

Effect of Grammatical Gender on the quality of English-German translation. The case of German Language Students at Kenyatta University

BY

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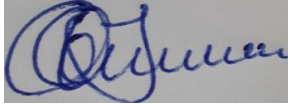
A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN TRANSLATION

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree at the University of Nairobi or any other University.



18. 11. 2023

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DATE

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University of Nairobi supervisors.

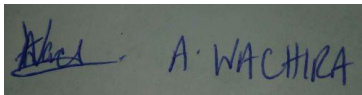


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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my three lovely children, Michael Mukunya, Abigail Wangechi and Angelica Waithira. May it serve as an inspiration to all of you. This also goes to my husband Anthony Mathenyu for creating a conducive peaceful environment for me to work in.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Errors of competence: Deviations from grammatical rules as a result of not having mastered the concept.

Errors of performance: Deviations from the grammatical rules as a result of oversight (mistakes)

Grammatical gender markings: A case where inanimate nouns are assigned a gender.

Global errors: Errors that affect comprehension of a sentence or a phrase.

German Language Students: Persons who have acquired basic training in German as a foreign language and are now undergoing work-related training with German as one of their working languages, but have not been actively involved in field of translation or any field that required active use of the German language.

Local errors: Errors that do not affect comprehension of the text, sentence or phrase.

Negative transfer: When aspects from one language are ‘borrowed’ into the other language where they are not applicable.

Positive transfer: Where aspects ‘borrowed’ from one language are applicable in the other.

ABBREVIATIONS

TL – Target Language

TL1- Target Language as translated by German language students.

TL2- Target Language in accordance with morphological principles.

SL- Source Language

FL/L3- Foreign Language

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

English, according to the Kenyan constitution 2010, is among the official languages spoken in Kenya. English and Kiswahili are the main languages of instructions in Kenya, since they are used as a medium of communication in schools and also at workplace ((Agoya-Wotsuna 2001, Wachira 2008, Hinga 2010). The two languages are also taught as compulsory subjects both at primary and secondary levels of education in Kenya.

German on the other hand is taught as the 2nd foreign language (Hinga 2010) and is only offered in selected secondary schools as a selective subject and also at selected universities and institutes in Kenya. Foreign language learning takes place in instances where the language plays no major role in the community and is formally learnt only in the classroom(Hinga 2010). However, some of the people who acquire foreign languages find engagements which require them to have a foreign language as one of their working languages. One of those engagements include translation.

Immediately after completion or during training in a foreign language, in this case the German language, Kenyan translators are faced with various challenges once they are released into the working environment. Some of these are the morphological differences between the source language, i.e., English and target language, i.e., German. One of these morphological differences is the way the two languages treat gender. In English, gender is natural in the sense that it

denotes things that are either biologically male and female. The rest of the nouns are neutral. On the other hand, all nouns in the German language have grammatical gender which is primarily expressed through the articles 'der' (masculine), 'die' (feminine) or 'das' (neuter). All the nouns then take 'die' as the grammatical gender in plural.

Gender markings determine the inflection of articles, personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, negative pronouns, relative pronouns and even adjectives, which also depends on different cases. Full mastery of these gender markings is difficult to achieve especially if the other languages acquired before have no gender markings or treat gender differently. The other languages that the sample in this research has acquired before the German language include English, which is the official language and the language of instruction in Kenyan schools and the official language, Kiswahili, which is the national language in Kenya and their native languages (Agoya 2001, Wachira 2008, Hinga 2010). The native or indigenous languages are commonly referred to as mother tongues.

This study looks at the effects of the gender markings on translation from the English language into the German language amongst German Language students, who do not have experience in working in the field of translation or any other field that requires active use of the German language. In this research, translation from English which does not have grammatical gender into German, which has an elaborate gender system is assumed to be more challenging, hence the subject of this research.

Due to lack of adequate exposure and the limited contact with the native speakers, the language students end up with morphological gaps which may affect the quality of their translation. This research analyses the effects of gender markings on translation between German and English languages, German possessing grammatical gender markings, while those are limited in the English language.

1.2 Statement of the research problem.

Grammatical gender is a basic concept that everyone using the German language should be conversant with. While one looks at any productive piece of writing, it is observed that there are gaps as far as grammatical gender is concerned, since even those who have studied the language for many years still commit some errors, which can be traced back to the challenges based on grammatical gender. This is also applied to German language students in Kenya. These, as earlier stated have acquired native languages, English and Kiswahili, after which German is introduced as a Foreign Language (FL/ L3) in secondary school at the age of about 14 years.

Late introduction of a language resorts to computationally less efficient processing strategies when confronted with (lexically determined) syntactic constructions different from those of L1.(Meulman et al.). As a result, they move along with those morphological gaps, from secondary schools to universities and even immediately after completion of their education.

These include wrong assignment of gender markings or wrong inflections of adjectives. One of those morphological gaps, that this research investigates is the effects of grammatical gender on

the quality of the target text translated by 4th year students at Kenyatta. Unfortunately, grammatical gender is indispensable since it affects many aspects of the language.

In Modern English, aside from a few archaic exceptions, only nouns referring to males and females take gendered pronouns; inanimate nouns are neuter, (Dye et al., ‘Alternative Solutions to a Language Design Problem’) What complicates the matter more is that there is no clear guidelines on how to determine the Gender in the German language. There have been attempts to get rules as to how one can tell the gender but there are very many exceptions to the rules (see Chapter 2). Some scholars claim that German has an opaque gender allocation system. The gender markings affect very many aspects of the language to an extent that if one is not well versed with them, they would not claim to be competent in the language.

In view of these discrepancies as far as grammatical gender is concerned, a systematic study to interrogate the challenges encountered by the inexperienced translators needed to be carried out.

1.3 Research objectives

The objectives that the researcher formulated in order to achieve her goals are:

- i. To identify the morphological errors committed when translating from English to German with focus on the grammatical gender markings.
- ii. To identify the negative transfers that are present in the two languages.
- iii. To analyse the effects of the morphological errors on the target text.

1.4 Hypothesis

The hypotheses that the researcher formulated in order to achieve the objectives are:

- i. The target text will contain errors, for instance, errors arising from wrong assignment of grammatical gender on nouns, inflections of adjectives, since translation from a language with less elaborate to one with a more elaborate grammatical gender system could be challenging to an inexperienced translator.
- ii. The similarities and differences in gender assignment between the two languages will lead to negative transfer in that they may tend to allocate neutral gender to inanimate nouns or fail to inflect adjectives, in line with the English language.
- iii. Some of the errors made during translation will affect the meaning of the target text or lead to ambiguity, while in some instances, will only affect the presentation of the text, but render the meaning correctly.

1.5 Significance/ Rationale

Grammatical gender is a very important morphological aspect especially in the German language as it affects many aspects of the language ranging from articles, pronouns, relative pronouns, cases and also inflections in adjectives. Mastery of the grammatical gender is therefore vital in acquiring competency in German, which would result to accurate translation. Grammatical gender tends to be very difficult to learners especially if the languages they acquired before have no grammatical gender. This is because there are no clear guidelines on how to determine the gender of the numerous nouns found in the language (see counter arguments in chapter 2). If this aspect is not well learnt, it could certainly affect the quality of translation.

As it has been discussed in literature review, other scholars have conducted similar research on the topic of grammatical gender, most scholars have put a lot of emphasis on the system that languages that have a gender system use to allocate gender to nouns, while others have researched on cognitive processes involved in gender acquisition. Some studies argue that gender agreement difficulties in L2 production are due to performance pressures that obscure an underlying representation that is intact (e.g., Prevost & White, 2000). Other studies have found continuing gender difficulties in L2 comprehension as well and have argued for representational deficits (e.g., Mc Carthy, 2008).

This study therefore contributes to the existing knowledge on how the grammatical gender affect the quality of translation especially in the Kenyan context where German is acquired later in life as a foreign language. The research does not give a definite solution on how one acquires grammatical gender, but rather points out at the existing problem of an aspect of a language that is not well learned yet it forms the basics in the competency of a language.

Different linguistic communities have their own challenges as far as acquisition of languages is concerned. To some countries like Kenya, some languages are considered to be more important than others depending on the career paths one would like to take. As one learns German in Kenya, they might not have to use it outside the classroom situation, making the process of natural language acquisition of the language difficult. A translator translating from German to

French and vice versa is likely to understand the case and gender marking better since these are present in both languages, although the neutral gender is not present in the French language.

This research is relevant to the translators, because they handle all types of texts from different genres, and the expectation is that they render all the aspects of a language as intended in the source text without alteration of meaning. Misrepresentation of grammatical gender may lead to loss of clients, since translators should maintain high level accuracy in the target text.

The research is also relevant to the educators of foreign languages, who could use it to develop strategies that will improve the acquisition of the German language in terms of grammatical gender. This research also gives insights to those who are training the translators as it sheds light on the proficiency of their students and they may consider incorporation of proficiency courses, to ensure high level of competency amongst the translators. Without knowledge of grammatical gender in the German language, one would not be considered to be competent in the language.

The research could serve as an eye-opener to the curriculum developers in Kenya, since they could develop learning and teaching materials that will enhance wholesome acquisition of all aspects of the language including grammatical gender.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

This research explores the errors made in relation to the grammatical gender and their effects on the quality of translation done by German language students, whose competency in one of their working languages is beyond the other as a result of inadequate exposure to the language and also because one, in this case the German language, is introduced to them much later in life, and one does not use it in day-to-day situations outside the classroom situation.

This research mainly focuses on translation from the English language, which does not have the grammatical gender, to German which has a more elaborate grammatical gender system.

The research restricts itself to the effects of gender markings on articles, inflections on possessive articles, negative articles, pronouns and adjectives. Gender markings also serve as determiners when it comes to case, hence it is not possible to ignore the case markings, which are determined by gender markings.

This research is also restricted to manual translation and not machine translation, since the two types of translations face different challenges.

This research was carried out among the fourth year undergraduate German-students at the Kenyatta university, who have done at least one of translation courses, but they have no experience in the field of translation. The students translated a reflective narrative from English to German, since translation from a language without grammatical gender to one with an

elaborate gender system is considered in this research to be more challenging, than translation from a language with grammatical gender markings.

This research will interrogate errors arising from grammatical gender, but does not give a direct solution to the problem, but paves way for further research on the solutions of the existing problem.

1.7 Literature review

Other scholars have also researched on similar topics relating to grammatical gender markings found in the German language. They have in their research tried to point out at the level of difficulty the grammatical gender presents to the non-native speakers. Others have tried to unmask the importance of grammatical gender and others have tried to explain how grammatical gender is acquired. Most have tried to research on how language systems assign gender markings to nouns. Some argue that grammatical gender is an important lexical component in a language. Below is an outline of what some scholars have to say about their related researches.

1.7.1 Grammatical Gender in German

The issue of the grammatical gender markings in German has been a topic of research by many scholars for many years. Some have even gone further to research on languages that employ grammatical gender, coming up with a conclusion that grammatical gender may not serve any purpose. Mark Twain in his article, 'The Awful German Language (1879)' tries to illustrate how difficult it is for non-native speakers of German to acquire grammatical gender. He also does not understand the rationale behind grammatical gender since according to him, it does not make any sense allocating gender to inanimate nouns.

He states:

'A person who has not studied German can form no idea of what a perplexing language it is [...]. Every noun has a gender, and there is no sense or system in the distribution; so, the gender of each must be learned separately and by heart. There is no other way. To do this one has to have a memory like a memorandum-book. In German, a young lady has no sex, while a turnip has.'

