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## TEACHING GERMAN LANGUAGE AND ITS GRAMMAR STRUCTURE IN SPEAKING

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## **Annotation:**

This article involves teaching German is one of the most challenging aspects of learning the language. It gives full information about the genitive case in German. In English, the dative case is known as the indirect object. Unlike the accusative, which only changes with the masculine gender, the dative changes in all genders and even in the plural. The pronouns also change correspondingly.

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For native English speakers, one of the most challenging aspects of learning German, at least initially, can be the fact that each noun, pronoun, and article has four cases. Not only does every noun have a gender, but that gender also has four different variations, depending on where it lands in a sentence.

Depending on how a given word is used – whether it's the subject, a possessive, or an indirect or a direct object – the spelling and the pronunciation of that noun or pronoun changes, as does the preceding article. The four German cases are the nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative. You can think of these as the equivalent of the subject, possessive, indirect object, and direct object in English.

The German Nominative Case (Der Nominativ or Der Werfall). The nominative case – in both German and in English – is the subject of a sentence. The term nominative comes from Latin and means to name (think of "nominate"). Amusingly, der Werfall translates literally as "the who case." In the examples below, the nominative word or expression is in bold:

Der Hund beißt den Mann. (The dog bites the man.)

Dieser Gedanke ist blöd. (This thought is stupid.)

Meine Mutter ist Architektin. (My mother is an architect.)

The nominative case can follow the verb "to be," as in the last example. The verb "is" acts like an equal sign (my mother = architect). But the nominative is most often the subject of a sentence.

The Genitive (Der Genitiv or Der Wesfall)

The genitive case in German shows possession. In English, this is expressed by the possessive "of" or an apostrophe with an "s" ('s). The genitive case is also used with some verb idioms and with the genitive prepositions. The genitive is used more frequently in written German than in spoken form: It's essentially the equivalent of English speakers

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using the word "whose" or "whom". In spoken, everyday German, von plus the dative often replaces the genitive. For example:

Das Auto von meinem Bruder. (My brother's car or literally, the car from/of my brother.)

You can tell that a noun is in the genitive case by the article, which changes to des/eines (for masculine and neuter) or der/einer (for feminine and plural). Since the genitive only has two forms (des or der), you only need to learn those two. However, in the masculine and neuter, there is also an additional noun ending, either -es or -s. In the examples below, the genitive word or expression is in bold.

Das Auto meines Bruders (my brother's car or the car of my brother)

Die Bluse des Mädchens (the girl's blouse or the blouse of the girl)

Der Titel des Filmes/Films (the film's title or the title of the film)

Feminine and plural nouns do not add an ending in the genitive. The feminine genitive (der/einer) is identical to the feminine dative. The one-word genitive article usually translates as two words ("of the" or "of a/an") in English.

The Dative Case (Der Dativ or Der Wemfall)

The dative case is a vital element of communicating in German. In English, the dative case is known as the indirect object. Unlike the accusative, which only changes with the masculine gender, the dative changes in all genders and even in the plural. The pronouns also change correspondingly.

In addition to its function as the indirect object, the dative is also used after certain dative verbs and with dative prepositions. In the examples below, the dative word or expression is in bold.

Der Polizist gibt dem Fahrer einen Strafzettel. (The policeman is giving the driver a ticket.)

Ich danke Ihnen. (I thank you.)

Wir machen das mit einem Computer. (We do that with a computer.)

The indirect object (dative) is usually the receiver of the direct object (accusative). In the first example above, the driver got the ticket. Often, the dative can be identified by adding a "to" in the translation, such as "the policeman gives the ticket to the driver.

The question word in the dative is, naturally enough, wem ([to] whom?). For example: Wem hast du das Buch gegeben? (To whom did you give the book?)

The vernacular in English is, "Who'd you give the book to?" Note that the Germanic word for the dative case, der Wemfall, also reflects the der-to-dem change.

