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„Pronoun Use and Gender Stereotyping in Connection with Job Related Role Nouns among Learners of English as a Second Language"

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1.   Introduction: A history of language use

Women and men have always had and still have a very different status in language. While men are seen as stronger and more dominant language users, women are degraded to small, invisible and silent language users. (Pauwels 2008: 550) This phenomenon originated when men marked their stance by being in charge of the "dictionary-making process, [of] the writing of normative grammars, [of] the establishment of language academies and other normative language institutions, and through their involvement in language planning activities" (Pauwels 2008: 550). By doing so, they have not only highlighted their own role in language and society, but they have also regulated and controlled women's speech up to today (Pauwels 2008: 550). Many more rules and guidelines that regulate women's language use have been created, while men are barley confronted with linguistic regulations (Pauwels 2008: 550). As a result, women have had only little authority when it comes to language control. Nevertheless, there have been two ways in which women have been able to intervene, namely as teachers and as mothers. Women have, therefore, been responsible for the accurate language education and consequently also for the language behavior of children. (Pauwels 2008: 550)

With the feminist movement in the 1970s came also the first big movement against male centered language regulations. This movement is also referred to as "second wave feminism" (Bruley & Forster 2016: 697). The first wave of feminism, from the 1830s to the 1920s, focused on women's right to vote and their civil rights. From the 1920s onwards, there was a rather inactive period for feminism. (Kemp & Squires 1998: 4). Between the 1960s and the 1980s feminist agency and organization started up again in many developed countries of the world, especially in Europe and North America (Bruley & Forster 2016: 697). Even though there were and are feminist movements before and after this period, it differentiates itself from them due to the intense and widespread feminist energy and ideas that were spread with the help of "mass activism [and] theoretical texts and literature" (Bruley & Forster 2016: 697). Due to that the second wave feminism is usually referred to as the origin of the feminist uprising and the protest for female rights (Bruley & Forster 2016: 697). The women's organizations made use of many media forms including performance art and other visual stimulations in order to broadcast their thoughts and ideas of equal rights for women (Bruley & Forster 2016: 699). The movement started, like many other social movements, in the post war prosperity of the 1960s. Living in a world without the fear of a nuclear war happening any minute, increasing living standards and better educational chances made women realize how they were still inferior to men in society.

(Bruley & Forster 2016: 697) This situation led to the development of an "imagined community of feminism [creating] a new sense of female selfhood" (Bruley & Forster 2016: 697). Most women and feminists had the goal of economic independency for women all over the world. The most important step in order to achieve this aim was paid employment. However, there also existed groups that were campaigning for women's right to stay at home with their children and potentially receiving state benefits, in case they chose to do so. Even though there were a lot of different groups and organizations with different campaigns, the main goal was still the same. (Bruley & Forster 2016: 698) Overall, the movement stood for "economic equality and access to education, affordable childcare; freely determined sexuality, an end to sexual violence and the right to control fertility; political and legal equal equality" (Bruley & Forster 2016: 699). While these aspirations were interpreted in multiple ways by the different feminist groups, especially depending on social status and ethnicity, the organizations all contemplated to enhance women's stance in society (Bruley & Forster 2016: 698 - 699). Women soon started to highlight the discriminatory effect the masculine worldview had on their role in society and denounced the linguistic regulations that fostered such an outcome. (Pauwels 2008: 551) A very prominent example of language control is the dictionary. Back then, dictionaries were of course written by men and, therefore, a perfect tool for the creation of rules developed by and for men, leading to sexism. Women were barely included in the production of dictionaries. (Pauwels 2008: 551) A sexist feature of English that gained its dominant role in the language due to male centered language regulations is the generic masculine pronoun *he*. This male generic pronoun is still very present today. Some women tried to create their own norm by implementing the generic *she* in return. (Pauwels 2008: 551) Women also started to develop their own language rules and norms in order to avoid sexist language use. However, men often perceived these attempts of women to take part in language planning as a threat and started to reject women as linguistic activists by questioning their capability and highlighting their lack of expertise. (Pauwels 2008: 551)

