

*Dr Jeen-puall Mavou**scientific researcher***IN GERMAN, WORDS USED IN PLACE THAT REPRESENT THE PERSON AND THINGS**

Abstract: In the German language, words used to represent people and things play a crucial role in communication, serving as the foundation of sentences and interactions. These words include pronouns, nouns, and demonstrative forms, which allow speakers to refer to individuals, objects, and ideas. Understanding the rules governing these terms is essential for mastering German grammar and achieving fluency. This article explores how words that represent people and things function in German, focusing on their grammatical categories, usage in sentences, and impact on communication. We also examine how these words vary in gender, case, and number, as well as their importance in the construction of meaningful statements.

Keywords: German language, pronouns, nouns, demonstratives, grammatical categories, case system, gender, number

Introduction: In every language, words used to represent people and things form the essential building blocks of communication. In the case of German, the words used for this purpose are not only pivotal to understanding the language but are also integral to its complex grammatical structure. These words, including nouns, pronouns, and demonstrative words, serve as the core elements through which speakers convey meaning, identify people, and refer to objects or concepts. Understanding how these terms operate in German is crucial for mastering the language, as they are governed by a set of rules that influence sentence construction, word order, and the relationships between various sentence elements. One of the key aspects of the German language that distinguishes it from many others is its grammatical system, which is more intricate than that of languages like English. In particular, German uses gendered nouns, which are classified into three categories: masculine, feminine, and neuter. The grammatical gender of nouns is assigned arbitrarily, which can be challenging for language learners since the gender of a noun does not always correspond to biological sex or logical associations with its meaning. For example, the word Mädchen (girl) is neuter, not feminine, despite referring to a female person. This linguistic feature requires learners to memorize the gender of each noun along with its meaning, making vocabulary acquisition more complex.

Furthermore, German uses a case system that dictates the role of nouns, pronouns, and articles within a sentence. There are four cases in German: nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive. The case of a word indicates whether it is the subject, direct object, indirect object, or showing possession. This system adds another layer of complexity to German grammar, as each case involves changes in the form of articles and pronouns, as well as sometimes altering the form of adjectives. For example, the article "der" (the) changes depending on the case it is in, becoming "die" in the accusative case, "dem" in the dative, and "des" in the genitive. Learning how to apply these changes in the correct contexts is essential for constructing grammatically correct sentences. In addition to gender and case, the role of pronouns in German plays a crucial part in understanding how the language structures its sentences. Personal pronouns (such as ich [I], du [you], er [he], sie [she]) replace nouns to avoid repetition and provide clarity in communication. Pronouns also change based on case, reflecting the noun's role in the sentence (subject, object, etc.). Reflexive pronouns (such as sich [oneself]) are used to indicate that the subject of the sentence is performing an action on itself, and possessive pronouns (such as mein

[my], dein [your]) show ownership. These different categories of pronouns function in various grammatical contexts and allow speakers to express relationships, actions, and possession more efficiently.

Demonstrative pronouns, like *dieser* (this) and *jener* (that), further emphasize the specificity of a noun. They help distinguish particular people or things from others in both space and time. For instance, a speaker may use *dieser* when pointing to an object near them and *jener* for an object farther away. This distinction is not only spatial but can also convey temporal differences, as *dieser* can refer to something happening in the present, while *jener* can indicate something from the past or future. **The purpose of this article** is to examine the role and usage of these critical words—nouns, pronouns, and demonstrative terms—in the German language. Understanding how these words function and how they interact with each other within the framework of gender, case, and number is fundamental to mastering German grammar. Through this exploration, we will also address the challenges these linguistic features present to learners of the language, highlighting their importance for effective communication in both written and spoken German.

Literature review.

The study of words used to represent people and things in the German language, such as nouns, pronouns, and demonstratives, has been a central topic in German linguistics. Researchers have extensively examined the complexities of these terms, especially their gender, case, and syntactic roles in sentence construction. In this literature review, we will explore key scholarly perspectives on the grammatical intricacies of these words, drawing insights from influential works in the field.

Gender and Nouns in German

The role of gender in German grammar is one of the language's most defining characteristics, influencing noun declension and the agreement of articles, adjectives, and pronouns. Schmidt (2014) discusses how the arbitrary assignment of gender to nouns (masculine, feminine, neuter) creates challenges for learners, especially since there is no clear logical pattern linking the meaning of a noun with its gender. For example, the word *Mädchen* (girl) is grammatically neuter, despite referring to a female person. This discrepancy between biological sex and grammatical gender requires learners to memorize the gender of each noun, which increases the complexity of learning German vocabulary. Schmidt's work emphasizes that while certain endings can offer clues to a noun's gender (e.g., nouns ending in -e are often feminine), these patterns have numerous exceptions, complicating the learning process [1].

Further supporting this point, Keller (2015) highlights the impact of gender on sentence structure, noting that in German, the grammatical gender of a noun dictates the form of accompanying articles and adjectives. Keller suggests that understanding gender is critical for achieving fluency in German because it governs both the grammatical and syntactical alignment of words within a sentence. He also notes that learners often face difficulties in adjusting to this system, especially when compared to languages like English, where nouns are not gendered [2].

The Case System: Nominative, Accusative, Dative, and Genitive

The case system in German is another key element that shapes how nouns and pronouns function in sentences. According to Weber (2016), German uses four cases—nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive—to mark the grammatical roles of words. The nominative case is used for subjects (e.g., *Der Hund schläft* - The dog sleeps), the accusative for direct objects (*Ich sehe den Hund* - I see the dog),

the dative for indirect objects (Ich gebe dem Hund einen Knochen - I give the dog a bone), and the genitive to show possession (Das ist das Spielzeug des Hundes - That is the dog's toy). Weber points out that the case system in German allows for greater flexibility in sentence construction compared to English, where word order largely dictates meaning. In German, the case marking provides clarity about the subject and object relationships, which can allow for varied word order without sacrificing understanding. However, the requirement to learn the different case forms for articles, nouns, and pronouns presents a significant challenge for learners, especially as each case involves changes in word form, as seen in the declension of articles (e.g., der [nominative], den [accusative], dem [dative], des [genitive]) [3].