The Accusative Case (Der Akkusativ or Der Wenfall)

If you misuse the accusative case in German, you might say something that would sound like "him has the book" or "her saw he yesterday" in English. It's not just some esoteric grammar point; it impacts whether people will understand your German (and whether you'll understand them).

In English, the accusative case is known as the objective case (direct object).

In German, the masculine singular articles der and ein change to den and einen in the accusative case. The feminine, neuter and plural articles do not change. The masculine

pronoun er (he) changes to ihn (him), in much the same way as it does in English. In the examples below, the accusative (direct object) noun and pronoun are in bold:

Der Hund beißt den Mann. (The dog bites the man.)

Er beißt ihn. (He [the dog] bites him [the man].)

Den Mann beißt der Hund. (The dog bites the man.)

Beißt der Hund den Mann? (Is the dog biting the man?)

Beißt den Mann der Hund? (Is the dog biting the man?)

Note how the order of the words may change, but as long as you have the proper accusative articles, the meaning remains clear.

The direct object (accusative) functions as the receiver of the action of a transitive verb. In the examples above, the man is acted upon by the dog, so he receives the action of the subject (the dog). To give a few more transitive verb examples, when you buy (kaufen) something or have (haben) something, the "something" is the direct object. The subject (the person buying or having) is acting on that object.

You can test for a transitive verb by saying it without an object. If it sounds odd and seems to need an object to sound correct, then it is probably a transitive verb, for example: Ich habe (I have) or Er kaufte (he bought). Both of these phrases answer the implied question "what?" What do you have? What did he buy? And whatever that is, is the direct object and should be in the accusative case in German.

On the other hand, if you do this with an intransitive verb, such as "to sleep," "to die" or "to wait," no direct object is needed. You can't "sleep," "die" or "wait" something. Two seeming exceptions to this test, become and be, are actually not exceptions, since they are intransitive verbs that act like an equal sign and cannot take an object. A good additional clue in German: All verbs that take the helping verb sein (to be) are intransitive.

Some verbs in English and German can be either transitive or intransitive, but the key is to remember that if you have a direct object, you'll have the accusative case in German.

The Germanic word for the accusative case, der Wenfall, reflects the der-to-den change.

The question word in the accusative is wen (whom) such as;

Wen hast du gestern gesehen? (Whom did you see yesterday?)

**Accusative Time Expressions** 

The accusative is used in some standard time and distance expressions.

Das Hotel liegt einen Kilometer von hier (The hotel lies/is located a kilometer from here.)

Er verbrachte einen Monat in Paris (He spent a month in Paris.)

Since English articles do not change depending on their position in the sentence, the language relies on word order to clarify which term is the subject and which is the object. For example, if you say "The man bites the dog" in English, rather than "The dog bites the man," you change the meaning of the sentence. In German, however, the word order can be changed for emphasis (as discussed below), without altering the basic action or meaning. as in:

Beißt der Hund den Mann? Is the dog biting the man?

Beißt den Mann der Hund? Is the dog biting the man?

**Definite and Indefinite Articles** 

The following charts show the four cases with the definite article (der, die, or das) and the indefinite article. Note that keine is the negative of eine, which has no plural form. But keine (no/none) can be used in the plural. For example:

Er hat keine Bücher. (He has no books.)

In Venedig gibt es keine Autos. (In Venice there are no cars.)

In conclusion, You can tell that a noun is in the genitive case by the article, which changes to des/eines (for masculine and neuter) or der/einer (for feminine and plural). Since the genitive only has two forms (des or der), you only need to learn those two. However, in the masculine and neuter, there is also an additional noun ending, eitheres or -s. In the examples below, the genitive word or expression is in bold. Some verbs in English and German can be either transitive or intransitive, but the key is to remember that if you have a direct object, you'll have the accusative case in German. The Germanic word for the accusative case, der Wenfall, reflects the der-to-den change.

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