The change that was triggered through the women's liberation movement in the 1970s and the new female consciousness that was found, is visible in languages and societies around the world. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of work to do and a lot of rethinking necessary until women and men can be regarded as truly equal. In order to get one step closer to that goal the present thesis focuses on the gender inclusive language use of second language learners of English with a German language background. It is supposed to raise people's awareness by confronting them with their own generic pronoun use in English in connection with job related

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role nouns. Furthermore, it aims at showing in what way such usage can influence the perception of gender roles.

For the purpose of achieving these aspirations a study was conducted as part of this thesis, focusing on the participants' pronoun use in English. The participants were all students from the University of Vienna and had the opportunity to take part in the study via an online link. In the first part of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to complete a sentence gap task. These exercises were designed to elicit the participants' use of pronouns by making them refer back to a certain occupational noun. The second part then focused on the participants' stereotyping in connection with these same job related terms. These tasks combined are supposed to create an overall picture of the students' language use and their connotations.

In order to get a more detailed understanding of the features that contribute to gender exclusive language use and of the mechanisms behind the generic male pronoun in English, the first section of the thesis will elaborate on the multiple ways gender is or can be expressed in language, focusing especially on German and English. The following chapter will then explain the connection of language and gender ideologies, which is supposed to shed light on the way language reflects people's thoughts and feelings. Followed by actual features of the English language that foster sexism including the use of the generic male pronoun and its multiple alternatives. Afterwards, the thesis will elaborate on studies concerning gender inclusive language use and how people can be convinced to implement such language not only in formal written context but also in their everyday lives in order to change their mental image of women and men. Finally, the study will be introduced and the findings will be presented and analyzed in detail, followed by a discussion of the results.

2.   Gender in Language

The perception of gender is composed of linguistic and social aspects and gender can therefore be seen as "linguistic category and [as] social construct" (Abudalbuh 2012: 5). In "Gender across languages" Hellinger and Bussmann (2001) illustrate the different possibilities languages have to depict gender on a linguistic level. They elaborate on the "structural properties" (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 2) of languages and focus on the importance of personal pronouns and nouns that are used in order to talk about people and in addition have the capacity to influence the building of identity and the formation of stereotypes (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 2-3). Since the individual's self-awareness also includes gender it is important to raise consciousness on how gender is mediated through the use of language. This is crucial in order to prohibit the exclusion of parts of society by not addressing them. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 2)

When looking at nouns, the assignment of a certain gender depends on the type of noun itself. While the gender classification of personal nouns is often rather clear, the allocation of gender to an inanimate noun is complex and distinguishes between languages. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 3). As an example, Hellinger and Bussmann (2001: 3) show that the noun *sun* has a different grammatical gender in German, in which it is feminine, and in Greek, in which it is masculine. In order to fully understand the mechanism of the construction of gender in a language, it is crucial to be aware of the fact that not all languages have such a strategy to classify their nouns, including English. Languages that have strategies to allocate their nouns into different classes are referred to as classifier languages and noun class languages. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 4).

Classifier languages are typical for East Asia and rely on so called "numeral classifiers" (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 4) which are "functional elements [that] specify the noun's class membership in certain context" (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 4). Therefore, a noun and a numeral (for example, *two*) cannot be linked without the implementation of a classifier. The classifier itself is an independent word that does not belong to the noun and usually describes the shape of the noun. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 4) Noun class languages do not have this restriction to the element of quantification when it comes to the marking of class membership. Here, the class membership leads to agreement with multiple elements surrounding the noun. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 5) Therefore, the noun is linked to a certain class that "structure[s] the entire nominal lexicon" (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 5). These languages

include, for example, German, French and Swahili and are commonly called 'gender languages'. The 'grammatical gender' usually functions as "basis of the typological classification of languages into 'gender languages' and 'genderless languages'" (Abudalbuh 2012: 6). Hellinger and Bussmann (2001: 5) go a step further and define commonly interchangeably used terms 'gender language' and 'noun class language' as two different categories.