Think what overwrought reverence that shows for the turnip, and what callous disrespect for the girl. (Twain 1879)

Rogers, Margaret 1987, in her research on learners' difficulty with grammatical gender in German as a foreign language, states that in the acquisition of German as a foreign language, grammatical gender has often been viewed as a problem by both learners and teachers alike. She suggests some reasons why this is the case, stating that one of the reasons may result from focusing on problems of production rather than reception. She does not establish a set of rules which might be pedagogically useful in the assignment of gender to German nouns, but puts the problem of gender in a linguistic and psycholinguistic context.

This research agrees to the fact that grammatical gender is problematic to the non-natives, but also goes further to look at the effects of grammatical gender, using concrete examples, to the meaning of the target text in translation. This research is on translation rather than language acquisition.

Sera et al, 2002, wrote a journal article on grammatical gender from a psycholinguistic perspective. Their main focus was the relationship between grammatical gender and categorization. They defined languages with grammatical gender as "gender-loaded". One of their interests in their research was to find out to what extent the assignment of grammatical gender is arbitrary. They observed that German grammatical gender is imperfect, since it allocates different gender markings for "woman" and "girl" (die Frau and das Mädchen respectively). The indefinite determiners also have two gender markings in the nominative case

(ein and eine) (Sera et al.2002). They also observed that nouns are rarely marked for gender, but the gender markings are mainly on the adjectives and determiners.

The difference between their approach and the one for this research is that they take a comparative approach between languages on the way gender is assigned, but this research is on the effect of gender markings on translation, from a language without grammatical gender to the one with an elaborate grammatical gender system.

Dye et al., 2017, in a journal article “Functional Theory of gender paradigms”, also carried out research on grammatical gender. In their research, their objective was to find out the functional role the grammatical gender markings play in facilitating communication. They state that grammatical gender is an obligatory morphological system found in many languages that groups nouns into a small number of mutually exclusive classes, and marks neighboring words (such as articles and adjectives) for agreement.

Scholars e.g. (Corbett 1991) state that gender markings assigned to noun classes lack any transparent purpose. Scholars, e.g., Wittgenstein (1953) assert that grammatical gender is a useless ornament with no apparent rhyme or reason. Not only have gender systems been branded as meaningless, but they are fiendishly difficult for non-native speakers to learn (Dye et al., 2017). German is notorious for its seemingly opaque gender system (e.g. (Salmons 1993): 187, (Comrie): 461, (Twain): 628, : 100), which has led various linguists to claim that German nouns are assigned genders completely arbitrarily(Corteen 2018).

Dye et al.,2017, also look at theoretical perspectives that shed light on communicative function of noun classification. These functions were easier to identify in languages such as, Russian but not German. However, they state that gender classes in German conform to a ‘tight discriminative logic’, where gender allocation conforms to a particular system, rather than random assignment. They suggest that the most concrete function of the gender marking in German could be reference tracking (Zubin & Köpcke, 1986; Koval, 1979; Heath, 1975).

The logic behind assignment of grammatical gender is important for this research since it will shed light on the types of errors identified in the data.

Fedden and Corbett, 2019 on a journal article on the continuing challenge of the German gender assignment system have discussed the gender assignment principles suggested by scholars e.g. Zubin and Koepcke, 1984, which illustrate that the gender assignment is not really opaque. However, the German gender system has not yielded all of its secrets(Fedden and Corbett, 2019). They suggest more research into the German gender system.

Donald Steinmerz, 2015 also researched on assignment of grammatical gender to inanimate nouns in German. They came up with two principles and some rules for gender allocation in German. These are principles relating to morphological and phonological shape of a noun and those relating to semantics of a noun. They came up with a conclusion that grammatical gender in German is to a large extent systematic and predictable.

The rules governing gender assignment are important for this research since they form the basis of what this research may recommend.

Audring, 2016 carried out research on grammatical gender in languages that have it, one of those being German. She states that grammatical gender is a reflection of natural gender in grammar(Audring 2016). It should be clear that the relation between grammatical gender and natural gender in German is in some instances imperfect, because different articles are used for “the woman” and “the girl”, (Audring 2016). Moreover, the German indefinite article only sometimes carries grammatical gender information when marking the feminine nouns in the nominative case. For example, among ein Mann, eine Frau, and ein Mädchen, only eine Frau is distinguished from the others by its indefinite article (Sera et al. 2002)

Gender specification can often appear arbitrary, with little obvious correspondence between the semantic properties of a given referent and its noun class(Dye et al., 2017) and also (Vigliocco, Vinson, Paganelli, & Dworzynski, 2005), (Köpcke and Zubin 1981). This could mean that grammatical gender must be stored for each noun in the lexicon and retrieved each time a noun is used (Corbett 1991: 7, van Berkum 1996: 33, Conzett 2006: 224).

1.7.2. Assignment of grammatical gender in German.

There is an accumulating body of evidence that native speakers use determiners to guide lexical access.(Dye et al.,2017). On their account, prenominal gender marking serves to modulate nominal entropy, making nouns of different frequencies more equally predictable in context. This functionality benefits language processing in multiple ways: (a) by helping speakers avoid the peaks in uncertainty that would otherwise occur over nouns, smoothing entropy over the

larger sequence; (b) by reducing competition between nouns that are highly confusable in context; and (c) by facilitating the use of a richer array of lexical items (Dye et al., 2017). In-depth analyses have revealed various patterns of correlation between the gender of a German noun and its semantic, morphological and phonological properties (e.g. Arndt 1970, Altmann & Raettig 1973, Zubin & Köpcke 1981, 1986, Köpcke 1982, Köpcke & Zubin 1983, 1984). Studies have proposed that using these regularities observed, the gender of a large proportion of German nouns can be systematically predicted.(Corteen, *The Assignment of Grammatical Gender in German*)

1.7.3 Gender assignment principles

Studies have revealed patterns of correlation between the gender of a noun and its semantic, morphological and phonological properties(Corteen, 2019). This has led to proposition that using these regularities observed, the gender of a large proportion of German nouns can be systematically predicted, Zubin & Köpcke (1981, 1986), Köpcke (1982), and Köpcke & Zubin (1983, 1984) estimate that the gender of around 90% of the 1466 monosyllables in the Duden dictionary can be accounted for. In this regard, scholars maintain that assignment of grammatical gender in German is not random, but uses regularities found in noun forms and meaning. This has resulted to formulation of principles governing gender assignment, which include morphological, semantic and phonological principles, highlighted below, but which are discussed in details in chapter 2.

1.7.3.1 Morphological principles

Morphological principles have been proposed for German which are based on the morphology of a noun. These include principles relating to particular derivational affixes, to compounds, and even to the inflectional class of a noun (Corteen, 2019).

1.7.3.2 Phonological principles

Phonology of a noun in German can determine its gender (Corteen, 2019). These principles are however mostly based on statistical tendencies and not grammatical rules (e.g. Altmann & Raettig 1973, Köpcke 1982, Köpcke & Zubin 1983, Mills 1986, Corbett 1991, Wegener 1995, Hickey 2000). These include among others word endings, e.g., word ending ‘el’ as in ‘Himmel’ tend to have a masculine gender, but there are also others with the same ending but have a feminine gender e.g., ‘Ampel’. On the other hand, nouns with an ending ‘e’, as in ‘Birne’ tends to be associated with the feminine gender. However, there is a certain group of masculine gender that have the same ending e.g., ‘Affe’.

1.7.3.3 Semantic principles

The most common semantic principle is ‘the natural gender principles (NGP)’ (natürliche Geschlechtsprinzip) (e.g. Mills 1986: 16; Wegener 1995: 71; Köpcke & Zubin 1996: 28, 1997: 479; Menzel 2004: 60f., Chan 2005: 41). The NGP states that a noun denoting an animate will be assigned the grammatical gender which corresponds to the “natural gender” of the referent. For animals, this is their biological sex, and for humans, this is their societal gender identity (Mills

1986: 16; Wegener 1995: 71 et al). The NGP states that nouns denoting young humans and young animals are neuter, e.g. das Kind ‘child’, das Küken ‘chick’

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This research is based on Error Analysis Theory. Error Analysis Theory was first established by Stephen Pit Corder and his colleagues in the late of 1970s and became a very popular approach for describing second language (L2) errors. Error analysis involves a systematic description and classification of L2 errors contained in a sample of learner’s speech or writing (Al-Khresheh, 2016). Error analysis deals with "the learners’ performance in terms of the cognitive processes they make use of in recognizing or coding the input they receive from the target language (TL)" (Erdogan, 2005, p. 263).

According to Mahmoodzadeh (2012), Error analysis could be defined as a procedure used to identify, categorize, and explain the errors committed by foreign language (FL)/L2 learners. Schaumann and Stenson (1976, p. 4) state that "the task of Error Analysis is to explain and analyze why one aspect of the target grammar has not been adequately acquired whilst a second is learnt without difficulty." Al-khresheh (2013) also claims that error analysis (EA) deals with the way people learn and use a language. This approach proposed some certain steps for investigating L2 errors, namely collection, identification, description and explanation of errors (Ellis, 1994). These steps are used in this research to investigate the errors that were committed during translation of a text from English to German. The steps are outlined below:

1.8.1 Collection of a sample of Language:

Errors are influenced by a group of important factors e.g., learner/translator and the language.

Ellis (1994, p. 49) asserts that these factors are significant in "collecting a well-defined sample of language so that clear statements can be made regarding what kinds of errors are produced and under what conditions". In this research, the sample was collected from the 4th year students of Kenyatta University, which were thought to be a homogeneous group and a representative of a wider population of German language students.

1.8.2 Identification of errors:

There are certain ways to distinguish between an error and a mistake. The first one is associated with checking the consistency of the L2 learner's performance. The second way is associated with self-correction of a deviant utterance. If one is able to correct a deviant utterance, then it is considered a mistake, and if one cannot, then it is an error (Ellis (1994). According to his model "every sentence is to be regarded as idiosyncratic until shown to be otherwise" (p.21). In this research however, the distinction between an error and a mistake was not obvious, since the text was translated once, hence presented no chance of self-correction. In this regard, any deviation from the grammatical rules governing grammatical gender assignment was considered an error.

His model provides a good distinction between what he calls 'overt' and 'covert' errors. If a sentence is ill-formed in terms of TL rules, it has been regarded as 'overtly idiosyncratic' whilst the sentence that is superficially well-formed but does not mean what the learner intends to mean has been regarded as 'covertly idiosyncratic'. Brown (2000), Ellis (1994) and Corder (1981)

(cited in Al-Tamimi (2006, p. 39) "consider any deviation from what a native speaker would produce, as an error". This is the approach that was taken in this research.

1.8.3: Description of Errors:

Description of errors is a prerequisite for a good explanation of errors. (Corder, 1973), classified errors into 4 groups namely omission, selection, addition and misordering of elements.

According to Ellis (1997), **omission** appears when a student leaves a required item from an utterance or from a sentence that he/she has constructed. **Selection** can be done by selecting an incorrect element. **Addition** is addition of unnecessary elements to an utterance, a sentence or a phrase. Lastly, **misordering of elements** can be done by misplacing an item or putting it in the wrong place.

Erdogan (2005, p. 264) further distinguishes between the **global** and **local** errors. He indicates that global errors might hinder communication by preventing understanding of the intended meaning, while local errors might not stop comprehension of the intended meaning.

1.8.4 Explanation of errors:

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005,p,62) declare that "explaining errors involves determining their sources in order to account for why they were made". Ellis (1994, p. 57), states that explanation of errors "involves an attempt to establish the processes responsible for L2 acquisition". Ellis

explains the psycholinguistic sources of the nature of L2 learners' errors by classifying them as errors of performance and errors of competence.

This theory is relevant to this research because it is about collecting sample errors, distinguishing and analyzing errors that German language students make. This research adapts the steps that Corder (1973) suggested in investigating errors. To investigate the effects of the errors committed, it will also be necessary to classify the errors as global and local.

