

The Reanalysis of German *-end* as a Marker of Gender-Sensitive Language Use. A Process of Exaptation

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Abstract

*This article demonstrates the emergence of a new grammatical marker which has the function of expressing gender-sensitive language use. We propose that this linguistic innovation is a product of an individual's use of language rather than a result of intentional planning. Both language-internal and language-external factors lead to linguistic innovations. This claim reflects that of Keller (2003), who explains that there is, on a macro-level, a spontaneous order triggered by concrete language use on a micro-level. To give an example, the participle suffix **-end** is currently used to meet the maxims of gender-sensitive language use. This is clearly a morphological innovation. What we thus observe is a process of reanalysis which can be interpreted as exaptation in the evolutionary sense of the word's meaning. Exaptation means the evolution of a new function on the basis of an old form (see Gould/Vrba 1982; Simon 2010). In this article, we will demonstrate with select case studies from reformulated texts found in legal documents (e.g. the German Road Traffic Act) and study regulations that the present participle suffix **-end** ('-ing') is reanalysed in order to highlight gender-sensitive language use. Furthermore, this article will address the insistent dominance of the generic masculine in language. It seems that the generic masculine is a basic and highly economic grammatical category, verifiable not only in already engendered nouns but also in pronouns. The dominance of generic-masculine forms is also evidence for the great importance of generic language use in general.*

1 Outlining the issue¹

The postulations of feminist sociolinguistics and gender linguistics in the last three decades have clearly demanded changes in language (cf. Wetschanow/Doleschal 2013; Hellinger 2004: 284-288). Pusch (1998: 7; trans. LB) describes this change as “the most significant and far-reaching linguistic innovation of the century”². Schiewe (1998: 10; trans. LB) underlines Pusch's statement by stating that a feminist language policy is “to date arguably the most effective critical linguistic concept”³. Feminist language policy is “according to its own expectations not only theory, but also language change in practice. This is to say that these

¹ Preliminary Remark:

To improve readability we seek to avoid complex semantic descriptions of the lexical items treated in the current text. We have thus inserted an appendix in which, for all instances of nominalized present participles (e.g. *Studier-end-e*) and of one perfect participle (*den Überhol-t-en*) in our paper, we give

- an inter-linear annotation of their literal meanings between double quotation marks, e.g. “study-ing-PL”;
- a paraphrase of them between simple quotation marks, e.g. ‘studying ones’ and
- their lexical meaning between simple quotation marks in brackets, e.g. (‘students’).

When instances of German forms are mentioned in the current text, they can be interpreted with the help of this appendix.

² “die bedeutendste und tiefgreifendste sprachliche Neuerung dieses Jahrhunderts“.

³ “das bisher wohl wirksamste sprachkritische Konzept”.

critical suggestions have also occasioned a change in linguistic behaviour”⁴ (Schiewe 1998: 272; trans. LB). Furthermore, through feminist language policy motivated language change is planned and intentional (cf. Hornscheidt 2006: 288). This language change is demanded in the hope that the social and economic conditions for women can continue to be improved. Feminist sociolinguists and gender linguists suppose that language use has a dual effect. On the one hand they state that language mirrors social reality and, on the other hand, that language is supposed to be the central medium with which to construct this reality (cf. Bußmann 2005: 484). In the context of this ‘duality’, language becomes a discursive instrument within social action.

At the centre of criticism in German feminist sociolinguistics is the generic masculine. It is supposed that, when referring to people, the generic masculine most often demarcates a masculine gender (see Steiger-Loerbroks/Stockhausen 2014; Irmen/Steiger 2005; Braun et al. 1998: 281). Feminist and gender linguists equate the grammatical category *Genus*⁵ with *gender* (social) and *sex* (biological). In respect to Garfinkel (1967), Goffman (1977), West/Zimmerman (1987) and Butler (see 2012a; 2012b), some linguists – and particularly those specialising in gender markers – deny the biological bias towards the male and thus against the female. As gender categories are constructed in social interaction, we must also take language use into consideration. The goal of feminist and gender linguists is for language users to avoid defaulting to the generic masculine in their language use. They propose to make gender visible (doing gender) by e.g. splitting syntagmata (*der Student, die Studentin* ‘student’ [m/w]) or to make gender invisible (undoing gender) through e.g. the use of nominalised participles in the plural (*die Studierenden*, lit. “the study-ing-s”, ‘the students’ [m/w/x]) or x-forms in the singular (*Studierx*, ‘the student’ [m/w/x]).⁶ Feminist and gender linguists emphasise that being aware of gender constructions in language is important in order not to discriminate against any particular gender.