German, for instance, is a 'gender language', as it has a limited number of gender categories and its nouns do not have to be marked for gender themselves. They, however, have to agree with other word classes. Here, the lexical aspects of a personal noun usually agree with the gender class the noun belongs to. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 5) With 'noun class languages' there is no immediate connection between a certain category and the personal noun's specific gender. In comparison to 'gender languages', which usually have two or three gender classes, 'noun class languages' tend to have more. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 5-6) In addition, the noun in 'noun class languages' is typically marked for gender itself, for example, with prefixes and "there is extensive agreement on the other word classes" (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 6). All in all, 'gender languages' have a limited number of gender categories and the personal nouns' belonging to a certain class and their lexical gender are closely connected. This grammatical gender type of noun classifications needs two elements interacting with each other to express class membership of certain nouns, namely the noun and other elements. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 6-7). These include "articles, adjectives, pronominals, verbs, numerals, and prepositions" (Abudalbuh 2012: 6).

2.1. Grammatical gender

As mentioned before, there are also languages that do not have grammatical gender. This, however, does not mean that they have no means of conveying gender as there exist multiple other linguistic possibilities. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 6) The next section will elaborate on gender categories including lexical, referential and social gender, which are relevant for all languages, and grammatical gender, which does not influence the representation of gender in every language, in order to draw a connection between the different noun classification concepts explained above and their significance for gender inclusive language use.

As elaborated before, grammatical gender is used to distinguish between gender and genderless languages. It is a rather arbitrary and immanent feature of the noun which determines the connection between the noun itself and the surrounding elements. (Motschenbacher 2014: 245-

246, Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 7). In gender languages the whole nominal lexicon is arranged by grammatical gender. This traditionally means that the noun is either masculine, feminine or neuter. (Motschenbacher 2010: 65) Nevertheless, other gender categories, such as lexical or referential gender, have the ability to rescind the grammatical gender (Abudalbuh 2012: 7). Especially personal nouns are often found to have the same lexical and grammatical gender. For example, *die Frau* meaning 'the woman' where *die* is feminine and *der Mann* meaning 'the man' where *der* is masculine. (Motschenbacher (2010: 66) When there is no lexical gender, the grammatical gender is the one determining the noun's gender perception. In German, terms like *Lehrer* 'teacher' and *Arzt* 'doctor' are not exclusively male on a semantic level but they can be interpreted as male-specific and generic. They, therefore, are usually seen as male and are also more commonly used than the feminine terms to "refer to all-male, mixed-sex, unknown-sex, or even all-female groups of people, which in effect makes them examples of generic masculines" (Motschenbacher 2010: 66).

2.2. Lexical gender

In general, the word *gender* refers to "the property of extra-linguistic (i.e. 'natural' or 'biological') femaleness or maleness" (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 7). Lexical gender only differentiates between male and female, meaning that nouns that are not animate do not possess a lexical gender. Here, it is important to add that not only gender languages but also genderless languages, like English, can have lexical gender. Nouns that are associated with a particular gender in English are, for instance, *mother* as female noun and *father* as male noun. The classification of these personal pronouns is purely lexical, meaning that the terms do not possess grammatical gender. (Abudalbuh 2012: 7) Most of the nouns in English are, however, neutral and do not have a lexical gender, such as *lawyer* or *doctor* (Abudalbuh 2012: 7). The so called "gender-specific" (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 7) require a lexically agreeing element, in English the pronouns *he* or *she*, while the genderless nouns do not have an appropriate equivalent, which often leads to the use of generic pronouns.