1.9 Methodology

This research was based mainly on quantitative research method. However, to support some of the findings, a questionnaire was also used. This brought in some aspects of qualitative research. The questionnaire was considered necessary since it served to substantiate some of the statements made in this study.

In this section, the process of data collection, the challenges faced during data collection, the sample and data analysis are discussed.

1.9.1 Data Collection

A text, in form of a reflective narrative, as data elicitation technique was used, whereby the sample chosen translated the text within a given time-frame and the errors identified in the target text were analysed. Selective sampling was done, where the researcher, through the lecturer at Kenyatta University requested the 4th year students to translate a text from English to German.

This sample was chosen, because the researcher felt it was representative of the situation of students of German as a foreign language in Kenya. This is because Kenyatta University draws its students from secondary schools in different parts of the country and they have almost the same time duration of exposure to German as a foreign language, hence they form a homogeneous group.

1.9.1.1 Challenges faced during Data Collection

Since the first sample group the researcher chose for data collection was not at the university, but enjoying their holidays, the researcher chose to use the online option to reach them. This was not difficult because they had an online forum where communication was made.

The researcher wrote clear instruction that the research was on manual translation and not machine translation. These instructions were not followed, and the sample used online translation programmes available on the internet, hence interfering with the quality of the data. This prompted the researcher to change tact and to give the sample the text to translate under controlled environment within a given time frame. What seemed to be just speculation at first, but was confirmed by the difference in the quality of translation that was noted when the sample was asked to translate under supervision when the university resumed. Although the online translations were not perfect, there was very little data on grammatical gender that could have been useful for this research.

1.9.2 The Sample

Selective sampling was done for this research. For this purpose, data was collected from 4th year students at Kenyatta University, where German language is studied at undergraduate level.

Although the main emphasis at the University is training for teaching purposes, the students also take up some units in translation which prepare them for careers in translation. Translation is also an important component in teaching of foreign languages, since teaching and learning materials are translated in one way or the other during the teaching process.

The students had already done one unit in translation and were yet to do the second unit, which they were going to do in the course of that academic year.

This sample is a representative of the wider population of who are expected later to use German as a working language in Kenya, since the university admits successful students from secondary schools which offer German as a foreign language all over the country. The students were all introduced to the German language in form one, hence all of them had between 7 and 8 years of exposure to the language, which makes it a homogeneous group. Since the students tend to have no prior experience in translation or in any field where they are required to actively use German, one is able to get a true picture of what competences a translation trainee is likely to possess as far as the application of the morphological aspects of the two language is concerned.

1.9.3 Data Analysis

The Data was analysed in reference to Error Analysis Theory, paying attention to the aspects that were to put to test. These aspects include analysis of error arising from:

1. Wrong assignment of gender markings, i.e., in terms of articles (selection).
2. Errors arising from failure to adjust gender marking as a result of case (misordering of elements)
3. Leaving out of articles and inflections (omission)
4. Errors arising from wrong inflections on adjectives (selection).
5. Errors arising from wrong assignment of personal pronouns (selection)
6. Errors arising from wrong inflections on possessive and negative articles (selection).

After the analysis, a further analysis was done to determine which errors affected the quality of translation in terms of meaning and hence creating ambiguity or misunderstanding in the target text, and also those errors that would not affect the meaning in the target language. No distinction was made between an error and a mistake. Every deviation from the grammatical rules of the target language was treated as an error. This is because the text was administered only once and therefore there was no way of telling whether the translator could have corrected the deviations themselves or not.

Chapter two: Grammatical Gender in English and German

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher looks at grammatical gender in comparison to other main working languages used in Kenya i.e., English and Kiswahili. The researcher discusses the different ways in which grammatical gender affects various morphological aspects of the German language before moving on to discuss the gender assignment principles that are used to allocate grammatical gender to inanimate nouns in German.

2.1 Research overview

The Kenyan German language students are faced with the problem of having to work with two or more foreign languages, one of them being more dominant than the other. Having to translate from the English language to the German language could pose challenges to many, since the two languages are not at the same level, since English may be viewed as an ‘A’ language, while German could be seen as a ‘C’ language. English is acquired mostly as the 2nd language and it is widely used, since it is the official language and the language of communication in Kenya (Agoya 2001, Wachira 2008, Hinga 2010).

German on the other hand could be acquired as a 3rd or 4th Language with limited exposure outside the classroom situation. German was introduced in Kenyan schools in 1980s (Laurien 1987) and gradually more schools have offered German as a foreign language, but the exposure

of the students to the German language is far below that of English, Kiswahili or their indigenous languages.

One of the challenges faced by those who have to use German as a working language, e.g., translators, is having to deal with grammatical gender found in the German language, since the other languages acquired have either no grammatical gender or it is less elaborate compared to German.

Grammatical gender is one of the ways that languages that have it use to break down nouns into groups and categories (*Gender in English: Masculine & Feminine Words | IELTS Australia*). The English language does not have a grammatical gender system, in the sense that it does not allocate gender to inanimate nouns. However, in some isolated cases, gender can be assigned when referring to countries, ships and even cars, e.g., Kenya and **her** neighbours. In this case the country Kenya has been assigned a possessive article in the feminine form.

Gonen et al, 2019, while researching on the effects of grammatical Gender in noun representations in languages that have gender markings, states that languages with grammatical gender assign and morphologically mark gender not only to animate nouns (which have biological sex, e.g., man, woman, mother, father), but also to inanimate nouns (e.g., table, chair). This grammatical gender assignment is mostly arbitrary: the same inanimate concept can have different gender in different languages. For example, a flower is masculine in Italian (fiore) and feminine in German (Blume). According to Audring 2016, gender is famously difficult for second language learners. This is especially true for adults and for learners whose first language

does not have a gender system. The table below shows how English, Kiswahili and German treat gender among the personal pronouns in the 1st person singular.

Example 1. Gender in Kiswahili, English and German

<i>Kiswahili</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>
a. Baba analala	He is sleeping	Er schläft
b. Mama analala	She is sleeping	Sie schläft
c. Paka analala	It is sleeping	Sie schläft

From the above analysis one notices that in English there are different pronouns denoting male and female persons, whereas in Kiswahili, nouns have no indication of gender. A cat in English is neutral, whereas in German, it has the feminine gender regardless of whether the cat in question is biologically male or female. German has three genders for nouns, but masculine and neuter gender behave largely the same with respect to plural formation (Wiese, 2009)

The gender markings which are found in the German affects the inflection of nouns, adjectives, personal pronouns, possessive pronouns and also the articles. This has an effect on the meaning and if not properly used, the meaning may not be rendered correctly or it could lead to ambiguity. In English, the gender has no inflections. The following is an example of inflections of the masculine gender in German according to case:

Example 2: Inflections of the masculine gender in German according to case

English

German

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. There is the new ball. | Da ist der neue Ball. |
| b. Mary buys the new ball. | Mary kauft den neuen Ball. |
| c. Mary plays with the new ball. | Mary spielt mit dem neuen Ball. |
| d. The colour of the new ball is white. | Die Farbe des neuen Balls ist weiß. |

The data above shows that translations of the article ‘the’ into German will depend on gender marking as well as the case. Translation of other articles will depend on various factors including the articles used, whether definite or indefinite and possessive articles which will consequently determine the inflections of the adjectives, as illustrated below:

Example 3: Inflections of adjectives

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a) There is a new ball. | Da ist ein neuer Ball. |
| b) She doesn’t drink cold water. | Sie trinkt kein kaltes Wasser. |
| c) The smile of a happy woman. | Das Lächeln glücklicher Frau. |

Depending on the type of article used, the adjectives are inflected differently as shown in the table above. If no article is used, the adjective takes a strong inflection, as discussed later in this chapter.

Understanding of these morphological concepts among others is crucial to understanding how the words are formed to avoid overgeneralization. On the table above, the adjectives in sentence 'a' and sentence 'c' may have the same inflection "er", but the meaning and the use of it is totally different. Sentence 'a', the inflection is in the nominative case after an indefinite article of the masculine gender, while in sentence 'c', the inflection is found in the genitive case when used without any article to mark the feminine gender. Whereas the 'a' and 'b' may pose no semantic challenge if a translator gets them wrong, the 'c' may not bring out the correct meaning and it is subject to misinterpretation. The aspect of 'belonging to' is important and should be brought out properly. In all the three sentences, the quality of translation is affected, if a translator does not apply the correct inflection, as it is viewed as an error and it affects the presentation of the target text.

In some isolated cases, there are nouns with two different gender markings which adds to the challenges of having to learn the grammatical gender, e.g., der Liter/ das Liter; das Joghurt/ der Joghurt; das Cola/die Cola. Which would mean that a translator could use either gender, but it is not clear whether they should be used randomly or systematically i.e., if one can use the masculine gender in the case of 'Joghurt' in one sentence and use the neuter gender to refer to the same noun in the next. Worse still, we have some nouns which could have different gender markings and different meanings e.g., die See (Sea)and der See (lake). There are also synonyms with different gender markings e.g., das Sofa/ die Couch or das Auto/ der Wagen. In this case, a person who has acquired the foreign language would wonder what rationale there is in marking a particular noun with two different genders.

Languages are not static and there is a rise in neology, some of which arise as a result of borrowing of terminology from other languages. When a noun is borrowed, it is also assigned a grammatical gender e.g., der Job, das Restaurant, die Jeans, die Shamba, die Pizza, das Hotel.

This research seeks to unveil effect of gender found in the German language. Certainly, the grammatical gender could serve to complicate the process of translation especially if the source language is English, which has no grammatical gender, and the target language is the German, which has three gender systems, namely masculine, feminine and neutral. The gender in the English language is purely natural, denoting male or female. In this case, the trainee will have to figure out what grammatical gender the noun takes and also figure out the inflections on the adjectives, articles, personal pronouns, relative pronouns and also their respective cases i.e., nominative, accusative, dative or even genitive. This would be quite a lot of data to process at the same time, hence there is the likelihood that some errors might occur. This could lead to *wrong assignment* of gender markings, case markings and inflections e.g., schöne Wochenende instead of schönes Wochenende or schöner Tag instead of schönen Tag, because the gender markings do not present themselves naturally especially if the 1st or 2nd languages do not have grammatical gender markings.

The similarities in the gender system denoting animate nouns could be of help to the translator and could lead to *positive transfer* e.g., man/woman (der Mann/ die Frau). These could be very clear to translator but others exhibit some differences in some aspects, e.g., Mädchen(girl) and Fräulein(miss) in German fall under the neuter gender. It would require more competence for

one to make out that these words are in the diminutive form and the ending ‘chen’ and ‘lein’ are used to make things smaller. Since gender in the German language is to a large extent grammatical, in the event that the nouns are in the diminutive form, grammar would take precedence, meaning that the nouns would take the neutral gender regardless of whether they refer to a noun denoting a biologically male or female. These could confuse a German language student and translators should be aware of these as it could lead to *overgeneralization* of grammatical rules. At this point, a significant number of errors are likely to arise, affecting the quality of translation.

2.2 Gender assignment in German

As mentioned in chapter one, gender assignment in German has been described as opaque. This is due to the fact that the gender system is to a large extent unpredictable. However, scholars have discovered that there are indeed principles and guidelines on gender assignment. These principles guide as far as allocation of gender to nouns are concerned. These include phonological principles, semantic principles morphological principles(Corteen 2017).

In this respect, this study looks at the principles that influence the gender allocation in nouns.

2.2.1 Morphological principles

These are gender assignment principles based on the morphology of a noun. These include derivational affixes, compounds, and inflectional class of a noun.