Analysis and Results.

In this section, we will analyze the usage and grammatical functions of words used in German to represent people and things, namely **nouns**, **pronouns**, and **demonstratives**. By examining how these words operate within the structure of German grammar, especially through gender, case, and the syntax of sentences, we aim to provide a deeper understanding of their role and impact on language learning and sentence construction.

Gender of Nouns and Its Influence on Sentence Construction

The first area of analysis is the **gender of nouns**, a fundamental aspect of German grammar. As previously noted, German nouns are classified into three categories: **masculine**, **feminine**, and **neuter**. This classification determines the form of the article and adjective used with the noun, as well as the corresponding pronoun.

We observed that the grammatical gender of a noun has a profound influence on sentence structure, particularly in terms of noun-article-adjective agreement. For example, consider the following sentences:

1. **Masculine:** Der große Hund schläft (The big dog is sleeping).
2. **Feminine:** Die große Katze schläft (The big cat is sleeping).
3. **Neuter:** Das große Kind schläft (The big child is sleeping).

In these examples, the adjective groß (big) changes its ending to agree with the gender of the noun, following the declension pattern: große (feminine), großer (masculine), and großes (neuter). This agreement between gender and grammatical elements is crucial for sentence coherence and meaning in German.

While some gender assignments seem intuitive—such as masculine for male individuals or feminine for female individuals—there are many exceptions. For instance, Mädchen (girl) is grammatically neuter, despite referring to a female person. This discrepancy demonstrates the challenges faced by language learners, as they must memorize the gender of each noun individually, without being able to rely on logical patterns in some cases.

In our analysis, it was found that learners of German often struggle with the arbitrary nature of grammatical gender, especially when they come from languages without gendered nouns, such as

English. However, over time, learners adapt by memorizing common endings associated with gender and through repeated exposure to sentence structures.

The Role of the Case System in Sentence Construction

The second major area of analysis is the **case system** in German, which includes the nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive cases. The case system plays an essential role in determining the function of nouns and pronouns within a sentence. To investigate how these cases affect sentence structure, we analyzed sentences with different cases to observe how they impact the placement of words and the relationships between them.

1. **Nominative case (subject):** Der Mann trinkt Wasser (The man is drinking water).
2. **Accusative case (direct object):** Ich sehe den Mann (I see the man).
3. **Dative case (indirect object):** Ich gebe dem Mann Wasser (I give the man water).
4. **Genitive case (possession):** Das Auto des Mannes ist neu (The man's car is new).

In these examples, the case affects the form of the articles and nouns. For instance, *der* (nominative) changes to *den* (accusative) in the direct object position, and *dem* (dative) indicates an indirect object. This flexibility allows for variations in word order, which is different from languages like English, where the word order is more rigid to indicate subject, object, and possession.

The case system in German thus provides a nuanced approach to sentence construction, offering flexibility while maintaining clarity. However, this system is also challenging for learners, particularly when it comes to knowing when to use each case and correctly applying the declensions for articles, nouns, and adjectives. Through our analysis, it became clear that students who actively practice the case system through exercises and exposure to native language use perform better in mastering the correct case forms.

Pronouns: Personal, Reflexive, Possessive, and Demonstrative

The final focus of our analysis is the use of **pronouns** in German, specifically **personal**, **reflexive**, **possessive**, and **demonstrative** pronouns. These pronouns play a significant role in avoiding repetition and improving sentence flow, as well as in expressing relationships such as possession and reflexive actions.

1. **Personal pronouns:** Er sieht sie (He sees her). Here, *er* (he) and *sie* (her) are used to replace nouns and avoid repetition, streamlining communication.
2. **Reflexive pronouns:** Sie freut sich (She is happy). The reflexive pronoun *sich* reflects the action back on the subject, which is a key feature of many German verbs.
3. **Possessive pronouns:** Das ist mein Hund (This is my dog). The possessive pronoun *mein* shows ownership.
4. **Demonstrative pronouns:** Jener Hund ist groß (That dog is big). Demonstrative pronouns like *jener* (that) provide specific emphasis or distinction between objects.

Our analysis revealed that learners often face difficulties when using reflexive pronouns, especially in verbs that are reflexive in German but not in English. For example, the verb *sich freuen* (to be happy) may confuse learners who are unfamiliar with reflexive constructions in German.

Additionally, possessive and demonstrative pronouns were found to be relatively straightforward for learners, although understanding their correct usage in different contexts (such as gender and case agreement) remains a challenge. For instance, the demonstrative pronoun *dieser* (this) agrees in gender, case, and number with the noun it refers to, requiring learners to pay close attention to these factors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study of words used in place of people and things in German—specifically nouns, pronouns, and demonstratives—reveals a complex and nuanced system that is foundational to understanding German grammar. The significant roles of gender, case, and pronoun usage are central to the structure and meaning of sentences, and mastering these aspects is crucial for language learners striving for fluency. The gender system in German, while essential for grammatical agreement, presents a challenge due to the arbitrary assignment of gender to nouns. Although there are patterns and rules that can guide learners, the presence of exceptions requires memorization and consistent practice. The use of case further adds to the complexity, as it governs the syntactic role of nouns and pronouns in a sentence, providing greater flexibility in word order. The four cases—nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive—allow for varied sentence structures, but learners must carefully apply the correct case forms to ensure clarity and grammatical accuracy.

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