As mentioned before, in gender languages, like German, the grammatical gender is usually accordant with the semantic category, especially in connection with kinship nouns like *Tante* 'aunt' as female and *Onkel* 'uncle' as male. Here, the compulsory pronouns are *sie* (feminine) and *er* (masculine). Hence, grammatically feminine forms are lexically female and grammatically masculine forms are also lexically male. (Motschenbacher 2014: 246) However, there are exceptions, for example nouns that have a certain lexical gender, but a different

grammatical one, e.g. *das Mädchen* 'girl' where *das* is neuter, while *Mädchen* is female. (Motschenbacher 2014: 246) Furthermore, there exist nouns that could be seen as gender neutral, as they might address both women and men (Hellinger & Bussmann 2003: 148). Such nouns are, for example, *die Person* 'person', which is grammatically feminine, and *das Mitglied* 'member', which is grammatically neutral. Here, the context and the social background knowledge give information on the right reference in each situation. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2003: 148). Overall, lexical gender is more prominent in languages with grammatical gender, as the surrounding elements "have more gender-variable forms" (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 8).

 "Lexically gendered personal nouns in English (a) and German (b)

(a) woman, man, girl, boy, mother, father, queen, king

(b) Frau 'woman', Mann 'man', Mädchen 'girl', Junge 'boy', Mutter 'mother', Vater 'father', Königin 'queen', König 'king'." (Motschenbacher 2014: 246)

2.3. Referential Gender

Referential gender is concerned with the question who is meant with a noun or pronoun in a certain context (Motschenbacher: 2010: 67). This means that a noun can have a specific grammatical, lexical or social gender, but might be used to refer to men and women (Motschenbacher: 2010: 67). An example is the German expression *Mädchen für alles* 'girl for everything' (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 8). Here, the German word *Mädchen* 'girl', which is grammatically neuter and lexically female, is used to refer to both men and women (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 8). Motschenbacher exemplifies this phenomenon in German and in English with the sentence "*Sie war nicht Herr ihrer Sinne* 'She was not master of her senses'" (Motschenbacher: 2010: 67). Here, the German word *Herr* meaning 'master' is lexically male and grammatically masculine, but refers to a woman or a girl, as the female pronoun *sie*, meaning 'she' is used. In English, the term "*you guys*" (Motschenbacher: 2010: 67) is often used to refer to both male and female people, while it is lexically male. This use of lexically male and grammatically masculine words to address women and girls has led to the development of false generics. Referential gender is also used to allocate gender to a gender-neutral noun like *person*. In this case, the pronouns *she* or *he* that are following the word *person* are not chosen due to the immanent feature of the word but because of a specific context. (Motschenbacher 2014: 67) In Hellinger and Bussmann's project all gender languages

commonly implemented the generic masculine in order to address males and females (2001: 9). As elaborated above, grammatically masculine nouns are universally used to refer to more than male-specific nouns including mixed and all-female groups. The generic use of feminine nouns is an exception, though. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 9) Languages that lack a grammatical gender traditionally apply male generics. In English the generic *he* is used to refer to a genderless singular person such as *the American*. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 10)

"[A]n American drinks his coffee black." (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 10)

This again results in the exclusion of women, as supposedly neutral nouns are no longer neutral. This tradition of discriminating women reflects an androcentric world view that "creates expectations about appropriate female and male behavior" (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 10).

2.4. Social Gender

Social gender is connected to the situation in which gender-neutral nouns are assigned a specific gender due to the affiliation with either women or men as the "stereotypical representative of a social category" (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 11). This means that social gender can be regarded as people's views on what gender traits are typical for certain nouns, especially with job related role nouns. In genderless languages social gender or 'covert gender' is considered salient, as the assigned gender cannot be derived from the nouns' forms, but only from personal pronouns that are implemented with the terms. (Abudalbuh 2012: 12, Motschenbacher 2010: 64)