2.2.1.1 Derivation via affixation

The connection between a noun's derivational morphological features and its gender is well established for German (Arndt 1970, Mills 1986: 30f., Köpcke & Zubin 1996: 28, Hickey 2000: 630, Hoberg 2004: 86-89, Weinrich 2007: 326f.). They stated that derivation by affixation is one of the most widely used principle to establish a gender of a noun.

Nouns ending with a suffix 'er' will in most cases take the masculine gender. Examples of such nouns include: **Lehrer**, **Schreiner**, **Schuhmacher** e.t.c. The same case applies to nouns ending with 'ling', e.g. **Lehrling**.

Nouns with suffixes 'schaft', 'in', 'ung' e.g. **Freundschaft**, **Landschaft**, **Lehrerin**, **Meinung**, tend to have a feminine gender marking. On the other hand, nouns with the suffixes 'lein' and 'chen' tend to be in the diminutive case and hence take the neuter gender. This explains why the word 'Mädchen' (girl) is neutral even though it refers to a person of feminine gender. Other suffixes e.g., 'tum' tend to be neuter in gender, though there are exceptions to the rules, e.g., in the case of '**Irrtum**' and '**Reichtum**', which are masculine in gender.

There are however suffixes that are associated with two different genders e.g., nouns with the suffix 'nis' can either be neutral or feminine for instance, **das Ereignis**, **die Erlaubnis**.

According to Mills 1986: 30, Hickey 2000: 631, Menzel 2004: 66, Rice 2006: 1396, Steinmetz 2006: 1424, there is a proposed gender principle involving the prefixes e.g., Nouns with the prefix ‘ge’ tend to be of neuter gender e.g., **Gefühl**.

Also categorized under morphological gender assignment principles are those associated with ‘Fremdsuffixe’ (loan or foreign suffixes) and they are associated with certain gender, e.g., ‘-ismus’ as in the case of ‘**Tourismus**,’ or ‘-ant’ as in the case of ‘**Praktikant**’ tend to take a masculine gender. On the other hand, suffixes e.g., ‘-anz’ (**Arroganz**), ‘-enz’ (**Existenz**) and ‘-tät’ (**Universität**) tend to take a feminine gender.

Nouns with foreign suffixes ‘-ium’ (**Stipedium**) or ‘-ment’ (**Parlament**) take a neutral gender marking.

2.2.1.2 Implicit Derivation

Implicit derivation is the process where nouns are derived from verbs without the process of affixation. These are derived from stems of verbs with some alteration of vowels e.g., from the verb ‘springen’, the stem of the verb is ‘spring-‘and the derived noun is ‘der Sprung’. Or in the case of the verb ‘fliegen’, the stem of the verb is ‘flieg-‘and the noun derived from it is ‘der Flug’ These nouns tend to be masculine in gender.

Also categorized alongside these are nouns derived from stems of verbs that have not undergone any change of the vowels, for instance from the verb ‘besuchen’ the noun ‘der Besuch’ is derived.

2.2.1.3 Conversion

In conversion, the word-formation process does not involve affixation, but rather consist of a simple change of syntactic category of a lexical item to form a new lexeme (Bauer 1983: 32, Plag 1999). These include:

- a) nominalized verbs in infinitive, e.g., das Schreiben, das Warten, das Lernen e.t.c.
- b) nominalized adjectives e.g., das Schwarz
- c) nominalized adverbs e.g., das Hier und Jetzt
- d) nominalized whole verb phrases, for instance, ‘das Inkranftreten’

The nominalized nouns in this category are mostly neutral in gender.

2.2.1.4 Compounds

The gender of a German compound is in the majority of cases determined by its rightmost element (e.g., Eisenberg 1999: 218, Donalies 2002: 57, Neef 2009: 389, Fleischer & Barz 2012: 85). For example, the noun ‘Zahnärztin’ comprises two nouns with different gender markings (Zahn is masculine while ‘Ärztin’ is feminine.). There is a morphological principle called ‘Letz-Glied-Prinzip’ (Last member principle [LMP]) which states that the compound noun will take

the gender of the right-most word. This means that the noun ‘Zahnärztin’ takes a feminine gender.

This rule however applies to majority of nouns but not all since there exists some exception to the rules. The word ‘Wehmut’ is feminine despite the fact that the last noun affixed is masculine in gender, i.e., ‘der Mut’.

2.2.1.5 Reductions

Nouns in this category are formed by means of reduction e.g. (Uni < Universität), initialisms (e.g. SPD < Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands), acronyms (e.g. FAZ < Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung), KaDeWe < Kaufhaus des Westens), and blends (e.g. Kurlaub < Kur+Urlaub) (Wegera 1997: 50, Donalies 2002: 144, Hoberg 2004: 91, Duden Grammatik 2009: 159). On the basis of such nouns, a general gender assignment principle has been proposed, stating that the gender of a shortened form is determined by the gender of the corresponding full form, e.g., die Universität (die Uni). In this case, both the reduced form and the full form have a feminine gender marking.

Some exceptions to the rule have however been identified as in the case of Foto, which is neuter in gender, while its full form Fotografie is feminine in gender.

It is important to note that even though these principles explain the gender allocation in the German language, there are also exceptions to the rules which may complicate the process of learning the gender markings further.

2.2.1.6 Inflection

Some scholars claim that the way a noun is inflected in the plural form can also determine the gender of the noun. E.g., nouns that form plurals by addition of ‘Umlaut’ and ‘er’ (Bilder); (Auto)’s’; ‘e’, are either masculine or neutral in gender. On the other hand, nouns that take the inflection ‘e’ and an ‘Umlaut’ are likely to take masculine or feminine gender, while those with the inflection ‘(e)n’ take the feminine gender.

Some scholars on the other hand claim that it is not the inflection that determines the gender of the noun but it is the gender that determines the inflection of the noun.

2.2.2 Phonological principles

Phonology of a noun in German can also influence its gender (e.g., Altmann & Raettig 1973, Köpcke 1982, Köpcke & Zubin 1983, Mills 1986, Corbett 1991, Wegener 1995, Hickey 2000). They claim that some phonological features found in nouns are related to their gender assignment. This leads to formulation of gender assignment principles, which are based on tendencies rather than categorical rules. These include:

2.2.2.1 Word endings

A study by Altmann and Raetting 1973 showed close association or disassociation with a certain gender marking, e.g., nouns with the ending '-ang' as in 'Gang' are closely associated with the masculine gender, whereas those with the ending 'b', as in 'Korb' are strongly disassociated with the masculine gender (Altmann and Raetting 1973).

Other phonological principles involving pseudo-suffixed have been suggested. These are noun-endings that resemble suffixes but they do not constitute morphemes, e.g. in the ending 'er' in 'Lehrer' has a morpheme but in 'Hammer' does not constitute a morpheme (Eisenberg 1999: 203). Other pseudo-suffixes include: 'en', 'el', 'e'. It is important to note that all gender markings exist among the pseudo-suffixes, but in each of them, there is a close association to one gender as opposed to another, e.g., 'e' is closely associated with the feminine gender.

Still on word endings, Nelson 1998, proposed that stressed vowels also have an association with the gender of a certain noun. He argues that a stressed vowel sound followed by an 'm' or 'l' are associated with neuter gender, e.g., 'Problem' and 'Profil'. He also claims that unstressed final 'on' is associated with the neuter gender, as in 'das Stadion' while stressed final 'on' is associated with the masculine gender e.g., 'der Balkon'.

2.2.2.2 monosyllabic nouns.

Monosyllabic nouns are those nouns that constitute one syllable. Köpcke 1982, proposes that monosyllabic properties of a noun have close association with a certain gender marking. He analysed a number of monosyllabic words in ‘Duden’ dictionary and came up with the general rule that most monosyllabic words are associated with the masculine gender. Examples of such nouns include: der Lachs, der Knopf, der Tag, e.t.c. Other genders amongst the monosyllabic nouns have been noted but they constitute the minority, e.g., das Ohr.

2.2.3 Semantic principles

Gender assignment principles that relate to semantic features of a noun have been proposed as influential in assignment of gender. The most common semantic principle is the ‘the natural gender principle (NGP)’.

2.2.3.1 The Natural Gender Principle (*Die natürliche Geschlechtsprinzip*)

The NGP states that a noun denoting an animate noun will be assigned the grammatical gender which corresponds to the “natural gender” of the referent, (e.g., Mills 1986: 16; Wegener 1995: 71; Köpcke & Zubin 1996: 28, 1997: 479; Menzel 2004: 60f., Chan 2005: 41). For animals, this is their biological sex, and for humans, it is both their biological gender and their societal gender identity. Therefore, according to the NGP, nouns denoting men and male animals are masculine, e.g., der Mann (man), der Hund (dog), and nouns denoting women and female animals are feminine, e.g., die Frau (woman), die Kuh (cow).

Chan 2005, notes that for nouns denoting people, exceptions to the NGP can generally be explained by the referent of the noun deviating from the normative ideas of the societal gender categories. For instance, in terms of nouns referring to men, exceptions to the NGP are mostly pejorative terms for men ‘who traditionally have been regarded in German culture as lacking central characteristics of culturally-defined masculinity’, such as die Tunte and die Schwuchtel ‘gay man [pej.]’ or die Memme ‘coward’ (Zubin & Köpcke 1981: 445).

In terms of nouns referring to women, exceptions to the NGP generally constitute neuter nouns denoting either young women, e.g. das Mädchen, das Gör, or pejorative terms for women based on factors such as their culturally-determined ‘sexual undesirability’ because of old age, e.g. das Weib, das Reff ‘old woman [pej.]’, or perceived behaviour, e.g. das Luder, ‘wanton woman [pej.]’ (Zubin & Köpcke 1981: 445, Köpcke & Zubin 1996: 483; Mills 1986: 16).

The NGP also states that nouns denoting young humans and young animals are neuter, e.g., das Kind (child), das Küken (chick) (e.g. Zubin & Köpcke 1981: 444f., Köpcke 1982: 77, Flämig 1991: 456, Eisenberg 1999: 156, Hickey 2000: 630, Hoberg 2004: 102, Chan 2005: 296, Weinrich 2007: 336).

NGP has not allocated gender to a number of animals, since it is mostly restricted to domestic animals whose biological gender is viewed as of cultural importance, e.g., die Kuh. Other

animals whose gender is not viewed as of any cultural importance can take any of the other genders (Zubin & Köpcke 1981: 445, Köpcke & Zubin 1996: 483; Mills 1986: 16).

Big wild animals which tend to have human-like characteristics tend to have a masculine gender, e.g., ‘der Affe, der Löwe or der Elefant’, while small animals with less human-like characteristics for instance insects, tend to have feminine gender, e.g., ‘die Fliege’, (Köpcke & Zubin, 1996)

2.3 Gender-Case interaction amongst articles and demonstrative articles.

In singular, German marks gender on the determiners and prenominal adjectives/participles as well as in certain appositional structures within the noun phrase (internally controlled gender agreement), and on personal, relative, and possessive pronouns outside the noun phrase (externally controlled gender agreement). In the plural, gender is neutralized in all contexts.

Adjectives are only inflected in the attributive function, not as predicates (Schriefers and Teruel).

For instance, in ‘das Haus ist groß’, adjective ‘groß’ is used as a predicate, hence not inflected.

On the other hand, in ‘das große Haus’ the adjective is used in the attributive form hence it is inflected.

The noun determines the morphology of the preceding articles (determiners) and adjectives. The determiners can be definite articles, indefinite articles (also possessive and negative articles) and demonstrative articles. The definite and the demonstrative determiners are gender-marked and

these are also dependent on the case. The table below shows interaction between the inflections of the definite and demonstrative determiners and the case markings.

Table 2.1. Gender-case interactions of the definite determiners

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	der	Die	das	Die
Accusative	den	Die	das	Die
Dative	dem	Der	dem	den +n
Genitive	des +(e)s	Der	des+(e)s	Der

Table. 2.1. Gender–Case interaction of the definite determiners.

