lately I've been feeling dysphoric about my size and have wanted to do something about it.

Reddit Example 2 *r/truscum*,
January 4, 2025

I generally agree with your idea of accepting anyone who is making a serious effort to transition considering their circumstances, and I would see making such an effort itself as evidence the person is dysphoric.

In the former case, *lately* clearly indicates that there was a time interval when the Reddit user was not feeling as dysphoric about their size as they are now, forming a stage-level dysphoric property. In the latter sentence, being dysphoric is discussed in terms of a hypothetical scenario, where dysphoria is not merely a feeling or affect but a threshold that requires *evidence*.

Furthermore, this use of *dysphoric* is not time-bound but instead characteristic of a person, which makes it individual-level.

It is clear, then, that *dysphoric* can be used as both stage- and individual-level, depending on the discursive and social context and the particular user's experience. A more relevant question for this study, however, is whether the high use of *dysphoric* as individual-level in *r/truscum* implies that it is fundamental to transmedicalist beliefs that dysphoria is something permanent, unchangeable, and consistently manifesting in the same exact ways. The rather sizable set of examples of stage-level *dysphoric* in *r/truscum*, however, shows that this is not necessarily true. Consider, for example, the following post, where the sentence with *dysphoric* is highlighted.

Reddit Example 3 *r/truscum*,
April 15, 2025

Title: Anyone hate being they/them'd?

No hate against nb people I just get dysphoric being called they.

But any FTM or MTF who feel the same way?

Here, the user, presumably someone living one of the binary genders, is telling the usership base of *r/truscum* about the dysphoria that the user experiences in reaction to the pronoun *they* being used to describe the user. The *dysphoric* property discussed here is clearly stage-level, as the user changes state from not being dysphoric to being dysphoric. However, there are traces of transmedicalist outlooks and positions in this example. For instance, by providing the disclaimer *No hate against nb people*, the user appears to believe in the need to clarify that the user does not hold any ill will or antipathy towards nonbinary people. One reason the user added this clause might have been to acknowledge that by claiming that nonbinary-indexing pronouns would make

the user dysphoric, and indeed by posting on a transmedicalist subreddit, it would not be otherwise unreasonable to interpret the user's message as one of hostility towards nonbinary or genderqueer individuals. As can be observed, then, it is not fundamentally contradictory for a transmedicalist-aligned post or comment to consider *dysphoric* something that someone can *get* as opposed to permanently *be*.

On the other hand, what is critical to the individualization of *dysphoric* (i.e. the act of using *dysphoric* in an individual-level reading), is a process of identity construction. For instance, consider the following example that not only demonstrates a process of intersubjective distinction but includes the word *distinction* itself.

Reddit Example 4 *r/truscum*,
May 18, 2025

It's not that "I'm not like other trans people," it's that non-dysphorics aren't trans people ... Most tucutes I've met irl view a difference between dysphorics and non-dysphorics, they just view us as under the same umbrella. **I'm open to non-dysphorics having their space as long as there is a distinction between us and them.**

TUCUTE here is a term stemming from “too cute to be cis,” which describes the category of person who is/identifies as trans but does not experience gender dysphoria, or otherwise does not believe that dysphoria is a necessary threshold to be considered a valid trans person (Hendrie 2022). The passage above is from a much longer comment and is placed in the context of an even larger discussion on transmedicalists being considered “pick me” trans people who try to appeal to conservatives or moderates. Here, the user takes objection with the idea that *tucutes* fail to distinguish or separate the dysphoric people, who are indeed trans, and the non-dysphoric people, who are not. The commenter is clearly expressing that they do not have a problem with *non-dysphorics* (a nominalized *non-* construction, notably) existing or identifying as trans, but refuse to be placed in the same category as the other group. This is an example of dysphoria being not merely a criterion for a diagnosis, but a separation line between the supposedly only true or authentic trans people and everyone else.

Some uses of *dysphoric* and *non-dysphoric* also point to a transmedicalist strife for authorization (i.e. legibility of trans identity by broader society (Bucholtz & Hall 2004)) at the expense of people not deemed dysphoric enough, as in the following.