However, we must also consider non-intended language change: the result of human (inter)action rather than deliberate planning. Non-intended language change leads to spontaneous orders (see Keller 2003). These orders on the macro-level are the result of maxim-guided performances by individuals on the micro-level. The spontaneous order in natural languages

comes into existence due to certain forces which, under certain framing conditions, influence individual elements. If we call the level of the individual elements the system’s microstructure and the emerging order itself the macrostructure, we arrive at the following definition: spontaneous order is a macrostructural system that emerges under certain framing conditions, due to microstructural influences that are not directed toward the system’s formation (Keller 1997: 4).

Keller (2003: 143; trans. LB) stresses the ‘hyper-maxim’ as follows: “Speak so that you are socially successful, with the least possible expense”⁷. For the language user, following this maxim is usually an unconscious process. The selection of the linguistic elements happens in

⁴ “ihrem Anspruch nach nicht nur Programm, sondern Sprachwandel im Vollzug. Damit ist gemeint, daß die sprachkritischen Vorschläge auch eine Veränderung des Sprachverhaltens bewirkt haben”.

⁵ To avoid confusion we will use the German term ‘Genus’ instead of ‘grammatical gender’. It is important not to mix up Genus and gender. Genus is a purely grammatical category (see Leiss 1994). However, we have to distinguish carefully between a (social) grammatical category and a category which refers to the (social/biological) gender of persons. Therefore, we use MASC, FEM, and NEUT to indicate the grammatical category ‘Genus’; we use *m*, *w* and *x* to indicate the (biological/social) gender of persons. *m* is the abbreviation for *men* (or the male), *w* is the abbreviation for *women* (or the female). We decided to use *w* in order to align it closer with the German *weiblich* and also clearly distinguish it from the grammatical category of the feminine, which is itself sometimes abbreviated as *f*. *x* is our abbreviation for sex-indifferent or gender-indifferent persons.

⁶ For the terms doing and undoing gender, see Hirschauer (1994; 2001) and Kotthoff (2002). How to use the x-forms see AG Feministisch Sprachhandeln der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (2014: 17).

⁷ “Rede so, daß Du sozial erfolgreich bist, bei möglichst geringen Kosten.”

the triangle of tension between a) inner systematic relations (e.g. morphological vs. phonological constraints), b) factors of cognitive language processing, and c) striving towards success in one's social life.

With respect to Keller (2003), we take the position that non-intended language change is stronger and more sustainable than language planning. Language planning is target-oriented. However, language is not teleological. It is impossible to imagine that language can reach a perfect, static and finite state. Language planning underestimates the complexity and role of interacting factors that exist in language change. Both idiolectal linguistic knowledge as well as communal language are dynamic and complex adaptive systems, which are in permanent synchronization on all linguistic levels (see Bülow 2015).

Firstly, we want to show with reference to planned change in the German Road Traffic Act ('Straßenverkehrsordnung') that the authors favour using gender-neutral forms like participles in the plural for both style and economy (e.g. *Fußgänger* 'pedestrians' > *zu Fuß Gehende* 'those who go by foot', 'pedestrians', *Studenten* 'students' > *Studierende* 'studying persons', 'those/some who study', 'students'), which primarily means avoiding splitting (*der Student, die Studentin* 'student' [m/w]) and saving cognitive energy while thinking about a good solution. Secondly, we would like to demonstrate that generic-masculine forms are unintentionally used under the cloak of the participle morpheme *-end* (*der Studierende* 'student' SG.MASC). In Section 2, we will show that the speakers reanalyse the participle morpheme *-end* as a marker for gender sensitive language use. This process of reanalysis can be interpreted as exaptation. Lass (1997: 316) defines exaptation in its evolutionary sense as "a kind of conceptual renovation, as it were, of material that is already there, but either serving some other purpose, or serving no purpose at all". To differentiate between reanalysis and exaptation Simon (2010) emphasises that the term exaptation should be used if new grammatical categories arise from an existing linguistic structure.