The determiners of a noun vary depending on both the case and gender of the noun. In the nominative case, the masculine nouns have the determiner ‘der’, the feminine take the determiner ‘die’ and the neuter have the determiner ‘das’. All the nouns in plural take determiner ‘die’ in the plural. Whereas the feminine and the neuter retain their determiners in the accusative case, the masculine nouns change the determiner to ‘den’. Masculine and the neuter genders then change their determiners to ‘dem’ in the dative case, while the feminine gender change to ‘der’. The plurals in the dative case take the ‘den’ determiner in all genders and in this case, the noun also in most cases take the inflection ‘n’. In the genitive case, both the masculine and the neuter nouns take the determiner ‘des’ followed by an inflection of the noun, while the feminine and the plural take the determiner ‘der’ with no inflection of the noun.

Table 2.2 Gender-case interactions of the demonstrative articles

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	dieser	Diese	dieses	Diese
Accusative	diesen	Diese	dieses	Diese
Dative	diesem	Dieser	diesem	diesen +n
Genitive	dieses +(e)s	Dieser	dieses +(e)s	Dieser

Table. 2.2 Gender-case interactions of the demonstrative articles

Indefinite, possessive and negative determiners take the same suffixes as those of the demonstrative determiners both in the dative and the genitive cases. The determiners are however not inflected in the nominative case in the masculine and neuter gender, and also in the accusative neuter gender.

Table 2.f. below shows the suffixes of indefinite determiners, which will also apply to the possessive and negative articles.

Table 2.3 Inflections of the indefinite determiners

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Nominative	ein	Eine	ein
Accusative	einen	Eine	ein
Dative	einem	Einer	einem
Genitive	eines +(e)s	Einer	eines +(e)s

Table 2.3. Inflections of the indefinite determiners

Whereas the indefinite determiner is only possible in singular, the possessive and the negative determiners are possible in plural. In this case, they take the suffixes ‘e’ in the nominative and in the accusative cases, but ‘en +n’ in the dative case, and ‘er’ in the genitive case.

From the above tables, it is noted that there is a strong correlation between the neuter gender and the masculine gender, while there is some correlation between the feminine gender and the plural

2.4 Gender-Case interaction in adjectives.

As earlier stated, pronominal adjectives are inflected, i.e., they take a suffix. These inflections can either be strong inflections or weak inflections. In the rare cases, where pronominal adjectives are not preceded by any determiner, they take a strong inflection, meaning that they are gender-marked.

The table below shows strong inflections of pronominal adjectives that are not preceded by any determiner. The adjective ‘klein’ has been used as an example.

Table 2.4. Strong inflections of pronominal adjectives.

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	kleiner	kleine	kleines	kleine
Accusative	kleinen	kleine	kleines	kleine
Dative	kleinem	kleiner	kleinem	kleinen+n
Genitive	kleinen	kleiner	kleinen	kleiner

Table 2.4. Strong inflections of pronominal adjectives.

Adjectives that are preceded by an indefinite determiner or negative and possessive articles also have strong inflections close to those of pronominal adjectives not preceded by any determiner in the nominative and in the accusative cases,(Rehn). The difference is in the plural, dative and the genitive forms. Whereas the indefinite determiner is not possible in the plural form, the pronominal adjectives preceded by the possessive and the negative articles in the plural, dative and genitive forms carry the suffix ‘en’, a weak inflection as shown in the table below. The possessive article ‘mein’ is used as an example.

Table 2.5. Inflections of adjectives preceded by the possessive and negative articles.

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	mein kleiner	meine kleine	mein kleines	meine kleinen
Accusative	meinen kleinen	meine kleine	mein kleines	meine kleinen
Dative	meinem kleinen	meiner kleinen	meinem kleinen	meinen kleinen
Genitive	meines kleinen	meiner kleinen	meinem kleinen	meiner kleinen

Table 2.5. Inflections of adjectives preceded by negative or possessive articles

In the case of demonstrative and the definite determiners, there is a weak paradigm comprising only the endings 'e' and 'en'. The 'e' is found in all the genders in the nominative and neuter and feminine in the accusative case. The suffix 'en' is found in the accusative masculine, all the genders in the dative and genitive cases. The plurals also take the 'en' suffix. The adjective 'klein' will be used as an example.

Table 2.6. below show the inflections of adjectives preceded by definite and demonstrative articles.

Table 2.6. Inflection of adjectives preceded by the definite articles

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	der kleine	die kleine	das kleine	die kleinen
Accusative	den kleinen	die kleine	das kleine	die kleinen
Dative	dem kleinen	der kleinen	dem kleinen	den kleinen
Genitive	des kleinen	der kleinen	des kleinen	der kleinen

Table 2.6. Inflection of adjectives preceded by definite articles

2.5. Gender-case interaction in pronouns

Gender assignment in personal pronouns is only in the 3rd person singular. All the other pronouns are not gender-marked. In this respect, we have ‘natural gender assignment’ and ‘grammatical gender assignment’. Natural gender assignment refers to biological gender of animate nouns while grammatical gender is in accordance with gender assignment principles. Personal pronouns are classified as strong pronouns and weak pronouns. Strong pronouns are identical to the definite determiner that they represent, and they are commonly used in the spoken German, e.g.,

Example 4: Definite determiners

Der Rock ist schön, aber **der** ist zu lang.

(**The** skirt is beautiful, but **it** is too long)

The strong pronoun is also inflected depending on the case, e.g.,

Den Rock finde ich schön, aber **der** ist zu lang

(I find **the** skirt beautiful, but **it** is too long)

In this case, the determiner is in the accusative case, whereas the strong pronoun is in the nominative case.

The strong pronouns are also used as relative pronouns, but relative pronouns were not identified in the data that was analysed, hence the details may not be relevant in this research.

The weak pronouns take the form 'er, sie, es' (he, she, it), e.g.

Example 5: Weak pronouns.

- a. **Der** Tisch kostet 150 Euro. **Er** ist teuer. (**The** table costs 150 Euros. **It** is expensive)
- b. **Das** Buch kostet 150 Euro. **Es** ist teuer. (**The** book costs 150 Euros. **It** is expensive)

- c. **Die** Tasche kostet 150 Euro. **Sie** ist teuer. (**The** bag costs 150 Euros. **It** is expensive)

The personal pronouns also take a different form depending on the case as illustrated.

Table 2.7. Personal pronouns in accordance to gender and case

	Nominative	Accusative	Dative
Masculine	Er	Ihn	Ihm
Feminine	sie	sie	ihr
Neuter	es	es	ihm

Table 2.7. Personal pronouns in accordance to gender and case.

Just as in other forms of gender markings, the feminine and the neuter have no change of form from nominative to accusative i.e., the nominative case and the accusative cases are identical.

The possessive pronouns however behave differently in the sense that the gender markings use both the internal and external controller. The internal controller is the possessor and this determines the stem of the possessive pronoun, e.g., ihr (her), 'sein'(his/its). 'Ihr' is used for the feminine and plural stem, while 'sein' is the masculine and neutral stem. The suffix will then be determined by the external controllers, which include gender of the possessor and the case in the

sentence. E.g., **Ihr** Wagen ist neu.’ (her vehicle is new) and ‚Sie fährt **ihren** neuen Wagen.‘ (She is driving her new vehicle). In the second sentence, the possessive article takes the ending ‘en’ because the possessor is masculine and it is in the accusative case.

3.CHAPTER THREE: PRESENTATION OF ANALYSED DATA

3.0 Introduction

This chapter includes the data collection mechanisms that were used by the researcher and the summary of the data collected. Data collection involved translation of a text (attached at the end of the document), from English to German. From the data, sample errors were identified and grouped according to the source of the errors.

Feedback from the questionnaire (see the appendix) was used to back up some of the assertions that had been made in the course of this research, e.g., when the researcher says that the grammatical gender is challenging to none native speakers, did the German language students find it so or was there a contradiction?

3.1 The Data

The researcher used a sample group from Kenyatta University 4th year students, who had done at least one course in translation. In doing so, the researcher seeks to identify and analyse errors arising from the fact that the one of the languages has grammatical gender markings while the other does not. Thirty-four 4th year students translated a reflective text. All had learnt German for at least 7 years and had not worked as translators prior to this.

The researcher went further and used a questionnaire, to get a clear view of the experience of the sample that translated the text and particularly the areas they found difficult when it came to translation from English to German.

3.1.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see the appendix) was used in order to shed light on the level of difficulty encountered by the German language students, especially when it came to translation from a language without grammatical gender markings to one with an elaborate gender system.

The pie chart below illustrates the level of difficulty of the grammatical gender as stated by the German language students in translating the text.

Fig 3.1 Difficulty in Grammatical Gender according to the sample.

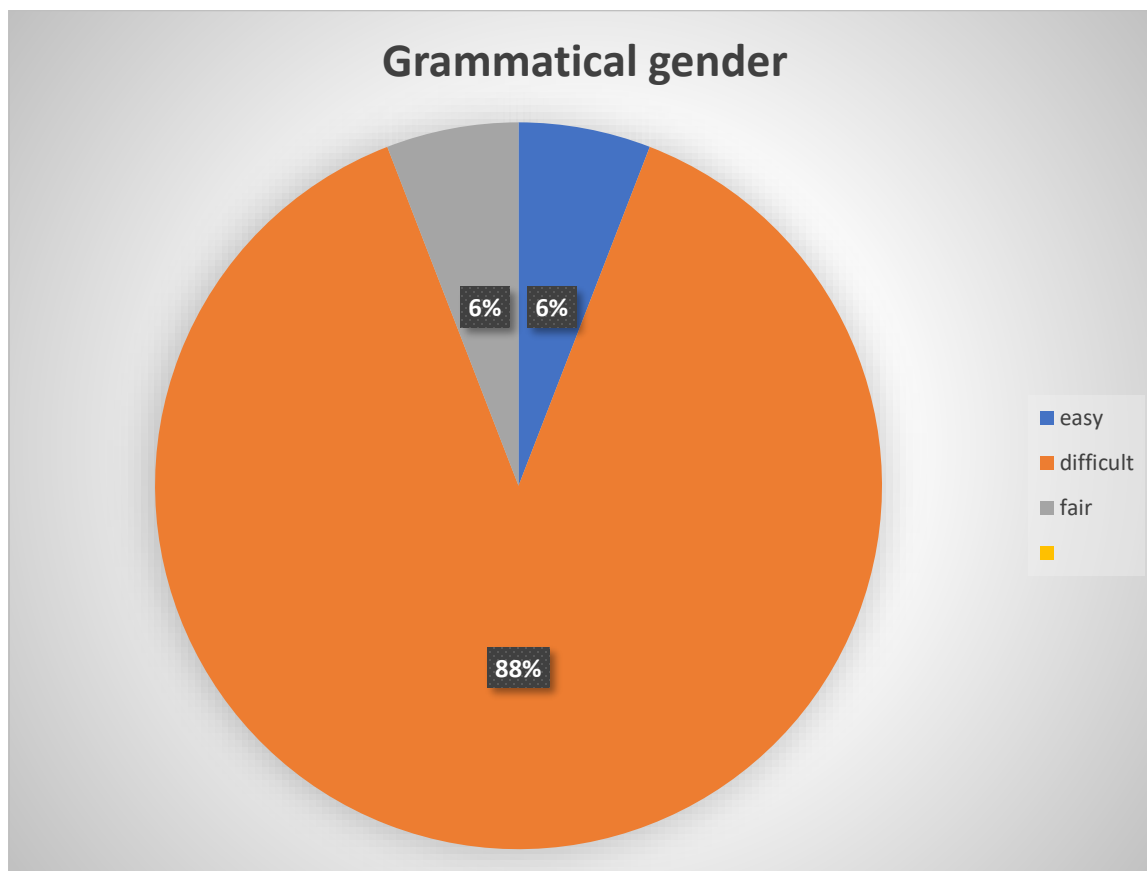


Fig 3.1 Difficulty of grammatical gender according to the sample

The question on the level of difficulty of the gender system was open-ended, but in summary, 88% (30 out of 34) of the students, using words that imply the same, stated that they found the gender system difficult, some used the words like confusing, others complicated and they said that grammatical gender complicates the language even more. 2 out of the 34 students said it was easy, while 2 said it was easy but the nouns were too many to master each of their gender. This was interpreted to mean that they found it fair. However, it is important to note that even those who stated that grammatical gender was easy or fair also had errors in most of the aspects that were tested in the translation.