In English, this phenomenon can, for example, be seen with job related role nouns. Especially higher status job terms (*lawyer, surgeon*) are mainly accompanied by the generic male pronoun *he* in contexts where the gender of the person is unknown. On the contrary, a lot of low status job terms (*secretary*, *nurse*) are usually associated with women and therefore accompanied by a *she*. Even personal nouns that are supposedly gender neutral, like *students* or *patient*, are commonly followed by the generic masculine. Another instance, in which the influence of social gender becomes visible in English is opposite-gender marking (*male nurse*, *female doctor*). (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 11) Motschenbacher (2010: 65) also states that the noun's association with a gender stereotype can be of different severity. He argues that terms like *nurse* and *farmer* are more strongly connected to certain gender stereotypes than for example the word *teacher*. (Motschenbacher 2010: 65) This again means that the current social associations have the capacity to change. (Abudalbuh 2012: 11)

Since the social gender of a noun is independent from the other gender categories, it is less salient in gender languages but still existent. On the one hand it is visible, as people's thoughts about gender are also incorporated in grammatical and lexical gendering of nouns and on the other hand it is rather unobtrusive as a noun's assigned gender is also influenced by grammatical, lexical or referential gender categories. (Abudalbuh 2012: 11) Therefore, the social gender is not the only way to assign gender to a personal pronoun in a gender language. Nevertheless, in German the use of the masculine forms as a generic noun is also very common for high status occupational terms, while the female nouns are used for lower status occupational terms. (Bußmann & Hellinger 2003: 149).

"der Arzt (m) und die Krankenschwester (f) 'the doctor and the nurse'

der Pilot (m) und die Stewardesse (f) 'the pilot and the flight attendant'" (Bußmann & Hellinger 2003: 149).

Even though German, as a gender language, has masculine and feminine personal nouns the implementation is very unbalanced. The different features introduced here that lead to sexism in the English language and to the discrimination of women will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

2.5. Second Language Acquisition and Proficiency

In the final part of this chapter, aspects of second language acquisition and the role of first language transfer will be discussed in order to highlight its importance for gender inclusive language use. Overall, experts seem to agree on the fact that grammatical features of the first language can have a big influence on multiple properties of a second language. This transfer, therefore, has the ability to "affect a wide range of linguistic phenomena" (Franceschina 2005: 38). Second language acquisition is on the one hand interactive and on the other hand dynamic. The learning of a new language is influenced by both of these core elements. As mentioned above, the first language often affects the second language that is acquired and thus makes it an interactive process. What the learners already know about a language, their mother tongue and other languages, always plays a role when learning a new language. In a teaching context, this feature can be used to improve the language learning process. The intensity of the first language's influence also depends on the time when the second language is acquired. The later in life, the more is the development of a new language affected by the already existing linguistic knowledge. (Kootstra, Dijkstra & Starren 2015: 350)

Psycholinguistic research in the last two decades has provided evidence that most sorts of language information, for instance, with respect to pronunciation (phonetics/phonology), words (lexicology), word formation and grammar (morphosyntax), and meaning (semantics) in bilinguals are not stored in longterm memory stores that are separate for each language but are integrated across languages. (Kootstra, Dijkstra & Starren 2015: 350)

When a language is used, all of the knowledge about the individual languages is activated to gather information. Therefore, knowledge about the different languages is connected, for example, when learners produce words and sentences (Kootstra, Dijkstra & Starren 2015: 350).

The second important element of language learning is its dynamic. This means that "[t]he language system goes through profound changes during the lifespan and it is quite sensitive to prolonged and momentary changes in the environment" (Kootstra, Dijkstra & Starren 2015: 350). There are words that are seen, heard or used more often than others and, as a consequence, are accessible more easily. Since the second language is usually used less frequently and acquired later in life, more effort is needed to produce the language. This also means that the more the language is used and the more contact people have with it the higher is their proficiency level. (Kootstra, Dijkstra & Starren 2015: 350)