2 The reanalysis of *-end* as a marker for gender-sensitive language use

Our understanding of reanalysis in a narrow sense is that both the resegmentation of formal linguistic structure and the semantic remotivation of this structure take place at the same time (cf. Harnisch 2010: 19). The reanalysis of *-end* as a marker for gender-sensitive language use can be seen in planned texts such as gender-sensitive reformulations of legal or administrative texts in which the authors try to combine and follow different maxims of language use. The maxim which is implemented as a mostly conscious act is to speak/write in a gender-sensitive way. However, there are other maxims at work. "Legal texts must meet the requirements of being comprehensible, clear, simple, and succinct" (Steiger-Loerbroks/Stockhausen 2014: 58). It is not easy for the emittent⁸ to find an adequate way to meet each of these requirements. This might be the reason why literature advising on gender-sensitive language use recommends numerous strategies such as short splitting (*Student/in* 'student' (m/w)), to address people directly (*Sie können zwischen den Modulen frei wählen* 'you may freely choose between modules'), or to use gender-unmarked role nouns.

⁸ Here the generic form is used for the singular and the plural.

Gender-unmarked role nouns

can be participles combined with gender-unmarked nouns, e.g. *die ausgleichspflichtige Person* [person obliged to compensate], individual gender unmarked-nouns, e.g. *Mensch* [person, individual], indefinite pronouns (e.g. *niemand* [nobody], *alle* [everyone], *jemand*⁹ [someone]), collective terms (e.g. *der Vorsitz* [chair] instead of *der Vorsitzende* [chairman]) and plural forms of nominalised adjectives and participles (Steiger-Loerbroks/Stockhausen 2014: 60),

e.g. *die Studierenden* or *die zu Fuß Gehenden* ('the studying persons' / 'those who go by foot'). Sometimes, (short) splitting or using collective terms are not the most aesthetically pleasing solutions. They may be detrimental to the text in that they take too much time to read or produce because they are not standard solutions for resolving communicative problems.¹⁰ Some feminists and gender linguists demand creative solutions to these issues (see Steiger 2008; Hellinger 2004). However, it is clear that creative solutions require considerable time and cognitive energy. It is cognitively expensive to find a creative strategy to avoid the generic masculine.

Nevertheless, there is one option favoured by a number of institutions because it is the most economical strategy for saving cognitive energy. The idea is that the authors/speakers use plural forms of nominalised participles (*die Studenten* 'the students' > *die Studier-end-en* 'the studying persons', 'those who study', 'students'). This strategy has many advantages. First, the authors/speakers no longer have to rearrange words in an existing sentence to be in accordance with the maxim of gender-sensitivity. To add the morpheme *-end* is an easy rule to adopt and has potential to become a default case. Therefore, nominalised participles are easier and faster to produce on demand than to search for gender-adequate and creative variants in the mental lexicon. A new standardisation of a language structure (triggered through social change) within a stable language environment is the optimum precondition for processes of reanalysis in general.