The students were also asked which direction they preferred to translate; English to German or from German to English. The pie chart below illustrates the percentage of students who would prefer to translate from either language.

Fig 3.2 Students' preferred direction of translation

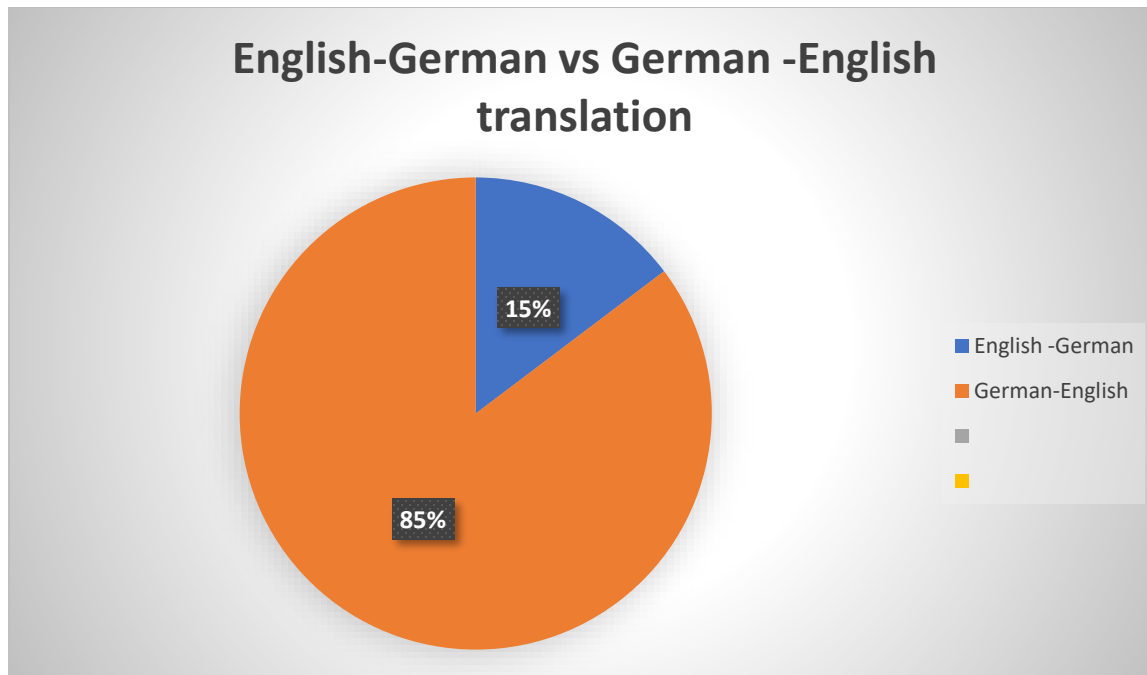


Fig. 3.2. Preferences in the direction of translation according to the sample under investigation

On the way the students preferred to translate, 85% (29 out of 34) stated that they find it easier to translate from German to English, due to long exposure to English compared to German. In an open-ended question, they said it was easier because they were well acquainted with the English vocabulary and they are also familiar with the sentence structures in English. Most of them seemed to imply that German had more grammatical rules to be followed hence they did not feel comfortable with the language.

Interestingly, even the five who preferred to translate from English to German gave a similar reason for it. They stated that they would rather translate from a language they understand best, because if one doesn't understand, then they cannot translate.

It is important to note that even those who stated that they found the gender markings and translation into German easy or fair also had some errors in translation, for instance, one allocated 'Leben'(life) a feminine gender, 'meine Leben' instead of a neutral gender; 'Monat'(month) a feminine gender, 'eine Monat' instead of a masculine gender; 'Zeit'(time) a neutral gender, 'ein Zeit' amongst others, meaning the translator also had difficulties in grammatical gender.

Grammatical gender is not the only area that the students found difficult. There were also some other areas that the students described as difficult to translate, but those are not subjects of this research.

3.2 The Translation Text

The translation text served to identify the specific errors committed by the students. Aspects that were identified included errors involving:

- a) Wrong assignment of gender markings, i.e., in terms of articles (selection).
- b) Errors arising from failure to adjust gender marking as a result of case (misordering of elements)
- c) Leaving out of articles and inflections (omission)
- d) Errors arising from wrong inflections on adjectives (selection).
- e) Errors arising from wrong assignment of personal pronouns (selection)
- f) Errors arising from wrong inflections on possessive and negative articles (selection).

3.3 Individual distribution of errors committed by each sample

From the translation texts that were analysed, the researcher was able to identify the errors the sample committed, and the errors were grouped according to the type of the error then such errors were counted.

Table 3.1 shows the number of errors each sample committed.

Table 3.1 Distribution of errors committed by each sample in accordance to type

Type of error The sample	WG	WGC	OAA	WIA	WPP	Total no of errors per sample
Sample 1	2	4	4	2	4	16
Sample 2	3	2	5	2	5	17
Sample 3	3	2	4	2	4	15
Sample 4	5	3	4	3	2	17
Sample 5	3	4	2	2	3	14
Sample 6	2	2	3	2	3	12
Sample 7	5	1	1	1	3	11
Sample 8	3	1	3	-	2	9

Sample 9	2	-	2	1	1	6
Sample 10	2	7	1	3	1	14
Sample 11	3	3	1	-	4	11
Sample 12	4	5	2	2	6	19
Sample 13	1	2	3	4	5	15
Sample 14	4	2	2	2	2	12
Sample 15	9	2	-	2	5	18
Sample 16	4	2	3	2	2	13
Sample 17	1	4	-	1	4	10
Sample 18	2	3	-	1	4	10
Sample 19	2	2	2	3	4	13
Sample 20	1	2	1	2	3	9
Sample 21	-	3	-	5	3	11
Sample 22	4	3	2	-	2	11
Sample 23	6	-	-	2	3	11
Sample 24	1	4	1	-	4	10
Sample 25	3	4	1	2	4	14

Sample 26	2	6	1	-	-	9
Sample 27	2	3	3	2	3	13
Sample 28	2	1	1	2	2	8
Sample 29	2	4	2	-	-	8
Sample 30	2	4	2	1	2	11
Sample 31	1	1	2	4	3	11
Sample 32	4	2	2	3	3	14
Sample 33	4	1	3	1	3	12
Sample 34	2	2	1	2	4	11
Total no. of errors per aspect	96	91	63	61	103	

Table 3.1 Distribution of errors committed by each sample in accordance to type

KEY

WG- *Wrong gender marking*

WGC- *Wrong assignment of gender as a result of case marking*

OAA- *Omissions of articles and their inflections*

WIA- *Wrong inflections of adjectives.*

WPP- *Wrong assignment of personal pronouns and possessive articles.*

From the above data analysed, it is evident that each sample committed errors in most of the aspects that were tested. There was a total of 414 errors counted, arising from aspects that had something to do with the grammatical gender of nouns. From the sample under research, the majority of errors arose from wrong inflection of the possessive pronouns and personal pronouns, which amounted to 103 out of 414 errors, which was 24.88% of the total number of all the errors committed.

The least number of errors arose from wrong inflections of adjectives. 61 errors of this type were counted, which was 14.73% of all the errors that were committed.

Individual aspects of these errors are discussed in the following sections, whereby the researcher looked at each aspect and also gave examples of the errors committed by the sample.

3.2.1 Wrong assignment of gender markings

From the target text, it was observed that at least all the translations except one had error arising from wrong assignment of gender markings. There were a total of 96 errors out of a total of 414 errors, which was 23.18% of all the errors committed.

Examples of this are shown on the table below:

Table 3.2 Example of errors arising from wrong gender assignment

Source Text (English)	Target 1 (from German Language Students)	Correct translation in accordance with standard grammar
The centre	die Zentrum	das Zentrum
My parents	mein Eltern	meine Eltern
The Change	das Veränderung	die Veränderung
A funny little guy	ein lustig kleines Person	eine kleine lustige Person
Life was sweet	die Leben war süß	das Leben war süß
To be a good brother	eine gute Bruder sein	ein guter Bruder sein

Table 3.2 Errors arising from wrong assignment of gender.

From the table above, it is clear that the errors that have been committed arose from the wrong assignment of the grammatical gender, e.g., in the German language, all the nouns in plural form have a gender identical to the feminine gender “die” hence, my parents should be “meine Eltern” as opposed to “mein Eltern”.

The word ‘Veränderung’ will take the feminine gender since most of the nouns with the suffix “ung” usually take the feminine gender. On the other hand, “Person” regardless of whether the referent is male or female will always take the feminine gender.

‘Bruder’ semantically refers to a male sibling hence the gender remains male even in the German language.

This type of error was committed by 97% of the sample tested, meaning that almost everyone who translated the text had errors of this kind.

3.2.2 Errors arising from failure to adjust gender marking as a result of case

The grammatical gender in German also influences the case markings on nouns. If the case markings are not adjusted correctly or if one fails to adjust them at all may lead to ambiguity. In all the translated texts except 2, there were errors arising from failure to adjust gender markings according to case. The total number of errors arising from this aspect were 91, which constituted 21.98% of the total number of errors committed.

The table below shows instances where the students failed to inflect the articles correctly according to case:

Table 3.3 Examples of errors arising from gender-case mismatch

Source language (English)	Target language 1 (translation by German Language Students)	Correct inflection in accordance with standard grammar
From my mother	von meine Mutter	von meiner Mutter
In his growth	bei seinem Entwicklung	bei seiner Entwicklung
Because he developed the obnoxious habit....	weil er einer widerliche Gewohnheit entwickelte.....	weil er eine widerliche Gewohnheit entwickelte
Despite my anger....	trotz meine Ärger	trotz meines Ärgers
With my parents	mit meine Eltern	mit meinen Eltern
Despite my anger....	trotz mein Ärger	trotz meines Ärgers

Table 3.3. Errors arising from gender-case mismatch.

From the table, the students have committed errors arising from uncertainties in the inflections of articles arising from case markings.

In cases where prepositions were present e.g., von, bei, mit...the students seemed to overlook the fact that these are usually followed by the dative case hence allocating the wrong inflection on the gender marking, e.g., ‘from my mother’ (von meine Mutter). There are instances where they seem aware of that, but the gender allocation was wrong, e.g., in his growth (bei seinem Entwicklung) instead of (bei seiner Entwicklung). ‘Entwicklung’ has a feminine gender

marking, which takes the inflection 'er' in the dative case. Similarly, the preposition 'trotz' (despite of) takes the genitive case. Since 'Ärger' has a masculine gender marking, both the article and the noun will be inflected as shown on the table above (trotz meines Ärgers).

3.2.3 Leaving out the gender markings (omission)

In some instances, one found that the inexperienced translator had left out gender markings where they are supposed to be present. This affected the pragmatics of the language since it does not sound normal to a native speaker. Apart from the instances where there were combinations of nouns with different gender markings e.g., the case of 'my mom and dad' the majority of the texts had assigned a gender to nouns, whether correctly or incorrectly. 5 samples out of 34 that were analysed did not have an error of this type. However, this aspect still presents a challenge to the students, since 63 errors of this type were committed. This is 15.12% of all the errors. The table below shows instances where the students omitted the gender markings.

