ARTICLE IN PRESS

Journal of English for Academic Purposes xxx (2018) 1–11



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of English for Academic Purposes

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jeap



How do you wish to be cited? Citation practices and a scholarly community of care in trans studies research articles

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history: Available online xxx

Keywords: Trans studies Community of care Citation Erasure Outing Gender Social justice

ABSTRACT

Trans rights advocacy is a social justice movement that is transforming language practices relating to gender. Research has highlighted the fact that language which constructs gender as binary harms trans people, and some trans studies researchers have developed guidelines for honouring trans people's names and pronouns. The language of academic writing is an area of discussion where questions of trans rights and trans experiences have not yet been addressed. This paper draws on two data sources to explore the citation experiences and practices of trans scholars and activists: a web-based archive of writers' perspectives built between 2015 and 2016; and a corpus-based study of 14 research articles published in TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly. Our analysis highlights the sensitivity that is required of colleagues who work with transgender authors' writing, furthering our understanding of citation as a collaborative and potentially intimate and caring practice. Practices of referring to work by trans scholars pose ethical questions about the social relations expressed in citation in general, enabling applied language scholars to develop a new and different awareness of the sociality of citation.

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Transsexual monstrosity, however, along with its affect, transgender rage, can never claim quite so secure a means of resistance because of the inability of language to represent the transgendered subject's movement over time between stably gendered positions in a linguistic structure.

—Susan Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein"

I feel I am constantly being asked to pick a team, stick to it, tick a box, choose F or M, make up your mind because you can't have it both ways ... But in my experience, there are more options than male or female, masculine or feminine. The meanings of these words change depending on the context, anyway, so my mutability is echoed in language. Is it possible to understand both language and myself as incoherent? As always spilling over the edges of intelligibility?

—loe Macdonald, "An Authoethnography"

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2018.03.010

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Please cite this article in press as: Thieme, K., & Saunders, M. A. S., How do you wish to be cited? Citation practices and a scholarly community of care in trans studies research articles, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* (2018), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2018.03.010

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1. Introduction

Transgender studies is an interdisciplinary research field which first emerged in the 1990s, rapidly taking shape in the current century. Susan Stryker, a central figure in the field, has remarked that "what began with the efforts of emerging and marginally situated scholars and activists ... to be taken seriously on our own terms, and not pathologized and dismissed, has helped foster a sea-change in the academic study of gender, sex, sexuality, identity, desire, and embodiment" (Stryker, 2006, p. 2). The term transgender (often abbreviated as "trans") is a broad term used in reference to anyone who finds that the gender they were assigned at birth either incorrectly or inadequately accounts for how they experience their gender identity (conceptually broad, "transgender" comprises within it many identity categories). "Trans" stands in contrast to "cisgender" which refers to people who remain with the gender they were assigned at birth. The Latin prefix *cis*- ("on the same side as") is the corollary of *trans*- ("across") (Aultman, 2014; Enke, 2013).

During the time in which we worked on this paper, both authors attended "Trans*Studies: An International Transdisciplinary Conference on Gender, Embodiment, and Sexuality," the 2016 inaugural conference of the University of Arizona's Transgender Studies Initiative. The conference featured over 250 papers and its most remarkable feature was the sheer number of trans-identified scholars from different countries. Importantly, one of the keynote speakers was Sandy Stone, whose essay "The 'Empire' Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto," written in the late 1980s and first published in 1991, is now widely recognized as the text from which contemporary transgender studies emerged (Stone, 1991). At the conference's closing party, Stone put her arm around one of the current authors and gestured to the room, saying "Look at all of us. Who could have imagined this 25 years ago?" She was taking note of an extraordinary community which has insisted on making knowledge about trans people and trans lives in the face of, at best, institutional indifference, but more often hostility, in the decades since the publication of her important essay. Our paper is about the role which citation practices, and attitudes towards citation, play in creating and sustaining the scholarly community of care which so moved Stone. The term "community of care" has been used in discussions of restorative justice (Bolivar, 2012), medical care (Epstein, Fiscella, Lesser, & Stange, 2010), as well as teaching (Northedge, 2003; Owens & Ennis, 2005; Ellerbrock & Kiefer, 2010; see Tuck this issue). In contrast to the broader concept of the academic community, we here propose the narrower concept of scholarly community of care to describe the closer relations among marginalized scholars that vitally sustain their ability to work within dominant systems (McCold, 2004).

Trans rights advocacy as a social justice movement is transforming current conversations about gender on many North American campuses. Trans activism pinpoints exclusions that cisgender people are not able to see and shows up forms of violence that many cisgender people are often unwilling to acknowledge. There are an increasing number of initiatives to get instructors and students to honour trans people's names and pronouns (The Social Justice Institute, n.d.); there are analyses of how violence against trans people impacts learning (Bilodeau, 2005; Rankin, 2005); there are demands to meet the unique on-campus needs of trans students and instructors (Krum, Davis, & Galupo, 2013). While it might be expected that some of the drive towards discursive inclusiveness in postsecondary teaching will also have an effect on research writing, so far there has not been any discussion of questions of trans scholarship and trans experience in the realm of writing studies. As yet no research exists on the inclusion and discursive positioning of trans scholars in research writing. In Part I of this article, we explore the nuanced points that trans scholars have made about citation practices, drawing on a web-based archive built between 2015 and 2016 of statements by trans scholars and activists. In Part II, we offer an analysis of citation practices by trans scholars drawing on a corpus-based study of 14 research articles published in TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly.

2. The research article, citation, and gender

The contemporary research article is a relatively stable genre with a strong core or macro structure evidenced in textual practices across many disciplinary, rhetorical, linguistic and cultural contexts (often referred to as IMRAD—introduction, methods, results, and discussion). At the same time, research articles exhibit many documented differences at the micro level, that is at the level of phrase, sentence, paragraph or "steps" and "moves" (for useful recent overview of the challenges of mapping such stability and variation, see van Enk & Power, 2017, and Moreno & Swales, 2018; for variation according to disciplinary norms and practices see Hyland, 1999).

In the context of a high degree of stability alongside variability, our paper focusses on citation as a nearly universal characteristic of the contemporary research article, a "constitutive feature" of the genre (Hyland, 1999, p. 343). To the extent that it is a widely taken for granted academic textual practice, citation can offer appear, as one source in our archive puts it, as "objective and value neutral" (Dobrowolsky, 2013a). However, a number of studies have shown that citation practices are far from neutral and tend to reproduce a range of hierarchical relations, including male/female hierarchies. Quantitative research has been able to show that female scholars are underrepresented in citation counts (Davenport & Snyder, 1995); that even when other factors are equal, male faculty have a higher likelihood to be highly cited (Toutkoushian, 1994); that where raw publication counts are equal, women across the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities are less likely to be in the prestigious first author position (West, Jacquet, King, Correll, & Bergstrom, 2013); and that as citations of women's publications increase, this increase tends to occur within articles by other women with male scholars not citing women at the increased rate in which they have entered a field (Lutz, 1990; McElhinny, Hols, Holtzkener, Unger, & Hicks, 2003; see Nygaard and Bahgat this issue). Much as they are able to reveal about gendered patterns of citation, such studies bear the flaw that they base their quantitative work on a stable and exclusively binary model of gender identity, working with the assumption that

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