The reanalysis of *-end* as a marker for gender-sensitive language use is, however, evident because nominalised participles only meet the criteria of being gender-sensitive if they are produced in the plural. Nominalised participles in the singular are not Genus-neutral¹¹ and therefore not gender-fair.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <i>fromm-er / frömmel-nd-er Junge</i> | 'pious / piety-affect-ing boy' |
| <i>fromm-e / frömmel-nd-e Schwester</i> | 'pious / piety-affect-ing sister' |
| <i>fromm-es / frömmel-nd-es Mädchen</i> | 'pious / piety-affect-ing girl' |
| <i>fromm-e / frömmelnd-e Jungen/Schwestern/Mädchen</i> | 'pious / piety-affect-ing boys/
sisters/girls' |
| 2) <i>die Fromm-en / die Frömmel-nd-en (PL)</i> | 'the pious / those affecting piety' |
| 3) <i>ein Fromm-er / ein Frömmel-nd-er (SG.MASC)</i>
(Genus-specific and therefore not gender-fair, but generic use is possible) | 'a pious / a piety-affect-ing person' |
| <i>ein-e Fromm-e / ein-e Frömmel-nd-e (SG.FEM)</i> | 'a pious / a piety-affect-ing person' |
| <i>ein Fromm-es / ein Frömmel-nd-es (SG.NEUT)</i> | 'a pious / a piety-affect-ing person' |

It is not very difficult to find evidence for the reanalysis of *-end* as a marker for gender-sensitive language use. We compared legal and administrative texts which were reformulated to meet the maxim of gender-sensitivity. As shown by Harnisch (forthcoming), it is a common strategy by authors of examination and study regulations to replace the generic

⁹ What Steiger-Loerbroks/Stockhausen didn't seem to notice is that indefinite pronouns can also be configured in generic-masculine forms.

¹⁰ Short-splitting is a particular problem for machine-readability.

¹¹ Genus-neutral is a separate category.

masculine with nominalised participles without realising that they use generic-masculine nouns again. For example (see Harnisch forthcoming):

Original text: *Auf Anfrage erhält der Student* [‘the student’ (generic-masculine form for (m/w/x)] *Auskunft über den Stand seiner* [‘his’ (generic-masculine)] *Leistungspunkte.*

Updated text: *Auf Anfrage erhält der Studierende* [‘the student’ (generic-masculine form for (m/w/x)] *Auskunft über den Stand seiner* [‘his’ (generic-masculine)] *Leistungspunkte.*

Meaning: ‘The student can ask questions regarding the status of his¹² credit points.’

Harnisch points out that the generic masculine is transformed into another more complex generic masculine in order to comply with the requirements of political and gender correctness. The promise of economic and social success, should one use the suffix *-end*, connects the importance of such language use with a wider context. From this point on, the morpheme is used in singular contexts where it was not used before. Moreover, the morpheme becomes reinterpreted: its new function is to express gender-sensitivity in general. Contrary to the requirements laid out by feminists and gender linguists, the generic masculine once again finds its way back into language use (see Harnisch forthcoming).

Our second case study is that of the gender-sensitive reformulation of the German Road Traffic Act (‘*Straßenverkehrsordnung, StVO*’) in 2013. In this Act, the authors converted a number of generic-masculine forms into nominalised participles. The form *Fußgänger* (PL.MASC) ‘pedestrians’ was changed to *zu Fuß Gehende(n)* (PL) ‘those who go by foot’. The phrase *zu Fuß Gehende(n)* (PL) is now used fourteen times. In total, 34 generic-masculine forms were converted into nominalised participles. This and other reformulation strategies become clear in the following example¹³:

The old version of Article 5, Paragraph 4 states:

„(4) Wer [MASC.SG] zum Überholen ausscheren will, muß sich so verhalten, daß eine Gefährdung des nachfolgenden Verkehrs ausgeschlossen ist. Beim Überholen muß ein ausreichender Seitenabstand zu anderen Verkehrsteilnehmern [MASC.PL], insbesondere zu Fußgängern [MASC.PL] und Radfahrern [MASC.PL], eingehalten werden. Der Überholende [MASC.SG] muß sich sobald wie möglich wieder nach rechts einordnen. Er [MASC.SG] darf dabei den Überholten [MASC.SG] nicht behindern.“ (StVO § 5 (4) valid until 31.03.2013)

‘The person who wants to pull out before overtaking must take caution, lest the traffic behind should not be endangered. In the case of overtaking, one must maintain adequate distance from other motorists, particularly pedestrians and cyclists. The person overtaking must return to his correct lane as soon as possible. He must not obstruct the motorist being overtaken.’