Table 3.4 Errors of omission

Source language	Target language 1 (from inexperienced translator)	Correct translation
my mom and dad....	meine Mutter und Vater..	meine Mutter und mein Vater.....
life was	leben war	das Leben war...
...by parents	...von Eltern	...von den Eltern.
...change in dynamicsärgert mich über Veränderung....	

Table. 3.5 Errors arising from leaving out the gender markings

In German, gender markings are used in articles in some instances where articles would be left out in English. In English, the sentence e.g., ‘life was good’ is correct as opposed to ‘the life was good’. In German, it is more natural to include the article ‘Das Leben war gut’.

Because ‘Vater’ and ‘Mutter’ have different gender markings, should they appear in the same sentence joined using a conjunction or otherwise, both gender marking should be indicated i.e., Meine Mutter und mein Vater, otherwise it might be seen as a misrepresentation of the gender markings.

This type of error was committed by 29 out of 34 of the sample, meaning that it was committed by 85% of the sample.

3.2.4 Wrong inflections on adjectives

Inflections of adjectives posed the least challenges according to the sample collected, despite the many rules governing the allocation of a single inflection. In 28 out of the 34 samples, such errors were evident in the translations that were analysed. These were 61% of the samples that were analysed. The total number of errors of this type were 61, which constituted 14.73% of the total number of errors committed.

Table 3.d shows some of these errors arising from wrong inflections on adjectives sampled from the target text of the inexperienced translators.

Table 3.5. Wrong inflections of adjectives

Source Text	Target Text 1	Correct inflections
..no realistic problems	..kein realistisch Problemekeine realistischen Probleme
A funny little childein lustige klein Kind	..ein lustiges kleines Kind,
Developed an abnoxious habit	..hat ein abscheulich Gewohnheit entwickelt.	...hat eine abscheuliche Gewohnheit entwickelt.
...is my younger brother	...ist mein junges Bruder	...ist mein junger Bruder
..no realistic problems	..keine realistische Probleme	keine realistischen Probleme
..a little funny guyein klein lustig Person	...eine kleine lustige Person

Table 3.5 Errors arising from wrong inflection of adjectives

For one to get the inflections right, one must consider the gender marking, the case, the kind of article used if present, and whether the noun is in singular or plural form. In the case where the translator translated a sentence segment as ‘kein realistisch Probleme’, and ‘hat ein abscheulich Gewohnheit entwickelt’ and ‘ein klein lustig Person’, the translator did not consider any of the syntactical and morphological rules, hence adapted the way English treats adjectives- without inflections.

The researcher also observed errors that could be classified as errors arising from random assignment of gender markings and hence wrong inflections. In the case of an error such as ‘ist mein junges Bruder’, one would attribute the error to a mix-up in articles and inflections of adjectives of the nouns of masculine and neuter gender. The translator allocated the correct gender marking on the possessive pronoun but failed to apply the correct inflection on the adjective that preceded the noun. The translator may have not acquired the concept of adjective endings in relation to gender properly.

3.2.5 Erroneous assignment of personal pronouns and possessive pronouns

In German, only pronouns in the 3rd person singular (er, sie, es) are gendered. The rest of the pronouns have no gender markings. Gender markings affect personal pronouns in various ways and just like the inflections on adjectives and articles, the pronouns assigned depend on the gender, case, number (whether singular or plural). These errors arose from a number of factors including wrong allocation of gender marking to the possessor, or allocation of the wrong inflection to the possession, or a combination of both. 103 errors of this type were detected in the

sample, portraying this aspect as the most challenging to the sample. This was 24.88% of the number of errors numerated.

Table 3.7. Shows the errors sampled, arising from erroneous assignment of gender to the personal and possessive pronouns.

Table 3.6 Erroneous assignment of personal pronouns and possessive pronouns

Source language	Target language 1	Correct pronouns
	mit ihre(Grants) Zunahme....	mit seiner Zunahme.....
I enjoyed his hero-worship	Ich fand ihre (Grants) Heldinverehrung gut	Ich fand seine Heldenverehrung gut.
...smirk on his face	Freude an ihrem (Grants) Gesicht.	Freude an seinem (Grants) Gesicht.

Table. 3.6 Errors arising from wrong assignment of possessive and personal pronouns.

In the table 3.e above, it was observed that the wrong assignment of personal pronouns was not only due to the gender-markings, but might have also been influenced by other morphological and syntactical gaps in the acquisition of the German language, which are not subjects of investigation in this research. These may include prepositions, verbs and also case markings, and also inflections on the possessive and personal pronouns. Such include: ‘er folgte mich herum’, ‘mir zu imitieren’. The Verb ,folgen‘ is used with the dative case while on the other

hand, the verb 'imitieren' is used with the accusative case. However, errors arising from the wrong assignment of gender were also noted, e.g., 'Ich fand **ihre** (Grants) Heldenverehrung gut'. According to the context, Grant is a brother, which means that the correct possessive pronoun to use is 'sein(his)' as opposed to the one the translator has used, 'ihr(her)'.

3.2.6. Errors arising from wrong inflections on the possessive and negative articles

Like adjectives, the possessive and the negative articles are inflected, since the gender markings and the case markings are represented in them. This means that depending on the case and the grammatical gender of the noun, the articles bear a specific inflection. In the case of nominative, masculine and neuter genders, these will have no inflections, while in the plural and feminine gender, they will have an 'e'. Accusative neutral, feminine and plural will be inflected just like those in the nominative case, but the masculine gender will have the inflection 'en'. In the dative case, the masculine nouns and the neuter nouns will have the inflection 'em', while the feminine and the plural will have 'er' and 'en' respectively. The genitive on the other hand has 2 possible inflections: 'er' for the feminine and plural and 'es' for the masculine and the plural.

Table 3.f shows some of the errors sampled arising from wrong inflections on the negative and the possessive articles.

Table 3.7 Wrong inflections of the possessive and negative articles.

Source language	Target language 1	Correct inflections
Despite my anger...	trotz meine Ärger	trotz meines Ärgers.
From my mother	von meine Mutter	von meiner Mutter
	Probleme seiner Wachstum	Probleme seines Wachstums
...has no Problems	..hat kein Sorge	...hat keine Sorge

Table 3.7 Errors arising from wrong inflections of negative and possessive articles

Errors as listed above are not caused by one isolated aspect, but a number of aspects may cause an error to occur, e.g., in the case of „trotz meine Ärger” it is probable that the students did not know the gender marking of the noun, or did not know its inflection in the genitive case or did not know that the preposition „trotz” is used with the genitive case. Nevertheless, presence of a more elaborate gender and case systems in one of the working languages complicated the matters further.

In summary, the table 3.8 below shows the percentage of students who committed a certain error in specific aspects of grammatical gender.

Table 3.8 Distribution of the sample that committed the errors in percentage.

Aspect	Actual no. out of 34 samples	No. in percentage
Wrong gender marking (selection)	33	97%
Wrong assignment of gender as a result of case marking (misordering of elements)	32	94%
Omissions or articles and their inflections	29	85%
Wrong inflections of adjectives	28	82%
Wrong assignment of personal pronouns and possessive pronouns	32	94%

Table. 3.8 Summary of distribution of errors committed.

From the data above, it is observed that the German Language Students had gaps as far as grammatical gender was concerned, since majority committed errors in each of the aspects under investigation.

The chart below is an illustration of the percentage of the students who committed errors in each of the aspects.

Figure 3.3 The percentage of the sample that committed each type of error

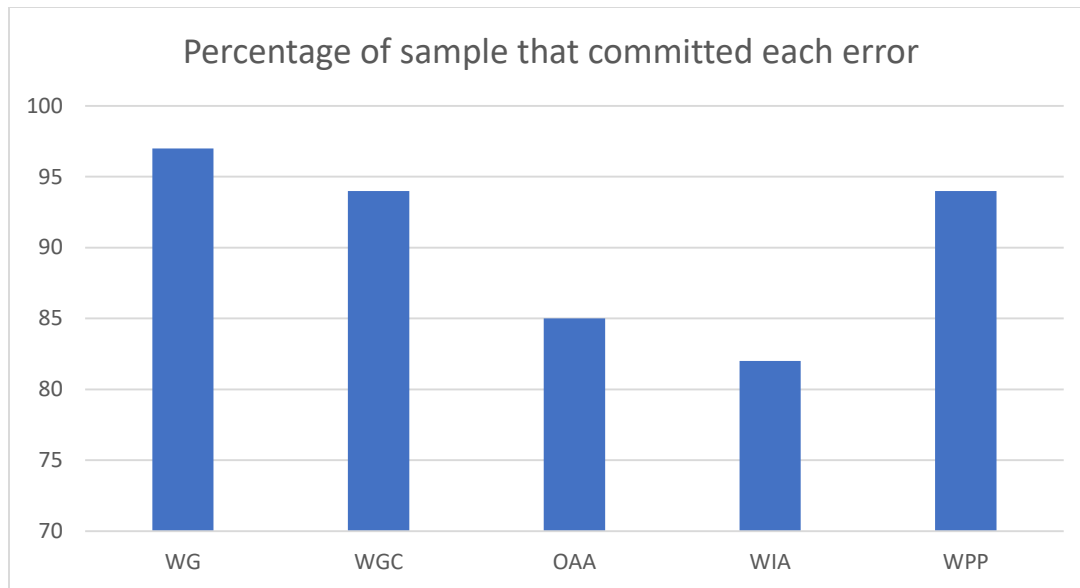


Fig 3.1 The percentage of the sample that committed each type of error.

KEY

WG- *Wrong gender marking*

WGC- *Wrong assignment of gender as a result of case marking*

OAA- *Omissions of articles and their inflections*

WIA- *Wrong inflections of adjectives.*

WPP- *Wrong assignment of personal pronouns and possessive articles.*

From the findings, the researcher observed that all the students committed errors when it came to the aspects of grammatical gender that were tested, which include; wrong assignment of gender marking, wrong inflections as a result of case markings, and wrong inflections of adjectives,

omissions of articles and inflections and also wrong assignment of personal pronouns. Although not all the students committed them, it is observed that a very high percentage of the them had difficulties in assigning the correct gender markings or inflections.

CHAPTER 4: DATA DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

Error analysis theory, Stephen Pit Corder 1970, on which this research is based, describes four steps that should be followed in the process of analysing data. These steps have been outlined in Chapter one. In this chapter, the discussion revolves around how these steps were applied in this research.

4.1 Steps taken to analyse the errors

The sample language was collected from the 4th year students at Kenyatta university. This was purposeful sampling, since one of the researcher's objectives was to analyse errors made amongst a specific group of people. 34 students translated a text from English to German. This sample was thought to be a representative of wider population of other students of the German language in Kenya.

This aimed at identifying the challenges that a German language student would face when translating from a language without grammatical gender into a language with an elaborate gender system. This was done in a controlled environment, where the students were given a timeline of 1 ½ to 2 hours to translate. This timeline was necessary in order to acquire credible data. In addition, the students filled in a questionnaire, where amongst other information, they stated that they found gender markings in German quite difficult to learn especially because the numerous nouns found in a language.

Error analysis theory distinguishes between errors and mistakes. Errors are said to be consistent in that even if the translator is asked to repeat the translation, the same error would still occur.

A mistake is on the other hand could be self-corrected, since it could be caused by an oversight.

Both errors and mistakes were identified in the Target text 1 (translations from the German Language students). In some cases, it was not easy to tell whether it was a mistake or an error, but since there was deviation from what the standard grammatical rules dictate, the researcher treated it as an error. Errors identified included:

‘...war **der** Zentrum...’ (...was the centre....)

