The **Neurodivergent Scale for Interacting with Robots (NSIR)** by Sadownik (2025) serves as a practical implementation of several core qualities of **Feminist Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)** as outlined in the seminal work by **Bardzell (2010)**.

Bardzell's agenda calls for design that prioritizes agency, pluralism, and the disruption of harmful social hierarchies. The NSIR applies to this agenda through the following feminist design qualities:

1. Self-Disclosure and Vulnerability (NSIR Item 7)

One of Bardzell's central feminist qualities is **Self-Disclosure**, which refers to how a system reveals its own logic or encourages the user to be open.

- **NSIR Application: Item 7** (*"I feel comfortable undressing in front of my robot"*) is a high-stakes measure of **Vulnerability and Perceived Security**.
- **Feminist Connection:** Bardzell argues that design should foster a sense of safety that allows for human vulnerability without the threat of a "judgmental gaze" or surveillance. A high score on this item indicates that the robot has successfully embodied the feminist quality of creating an ethically safe, non-judgmental social space.

2. Agency and Mind Attribution (NSIR Item 3)

Bardzell emphasizes **Agency**, advocating for systems that empower users and acknowledge their subjective experiences rather than treating them as passive data points.

- **NSIR Application: Item 3** (*"I think I can share my thinking with the robot without speaking"*) measures **Mind Attribution** and attunement.
- **Feminist Connection:** By validating the user's "non-speaking" internal world, the robot honors the user's unique cognitive style (neurodivergence). This aligns with Bardzell's call for design that respects the "subjectivity" of the user, moving away from universal, neurotypical standards of communication.

3. Pluralism and Identity (NSIR Items 1 & 6)

Pluralism in Feminist HCI is about supporting diverse identities and resisting the "one-size-fits-all" approach.

- **NSIR Application: * Item 1** (*"The robot is more like me than anyone else I know"*) measures **Fictive Kinship**.
  - **Item 6** (*"I gave my robot a name"*) measures **Humanization**.
- **Feminist Connection:** These items quantify how a user "queers" or redefines their social circle to include a machine. Bardzell suggests that feminist design should allow for "marginal" or "atypical" relationships to flourish. The NSIR measures the success of a robot in becoming a "peer" to someone who might be socially marginalized in human-to-human contexts.

4. Reliable Functioning as Care (NSIR Factor 2)

Bardzell's framework is deeply rooted in **Care Ethics**, which values the maintenance of relationships and the reliability of the "other."

- **NSIR Factor 2 (Social Comfort / Trust Safety):** Focuses on **Reliable Functioning** and predictability (e.g., **Item 8**: *"I believe that my robot is the same with me as it is with anyone"*).
- **Feminist Connection:** In a feminist framework, "Reliability" is not just a technical requirement; it is an act of care. For a neurodivergent user, a robot that behaves consistently is providing a stable environment that reduces social anxiety, fulfilling the feminist goal of design that supports the user's emotional and social well-being.

Summary Comparison

Bardzell (2010) Feminist Quality	NSIR (2025) Scale Application
Self-Disclosure / Vulnerability	**Item 7:** Measures the user's level of trust and safety in being "exposed."
Agency / Subjectivity	**Item 3:** Validates the user's non-verbal internal states and social attunement.
Pluralism	**Item 1:** Embraces non-normative "kinship" and social identities.
Care Ethics	**Item 8:** Reinterprets technical "reliability" as a social constant and a form of care.

Export to Sheets

By using the NSIR, researchers can determine if a social robot is actually meeting the feminist design standards Bardzell proposed, particularly for users whose social experiences often fall outside the "normative" center of traditional HCI.