The new version of Article 5, Paragraph 4 reads as follows:

„(4) Wer [MASC.SG] zum Überholen ausscheren will, muss sich so verhalten, dass eine Gefährdung des nachfolgenden Verkehrs ausgeschlossen ist. Beim Überholen muss ein ausreichender Seitenabstand zu anderen Verkehrsteilnehmern [MASC.PL], insbesondere zu den zu Fuß Gehenden [Genus-neutral PL] und zu den Rad Fahrenden [Genus-neutral PL], eingehalten werden. Wer [MASC.SG] überholt, muss sich so bald wie möglich wieder nach rechts einordnen. Wer [MASC.SG] überholt, darf dabei denjenigen [MASC.SG], der [MASC.SG] überholt wird, nicht behindern.“ (StVO § 5 (4) valid since 01.04.2013)

‘The one who wants to pull out before overtaking must take caution, lest the traffic behind should not be endangered. In the case of overtaking, one must maintain adequate distance from other motorists, particularly from those who go by foot and those who ride a bike. The one who

¹² The pronoun *his* is a generic-masculine form.

¹³ In this article, we cannot explain every strategy used to reformulate texts (e.g. using terms which do not refer to persons like *Kamera* instead of *Kameramann* [cameraman > camera], using constructions in passive like *der Betrag wird monatlich gezahlt* instead of *der Arbeitnehmer erhält monatlich* [the employee receives monthly > this allowance shall be paid monthly] etc.).

overtakes must return to the correct lane as soon as possible without obstructing the one who is being overtaken.’

The first sentence is identical in both versions. The second sentence in the new version contains the two nominalised participles *den zu Fuß Gehenden* (PL, Genus-neutral) ‘those who go by foot’ and *den Rad Fahrenden* (PL, Genus-neutral) ‘those who ride bikes’, which are used instead of *Fußgängern* (MASC.PL, Genus-specific, generic) ‘pedestrians’ and *Radfahrern* (MASC.PL, Genus-specific, generic) ‘cyclists’. In the third and fourth sentence the authors used another strategy to avoid the generic masculine *Der Überholende* (MASC.SG) ‘the person overtaking’. They used a *wer*-periphrase *Wer überholt* (MASC.SG.NOM) ‘the person who overtakes’. What the authors fail to recognise is that this *wer*-periphrase is also generic-masculine. This pronoun would have to be continued by a concordant relative pronoun and therefore another generic-masculine form (*Wer überholt, *der muss ...*). This type is realised in the second relative clause of the sentence: *denjenigen, der* [MASC.SG.ACC resp. NOM] *überholt wird* ‘the one who is being overtaken’. However, there is also evidence for notional concord like in *der Sprintstar und ihre Freundinnen* ‘the sprint star [MASC.SG] and her [FEM.SG] friends’ (Oelkers 1996: 6). Such structures are grammatically incorrect but widely accepted by the language community. It becomes more likely that the notional concord is accepted and used the further away the related word is (see Oelkers 1996).

In the new version, it can be observed that *-end* is employed as a marker for gender-sensitive language use (cf. Bülow/Herz 2014). The text includes three nominalised participles in the singular which are generic-masculine forms.

- 4) *als Fußgänger* ‘as pedestrian’ (MASC.SG) is replaced by *als zu Fuß Gehender* ‘as somebody go-ing by foot’ (MASC.SG) (StVO § 49 (1))
- 5) *als Veranstalter* ‘as organizer’ (MASC.SG) is replaced by *als Veranstaltender* ‘as somebody organis-ing’ (MASC.SG) (StVO § 49 (2))
- 6) *der zu Überholende* ‘the one who is to be overtaken’ (MASC.SG) remains *der zu Überholende* (StVO § 5 (2))

The fact that the form 6) *der zu Überholende* ‘the one who is to be overtaken’ (StVO § 5 (2)) was not modified might be explained by the circumstance that the authors overlooked the generic masculine because it contained the *-end* morpheme.