,... bei **seinem** Entwicklung‘ (in his development)

,...war **eine** komische kurze Kerl‘ (..was a funny short guy)

The word ‘Zentrum’ in German has a neutral gender marking, hence ‘das Zentrum’.

,Entwicklung’ on the other hand has a feminine gender marking, hence when one uses the preposition ‘bei’ then it takes the dative case, hence it should be ‘bei seiner Entwicklung’. The noun ‘Kerl’ takes a masculine gender and in the sentence, it is in the nominative case meaning that the correct inflections are ‘...war **ein** komischer kurzer Kerl’.

Some misrepresentations of gender markings could be considered as mistakes, for instance in the case of a translator, who at some point writes ‘mein Mutter’ and at another instance on the same

text, the translator writes ‘meine Mutter’, which is the correct gender marking. It can also be an error arising from random assignment of gender markings.

Ellis (1997), who is a proponent of Error Analysis Theory classified errors into 4 categories namely:

- a) Omission
- b) selection
- c) addition
- d) misordering of elements

4.1.1 Errors of omission

These are errors arising from missing elements in the translated text. Some of such errors arose when the student left out the gender markings or used one gender marking to represent two nouns of different gender. The most common example that was found in most of the translations was; ‘meine Mutter und Vater’ (my mother and father). Biologically and grammatically, the two nouns belong to different genders, but since possessive articles in English do not distinguish gender the possessive article ‘my’ is a representative of both father and mother. German on the other hand will inflect the possessive articles differently depending on their grammatical and sometimes the biological gender, hence the sentence segment should read ‘meine Mutter und mein Vater’. This type of error may not affect the meaning of the text, and anyone reading it understand what is meant, but since it is a deviation from the standard grammatical rule, it affects the quality of the translation.

4.1.2 Selection

These are errors arising from the choice of elements. This was a common error since in most of the translations, such an error appeared in one way or another. Some arose from choosing the wrong inflections on adjectives, wrong gender markings, wrong personal pronouns e.t.c.

Examples of such errors identified included: 'ein kleines Person' instead of 'eine kleine Person' (wrong inflection on adjectives); 'Mitte ihrem Welt' instead of 'Mitte seiner Welt' (a combination of wrong gender marking, wrong case marking and wrong assignment of personal pronoun) e.t.c.

4.1.3 Errors of addition.

These are errors committed when a person adds segments or parts of segments or elements that are not necessary, or are incorrect to a text. From the translated texts that were analysed, there were a few errors of addition identified e.g., 'zur ihm' which the researcher thought the student meant 'zu ihm' (to him). The preposition 'zur' is a short form of 'zu der' which has a gender marking, which is not necessary in this case since the pronoun is already gender marked. This also is a misrepresentation of gender, since it contains two different gender markings. There were also similar cases where a sample wrote phrases e.g., 'beim mir' or 'zum ihm', where the sample used additional gender markings.

4.1.4 Misordering of elements.

This error involves misplacing elements and placing them in the wrong place. This was identified by the researcher as a common error amongst the scripts that were analysed.

Examples include:

‘Ich fragte er...’. From the context, one can tell who asked whom. It was the writer who asked the brother, but this sentence in isolation would cause ambiguity. The subject in the sentence should be in the nominative case, while the object takes the accusative case. The articles and pronouns of the masculine gender are inflected or are different from those in the nominative case. In the example, it seems that both pronouns are in the nominative case, meaning it is not clear who asked whom.

In another translation, sample no. 12 translated ‘bei meinen Eltern’ as ‘bein meine Eltern’. In this case, the ‘n’ is supposed to inflect the possessive pronoun not the preposition.

4.2 Explanation of Errors

According to Ellis and Barkhuizen, error explanation involves determining their source in order to account for them. They classified errors into two categories, which are:

- a) Errors of performance
- b) Errors of competence.

Errors of performance do not indicate lack of competency in a language, but in most cases, they depend on the sequence of mental processes that occur during encoding and decoding of

language signals. These can be classified as mistakes, since the translator can easily correct themselves.

Errors of competency originate from the fact that one or more aspects of a language have not been properly acquired. Most of the errors that were identified in the translations were errors of competency, since some were consistent and they were repeated by more than one student in different forms. An example of these, is where the students used the wrong inflections of adjectives consistently, and at least 100% (see table 3.g in Chapter 3) of the sample had errors of competency

CHAPTER 5

5.0. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, a summary of the research project is made and recommendations for further research on the issue of effects of gender markings on the quality of translation is made. An evaluation, on whether the researcher was able to meet the objectives of the research was also made and the hypotheses were also tested.

5.1 SUMMARY

In line with observations by other scholars, this research also comes to a conclusion that translation from a language without grammatical gender into a language with an elaborate gender system is not easy especially if the language with the more elaborate gender system is introduced to the students or learners later in life. The concept of grammatical gender is really problematic for students to retrieve automatically through the cognitive processes.

From the data collected and analysed, it was evident that the sample under investigation, which acted as a representative of what the students of the German language, had a problem with grammatical gender markings in German. All of them had several errors in most aspects of the gender markings (see table 3.g in Chapter 3). Since gender markings affect many aspects of the language, it is however not easy draw a line between mastery of gender markings and the mastery of the other aspects. But one can conclusively say that the fact that gender markings exist in the first place in one of the working languages, contributes greatly to the errors.

German grammatical system follows certain principles to allocate gender to nouns, hence does not follow an opaque gender assignment system (Zubin & Köpcke 1981: 445, Köpcke & Zubin 1996: 483; Mills 1986: 16). In this research, there was however no evidence that the students had any knowledge of those principles. The principles in themselves are quite complex, and many factors have to be recalled and considered, in order to determine the gender of a new noun that one comes across. There are also many exceptions to the rules making it more complex. Grammatical gender can also not be learnt in isolation because it touches other aspects of the language e.g., possessive articles, pronouns, case markings e.t.c.

5.2 Testing the hypothesis

There were 3 hypotheses for this research as stated below:

- a) The more elaborate grammatical gender system in German could be challenging to a student of the German language.
- b) The similarities and differences in gender assignment between the two languages could lead to either positive or negative transfer.
- c) Some of the errors made during translation could affect the meaning of the target text, while others may only affect the presentation of the text.

The first hypothesis was proven correct to the extent that in all the aspects of grammatical gender markings that were analysed, all the students had errors relating to the aspects.

The same was confirmed by the questionnaire, whereby 88% of the sample confirmed that the gender markings are not easily predictable for them. 6% of them wrote that they found grammatical gender fair, while 6% stated that they found grammatical gender easy (see chart 3.a.in chapter 3) It was not clear what criteria they used to assign gender to the nouns which they assigned wrong gender.

The second hypothesis was also to some extent true where the animate nouns especially those referring to human beings retained their biological gender. This made gender assignment easier for the students. There were only 2 errors of the sample tested that did not get the inflection of the gender marking referring to 'Bruder' correct, meaning that 94% got it right. This was considered as a case of positive transfer. Now that the determiners carry information about the gender and case simultaneously(Sera et al. 2002), one may have missed one aspect but not the other, e.g., the inflection on the adjective.

Some exceptional instances, where a certain biological gender could be assigned an inanimate gender e.g., 'das Mädchen', were not found in the data collected. It is also important to note that not every gender marking referring to animate nouns was correct. This could be attributed to other aspects that function in tandem with the gender markings e.g., the case markings.

For the inanimate nouns, there was no transfer since that aspect of grammatical gender existed only in one of the languages, German. One can however argue that cases of negative transfer were noted where in some cases, the English language used one article to represent two or more nouns, e.g., in the case of ‘my mother and father’. In this case, the students would find themselves using one possessive article to represent the two, which is not acceptable in German, since the two have different gender markings, i.e., ‘mein Vater und meine Mutter’.

The third hypothesis was also found to be true. Some of the errors committed caused ambiguity in the sentence or phrase where they were present. In some of the errors, one could only comprehend the meaning from the context but not from isolated sentences, and in other instances, despite wrong gender assignment, the meaning came out.

However, all the errors had a negative effect on translation, since they affect the presentation of the text. Every production that deviates from what a native would produce is an error and it affects the quality of the translation. No client would gladly accept work that is full of syntactical and morphological errors.

5.4 Recommendations

Before one becomes a translator, they must have acquired the language in one way or another in an institution of learning. This research has identified gaps in the learning process whereby, even after 7-8 years of learning the language, one is not proficient in terms of the grammatical gender,

an aspect that is considered very basic and important in the languages that use it. In this respect, this research makes the following recommendation:

The curriculum developers should ensure that they come up with teaching, learning materials and teaching methodology that will enhance the acquisition of gender markings since it is an indispensable aspect of L2, not just encouraging learners to memorize the gender markings.

The curriculum implementers should utilize the skills they have to impart knowledge and come up with teaching methods that will enhance the acquisition of grammatical gender as naturally as possible. Although there exists a lot of exception to the rules, gender assignment principles could be of great relevance as far as teaching of grammatical gender is concerned. The principles should be taught during the acquisition of German so that the students do not have to cram all the nouns and their gender markings. The principles would guide the learners and students on how to assign grammatical gender to nouns.

Translation trainers should identify gaps in the proficiency of the translation trainees. They should come up with ways of bridging the gaps including introduction of proficiency courses in the course of training.

The translators should also make an initiative to identify their own morphological gaps and work on it, since grammatical errors produce poor quality translations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TRANSLATION TEXT

Not Taken for Granted

I guess I was spoiled. At first, I was an only child, cuddled and cooed over by parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Up until I was eight years old, life was sweet. Then along came Grant, and everything changed. Grant is my little brother.

I don't remember all the details, but he was born a month prematurely, so he needed a lot of extra attention, especially from Mom. My mom and dad didn't ignore me, but I was no longer the center of their universe so I resented the change in dynamics. And at first, I also resented Grant.

Fortunately, Grant's early birth didn't cause any real problems in his growth, and he crawled, toddled, and talked pretty much on schedule.

My parents were still somewhat protective of him, but as he got older, he developed the obnoxious habit of attaching himself to me, following my every move. My parents warned me to be nice to him, but I found him totally annoying. By the time I became a teenager, he was, at five, my shadow, following me around, copying my every move, asking questions, and generally being a pest.

Still, despite my irritation, I began to enjoy him. He was a funny little guy, and I began to find his hero-worship endearing. He copied the way I walked, the way I talked, and even the way I ate.

I remember one time we were eating jelly sandwiches, and he was humming away as he ate.

"Grant, why are you humming?" I asked.

He looked genuinely surprised. "You do it, too."

"Do not," I growled.

I took a bite then and realized I had been humming! Apparently, I hummed a lot and never even knew. I looked at Grant and the delighted little smirk on his face and had to laugh. He laughed, too, although I don't think he understood exactly why. Still, from then on, whenever one of us hummed, we both burst into laughter.

APPENDIX 2: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

How long have you been learning German?

How many units in translation have you done?

.....
.....

How did you find the translation units that you did?

- Very comprehensive
- Comprehensive
- Fair
- Superficial

How would you rate the text that you have just translated in terms of difficulty?

- Too easy
- Easy
- Difficult
- Very difficult

Into which language do you find it easier to translate?

- German to English
- English to German

What do you think is the reason for that?

.....
.....
.....

What aspects of the do you find especially difficult to apply when it comes to translation into the German language?

.....
.....
.....

How do you find the gender markings (nouns being either masculine, Feminine or neutral) found in the German language?

.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you rate your competency as far as gender markings in German are concerned?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Not good.

If fair or not good, kindly give a reason for that.

.....
.....
.....

What aspects do you think should be emphasized when one is training students to become competent translators?

.....
.....
.....