Reddit Example 5 *r/truscum*,
August 22, 2024

Title: **My left-wing friends are even starting to become less accepting of trans people because of non-dysphoric people claiming to be trans.** I have three friends who within the last week have all expressed that they are no longer accepting of trans people or the trans rights movement, and in one way or the other each instance relates directly back to people who are not dysphoric. None of them are even conservatives or right-wing at all ... I find it very dangerous and concerning that the loudest voices in the LGBTQ+ community are the ones who are painting an entirely inaccurate picture of what it means to be trans, and leading people who once considered themselves allies to reconsider their stances.

This user is focusing their post on the shifting sensibilities of their friends, who they otherwise claim are *left-wing* and not *even conservatives or right-wing at all*. Their concern is about the *non-dysphoric people's* dangerous impact on trans rights discourse and, potentially, even trans rights themselves. Reflecting a politics of respectability, compromise, and authorization by the cisgender perceiving subject (e.g. Calder & Steele 2025), the user equates the supposed trend of shrinking trans allyship with the shrinking possibility of trans liberation. Crucially, any responsibility or accountability is lifted off of the *left-wing* individuals under discussion, indicating that their reaction is force-like, nonagentive, cannot be helped, and entirely due to the unreasonableness of *the loudest voices in the LGBTQ+ community*, who should know better and adapt themselves to the impulses of the cisgender perceiving subject, or otherwise disappear. The separation between the user and the broader *r/truscum* usership on the one hand, and *non-dysphoric people* who are *painting an entirely inaccurate picture* of transness on the other, is apparent and further contributes to the construction of an authentic, legible, authorized, dysphoric identity.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is my hope that this paper has succeeded in highlighting a strategic, dynamic process of movement of the property of being dysphoric from stage- to individual-level status, not merely depending on presence of a transmedicalist ideology, but depending on whether *dysphoric* is being discursively constructed as an identity which includes some people identifying as trans, but critically for the survival of this identity, not others. In particular, examination of transmedicalist ideologies with an intersubjectivity framework extends Crowley (2025)'s dichotomy of self-facing/other-facing language, where one way in which the transmedicalist subreddit r/truscum operates is an effort to control certain aspects of other-facing trans linguistic practice, and to suppress any non-transnormative conceptions of not only a trans experience free of gender dysphoria, but also what dysphoria means in the first place.

Indeed, the dynamic between inclusive and transmedicalist views of trans existence and pro-trans advocacy runs parallel to one of the earliest illustrations of intersubjectivity tactics. Namely, Hall (2005) describes how such tactics are routinely deployed in KOTI communities in Delhi, India through the practice of hijra-acting. Both *kotis* and HIJRAS are gender non-conforming social groups in India; however, their differences in class positionalities, linguistic and non-linguistic practices, and role in Indian society yield tension and further social differentiation between the groups. It is argued that, on r/truscum, the same sort of separation occurs between that community and the *tucutes* outside of the transnormative understanding of gender dysphoria as a diagnostic requirement.

Equally, I believe that this study complicates the notion of an entirely lexically motivated SLP/ILP distinction by virtue of including identity construction as one potential motivator of individualizing a stage-level property. In addition to previous equations of SLP/ILP to a distinction between transitoriness/stability, or temporariness/permanence, this study demonstrates the intersubjective power of deploying the same lexeme (i.e. *dysphoric* as an ILP as opposed to a SLP). While transmedicalist views can diverge within community, considering the overall patterns in both use and, importantly, level of cross-community approval (as operationalized by usage of "hot" posts in the corpora), it is broadly allowed for a trans person to *get dysphoric* as a

result of a stimulus, or for that stimulus to “make (them) dysphoric.” What is not permissible under the framework of transmedicalism is “being a non-dysphoric (person).”

Finally, I hope that I have successfully cast doubt on the reader’s preconception of a static or uniform notion of gender dysphoria. Indeed, part of the argument of both this paper and the broader work on transmedicalist notions of dysphoria (Konnolly 2021, 2023) is that dysphoria is under the category of essentially contested concepts (Gallie 1955; Weber 2013), and that even an institutionalized experience like gender dysphoria can be redefined or recontextualized by trans community members who hold varying medical-ideological beliefs, depending on which the work of the *dysphoria* term can be either to include or to distinguish. Any gender-affirming care-oriented medical institution, or any human rights framework dealing with rights of trans people to exist as such, must take into account this localized, community-dependent contestedness of *dysphoria* if their goal is to adapt to the range of experiences held and discussed by trans folk. After all, transmedicalism, the militant ideology, can only exist and proliferate alongside transmedicalism, the unconscious practice.

6. REFERENCES

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