Table 1: Forms which are used in the new version of the German Road Traffic Act¹⁴

Typ	StVO new version 01.04.2013	quantity
FORM WITH PARTICIPLE SUFFIX IN THE PLURAL: GENDER-SENSITIVE THROUGH GENUS-NEUTRALIZATION IN THE PLURAL	zu Fuß Gehende Rad Fahrende Fahrzeugführende Mofa Fahrende am Verkehr Teilnehmende Teilnehmende Veranstaltende total	13 8 3 1 4 1 1 31
FORM WITH PARTICIPLE SUFFIX IN THE SINGULAR: APPARENTLY GENDER-SENSITIVE, BUT COVERTLY GENERIC	als zu Fuß Gehender als Veranstaltender der zu Überholende total	1 1 1 3
FORM WITH PARTICIPLE SUFFIX IN THE SINGULAR: OVERTLY GENDER-SENSITIVE THROUGH ARTICLE SPLITTING	wenn man sich mit dem oder der Verzichtenden verständigt hat total	1 1

¹⁴ The table is taken from Bülow/Herz (2014).

Harnisch (forthcoming) and Bülow (as yet unpubl. doctoral thesis) collected more than a hundred cases from different types of texts for the reanalysis of *-end* as a marker for gender-sensitive language use.¹⁵ The oldest written evidence¹⁶ of this collection is from a study regulation for upcoming teachers: *Jeder Studierende* [MASC.SG] *wählt [...]; nach Wahl des Studierenden* [MASC.SG] ‘every student chooses [...]’; ‘according to / after the choice of the student’ (Study Regulation of a Degree Program – Leading to a Teacher’s Position at a Secondary School, University of Bayreuth 1991). The youngest written evidence is out of an examination regulation from the University of Passau: *Grundsätzlich muss ein Studierender* [MASC.SG] *für die Ablegung von Prüfungsleistungen regulär immatrikuliert sein* ‘On principle, a student must be enrolled in order to be admitted to the examination’ (Examining Office University of Passau „Immatrikulation und Abgabe Abschlussarbeiten“, 16th May 2014).

The reanalysis of *-end* can be operationalised as follows (the table should be read bottom-up):

Table 2: The reanalysis of *-end* as a marker for gender-sensitive language use¹⁷

Reanalysis of a stronger categorial meaning	Types of categorial meanings and motive of reanalysis
‘correct gender-sensitive language use’	nominalised participles with <i>-end</i> receive pragmatic meaning
↑	intention to neutralise gender by using nominalised participles ending with <i>-end</i>
‘gender’/‘sex’	the grammatical meaning of ‘Genus’ after having received the referential-semantic meaning of ‘gender’/‘sex’

3 The reanalysis of *-end* as an exaptation process

The reanalysis of *-end* as a marker for gender-sensitive language use can be interpreted as an exaptation process. Exaptation was originally conceived of in the field of evolutionary biology, but the concept has been adopted by linguists. It was established by Gould and Vrba in the early 1980s (see Gould/Vrba 1982). They explain exaptation as follows:

We suggest that such characters, evolved for other usages (or for no function at all), and later ‘coopted’ for their current role, be called *exaptations* [...]. They are fit for their current role, hence *aptus*, but were not designed for it, and are therefore not *ad aptus*, or pushed toward fitness. They owe their fitness to features present for other reasons, and are therefore *fit (aptus) by reason of (ex) their form, or ex aptus*. (Gould/Vrba 1982: 6; quotation from Simon 2010: 43)

One popular example of exaptation is the development of the flying capacity of birds: Bird feathers may have initially evolved for temperature regulation. Only later were bird feathers exapted for flying capacity. The term exaptation thus relates to both the process and product.

Lass (1990) adopted the exaptation concept for language change theory. Transference of this concept to linguistic questions is based on the assumption that structural similarities exist in the process of biological evolution and language change. Bülow (as yet unpubl.) states that the term *evolution* is more than a metaphor to explain language change. There are isomorphisms affecting the macro-level of biological evolution and language change. These processes, which operate in biological evolution as well as in language change, are known as *replication*, *variation* and *selection* (see Bülow as yet unpubl.). Lass (1990: 96) had an idea of

¹⁵ Harnisch began this body of work in the early 1990s; Bülow has continued the work since 2013.