As a result, the frequency the new language is used with and the language background of second language learners influence their proficiency level (Tremblay 2011: 340). Language proficiency can be understood as "the comprehension and production abilities that [second language] learners develop across linguistic domains (e.g., lexical competence, grammatical competence, discourse competence) and modalities (spoken and written) to communicate" (Tremblay 2011: 340). According to Bachman (1990: 87) overall language competence is made up of organizational and pragmatic competence. The organizational competence is again divided into grammatical competence, concerned with syntax and morphology, and textual competence, concerned with cohesion, vocabulary and organization (Bachman 1990: 86 - 87). The pragmatic competence includes sociolinguistic competence, which comprises "sensitivity to register, naturalness and cultural references" (Bachman 1990: 86) and illocutionary competence meaning the different functions that are achieved through language use. In reality all these competences are connected with each other and with the actual language situation leading to communicative language competence. (Bachman 1990: 86 - 87) A higher language competence might also be beneficial for the correct use of gender neutral language, as being able to understand abstract topics about language and its social consequences is essential for grasping the importance of gender neutral language use. Apart from that the knowledge of how a language depicts gender is also crucial, as not all languages have the same mechanisms, as

explained above. The transfer of the gender mechanisms of the first language might influence second language learners' ability to express gender in the second language in an authentic manner. All aspects considered, it could be argued that a more detailed knowledge about the second language and its ways of portraying gender, makes it easier for second language learners to understand the meaning and the importance of abstract topics like gender inclusive language use.

The next section will elaborate on language or linguistic ideologies and why they are important when analyzing language phenomena. Apart from the fact that most of the feminine nouns are created from the masculine forms, masculine nouns also appear more frequently in written documents like, newspapers or textbooks and are usually also more positively connoted. (Bußmann & Hellinger 2003: 160) This connotation is also connected to different ideologies about gender and the thereby implemented use of certain language features like masculine generic pronouns.

3. Language and Gender Ideologies

The idea that women are subordinate to men and the resulting inequality was the central topic of the feminist ideological critique (Philips 2004: 481). Questioning entrenched language ideologies has been a goal of many political and social events (Cameron 2003: 448). The Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970s, being one of these events, not only focused on women's personal lives, but also on their stance in public. Feminists started to capture the topic of language ideologies in their writing long before the term was coined in the present sense (Cameron 2003: 448). The Feminist movement is also seen as the cornerstone of the development of "[t]he gender and language literature in linguistics, sociology, and anthropology" (Philips 2004: 480). The movement had a new and feminist viewpoint of women's role and focused especially on language use. There are multiple ways in which women are discriminated by the use of language according to the feminist critique. Even the semantic structure of a language contributes to the exclusion and reduction of women in the English language. Apart from being rendered invisible by the implementation of generic male pronoun *he*, women are also considered to have a less powerful and more polite way of speaking than men. As a result, they are silenced in conversation and their ideas and views are not heard. (Philips 2004: 481) Academic linguists soon started to investigate the excluding consequences this view of women had and still has on their stance in political, professional and private surroundings. Ideology can, therefore, be seen as an essential part of the evaluation of gender and language disparities. (Philips 2004: 481) Research in this area also brought forward the idea that "stylistic differences in language use could be the basis for social inequality" (Philips 2004: 483). The results of multiple studies on gender and language inequality have, therefore, a crucial role in the creation of the idea of language ideologies. (Philips 2004: 483)

As a consequence, it is essential to also have a close look at language ideologies when analyzing social and linguistic phenomena, as they are the linkage between the language that is being used and the meaning it has in connection to "group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology" (Woolard & Schiefflelin 1994: 55). In other words, ideologies of language represent the link between social structures and the way people use language in them (Woolard & Schiefflelin 1994: 55). Even though there has been no core literature concerning language ideology for a long time, scholars agree that finding out how and why people use language to describe their surrounding world and what those speaking people think about it, is worth the investigation (Woolard & Schiefflelin 1994: 55).

3.1. Looking for a Definition

As a result of the long missing core literature, there is also no consensus about the definition of language or linguistic ideologies, leading to multiple possibilities (Kroskrity 2004: 496). Overall, the definitions can be roughly structured into three groups that all have a different emphasis. Some pay attention to the agency and the awareness of the speaker, others focus on interest groups and others again have a closer look on the connection between the linguistic and the social structures (Abudalbuh 2012: 13).