¹⁶ The corpus also includes a great deal of oral evidence.

¹⁷ The table is part of table (27) from Harnisch (forthcoming).

these isomorphisms, while emphasising “that languages are not biological systems in any deep sense”.

Firstly, Lass (1990) used the term exaptation when former ‘junk’ – language structure without function – gets a function through processes of reanalysis. He later expanded on his understanding of the concept (see Lass 1997). Both ‘junk’ and functional structure can acquire another new function (‘non-junk’ exaptation). According to Lass (1997: 316), exaptation is “a kind of conceptual renovation, as it were, of material that is already there, but either serving some other purpose, or serving no purpose at all”. Furthermore, he states that “perfectly ‘good’ structures can be exapted, as can junk of various kinds” (Lass 1997: 316). In this respect, what matters is that an old form obtains a new function (exaptation: old form > new function).

The old form is reanalysed as having a new or additional function. To clarify the relationship between reanalysis and exaptation: Every process of exaptation is a reanalysis, but not every reanalysis is an exaptation.

Simon (2010: 52) proposes to use the term exaptation “for the cases in which already available grammatical material is reused, in order to express a categorically new function”^{18,19}. Expressing gender-sensitivity with a formal marker is a new grammatical category in German. Before today, it would have been impossible to find this category in German grammar.²⁰ The usual function of the participle suffix *-end* was to express that someone or something is ‘in the process of doing something’ (cf. Elsen 2011: 106). The participle suffix *-end* in our context suggests instead that the subject is aware of writing or speaking in a gender-sensitive way. In the aforementioned case study, the ‘old’ function is either weak or totally lost. Nevertheless, it does not really matter whether *-end* is already ‘junk’ or not. What is important is that a new function (a new grammatical category) arises on the basis of an old form. First, this new function is mostly bound to a social or communicative context. Second, if the new function on the basis of the old form is used (replicated) to a critical frequency, then it can spread to more communicative areas. Third, when this spreading happens, linguists can observe this new language use, write it down and codify it in new grammar books.

This is an evolutionary process from the micro- to the macro-level triggered by change in the social world, language planning and language use. Individuals select the form they think is best suited to certain communicative maxims. They then produce (replicate) the form. Variation like the form *der Studierende* (MASC.SG) ‘the student’ instead of *die Studierenden* (PL) ‘the students’ can then arise. This variation is an obvious indicator for linguists in mapping language change in progress.

4 Conclusion

Firstly, we aimed to show that the goals of feminists’ and gender-linguists’ language planning struggle against and are undermined by concrete language use. What is intended on the micro-level can have a different and non-intended impact on the macro-level. Keller (2003) calls this phenomenon a spontaneous order on the macro-level. The result on the macro-level is the result of human action but not of human planning. This power is eventually what Mandeville describes in his *The Fable of the Bees* (1714), what Goethe reformulates in his *Faust* (1808) and what Keller (2003: 57) cites as: „jene Kraft, die stets das Böse will und stets das Gute schafft“ [“that Power, not understood, Which always wills the Bad, and always works the Good” (Goethe’s *Faust* translated into English by Bayard Taylor²¹)].

¹⁸ “für die Fälle, bei denen bereits vorhandenes grammatisches Material wiederverwendet wird, um eine kategoriell neuartige Funktion zum Ausdruck zu bringen (trans. LB)”.

¹⁹ Simon (2010) emphasises that exaptation can be more than just the (re-)morphologisation of functionless phonological structure.

²⁰ It is comparable to the emergence of a marker for politeness, as Simon (2003) describes it.

²¹ <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14591/14591-h/14591-h.htm#III> [accessed 2015-05-16].

Secondly, we intended to show the complex interplay within the established structure of language between inner systematic relations (language-internal factors), individual responses to different modes and aims of communication and the desire for change in a subject's social life (language-external factors). Because of this interplay, we argue, the linguist is not able to predict language change on a large scale.²² In its progress language change is characteristically isomorphic to cultural and biological evolutionary change. In language change we also find replication, variation and selection. These processes lead, for example, to a reanalysis and exaptation of linguistic structure.

Thirdly, we planned to give an idea of the insistence with which the generic masculine is retained in common language use. It seems that the generic masculine is a basic and very economic grammatical category, not only verifiable in nouns which have gendered articles, but also in pronouns (see Harnisch's 2009 programmatic heading). The dominance of generic-masculine forms is also evidence for the great importance of generic language use in general.

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²² As mentioned under the scope of Dynamic Systems Theory, everything is interconnected and processes are non-linear (see de Bot/Lowie/Verspoor 2007; 2005).

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Appendix

The list of the basic nominalized participles (in **bold** letters) is given in alphabetic order.

Rad/Mofa **Fahr-end-e**
 “bike/small.moped rid-ing-PL”
 ‘bike / s.m. riding ones’ (‘bikers / s.m. riders’)

den Rad **Fahr-end-en**
 “the bike rid-ing-PL.ACC”
 ‘the bike riding ones’ (‘the bikers’)

ein **Frömmel-nd-er/-es/**
 “a piety.affect-ing-SG.NOM.MASC/NEUT”
 ‘a piety affect-ing male/sex-indifferent one’
 (‘a sanctimonious hypocrite’)

eine **Frömmel-nd-e**
 “a piety.affect-ing-SG.NOM.FEM”
 ‘a piety affect-ing female one’
 (‘a sanctimonious hypocrite’)

die **Frömmel-nd-en**
 “the piety.affect-ing-PL.NOM”
 ‘the piety.affect-ing ones’
 (‘the sanctimonious hypocrites’)

Fahrzeug**föhr-end-e**
 “vehicle.driv.-ing-PL”
 ‘vehicle driving ones’ (‘operators’)

ein zu Fuß **Geh-end-er**
 “a by foot go-ing-SG.GEN.MASC”
 ‘a by foot going one’ (‘the pedestrian’)

zu Fuß **Geh-end-e**
 “by foot go-ing-PL.NOM”
 ‘by foot going ones’ (‘pedestrians’)

die/den zu Fuß **Geh-end-en**
 “the by foot go-ing-PL.NOM/ACC”
 ‘the by foot going ones’ (‘the pedestrians’)

ein **Studier-end-er**
 “a study-ing-SG.NOM.MASC”
 ‘a studying one’ (‘a student’)

der/jeder **Studier-end-e**
 “the/every study-ing-SG.NOM.MASC”
 ‘the/every studying one’ (‘the/every student’)

des **Studier-end-en**
 “of.the study-ing-SG.GEN.MASC”
 ‘of the studying one’ (‘of the student’)

Studier-end-e
 “study-ing-PL”
 ‘studying ones’ (‘students’)

die **Studier-end-en**
 “the study-ing-PL”
 ‘the studying ones’ (‘the students’)

(am Verkehr) **Teilnehm-end-e**
 “in traffic participat-ing-PL”
 ‘in traffic participating ones’ (‘road users’)

der **Überhol-end-e**
 “the overtak-ing-SG.GEN.MASC”
 ‘the overtaking one’ (‘the person overtaking’)

der zu **Überhol-end-e**
 “the to be.overtaken-ing-SG.GEN.MASC”
 ‘the one to be overtaken’
 (‘the person who is to be overtaken’)

den **Überhol-t-en**
 “the overtak-en-SG.ACC.MASC”
 ‘the overtaken one’ (‘the person overtaken’)

(als) **Veranstalt-end-er**
 “(as) organiz-ing-SG.NOM.MASC”
 ‘(as) the organizing one’ (‘the organizer’)

Veranstalt-end-e
 „organiz-ing-PL”
 ‘organizing ones’ (‘organizers’)

dem oder der **Verzicht-end-en**
 “to.the.MASC or
 to.the.FEM relinquish-ing-SG.DAT.FEM”
 ‘to the relinquishing one’ (‘to the relinquent’)