Silverstein says "that ideologies about language, or linguistic ideologies, are any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein 1979: 193). The most interesting aspect of his definition is the assumption that ideologies are constructed from experiences and then summarized to a category (Woolard 1992: 241). Woolard tries to clarify that rationalizations do not only explain but also influence and change linguistic structures (Woolard 1992: 241). His approach basically claims that "to 'understand' one's own linguistic usage is potentially to change it" (Silverstein 1979: 233) and therefore highlights the importance of speakers' agency and awareness (Abudalbuh 2012: 13).

Another, rather concise definition of language ideology is that of Alan Rumsey (Kroskrity 2004: 496). His definition is based on Silverstein's and views the term as "shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world" (Rumsey 1990: 346). Rumsey, however, focuses more on different interest groups, which can be political, religious or social. These groups usually have a common position, which might not be a linguistic one, and, therefore, try to bring attention to their views in order to influence linguistic policies and rules. Rumsey additionally argues that one has "to consider, for each social formation, whose interests are served by the linguistic ideology's taking the form that it does" (Rumsey 1990: 356). An example for such an interest group would be feminists. After the feminist movement the once generally used generic *he* in a sentence like (1) would have been the preferred version of sentence (2):

   (1) A student is good if he studies hard.
   (2) A student is good if he or she studies hard.

This development shows how a certain interest group, in this case feminists, changed a standard rule in English grammar by criticizing and standing up against its discriminating impact on

women (Kroskrity 2004: 497). In accordance with Silverstein's view, Rumsey briefly summarizes:

> In short, language structure and linguistic ideology are not entirely independent of each other, nor is either determined entirely by the other. Instead the structure provides formal categories of a kind that are particularly conducive to "misrecognition" in terms of our ideologically enforced disjunction between things in the real world and ways of talking about them. And partly as a result of that misrecognition, might not the linguistic system gradually change so as to approximate that for which it was misrecognized? (Rumsey 1990: 357)

Perfect examples for Silverstein's and Rumsey's consideration are the T/V pronoun shift and the problematization of the generic male pronoun use in English (Woolard 1992: 242).

Other definitions of language ideologies have a more sociocultural focus. Here, the ideologies are designed from certain political and economic positions which shape and influence the thoughts about language (Kroskrity 2004: 497). William Labov, for example, already saw people's differentiating language use dependent on their socioeconomic background, economic or political views (Irvine 1989: 248). This assumption means that "the class connotations of variants influence the direction of change in the linguistic system" (Irvine 1989: 248). Irvine herself sees language ideologies as multiple and defines them as "cultural (or subcultural) system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine 1989: 255).

Most of the definitions of language ideologies discussed above see, despite their differences, their origin in a certain social position (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 58). Instead of focusing on only one main feature Kroskrity (2004: 501) argues that language ideology can best be seen as a 'cluster concept' which consists of multiple overlapping dimensions. He differentiates five of these dimensions when trying to define language ideologies (Kroskrity 2004: 501). The five layers include "(1) group or individual interests, (2) multiplicity of ideologies, (3) awareness of speakers, (4) mediating functions of ideologies, and (5) role of language ideology in identity construction" (Kroskrity 2004: 501).

In a very straightforward sense language ideologies are conceptions and uses of language that represent imperfect or halfway successful efforts to rationally explain language use (Kroskrity 2004: 496). These explanations are usually connected to a certain context and influenced by people's personal and social experiences (Kroskrity 2004: 496). Linguistic ideology can therefore be interpreted as a social process, which entails multiple ideas fighting for "recognition of variation and contestation within a community as well as contradictions within

individuals" (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 71). Considering language ideologies is of utmost importance to grasping the development of linguistic structures (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 69).

Woolard and Schieffelin nicely summarize the importance of language ideology:

> The topic of language ideology is a much needed bridge between linguistic and social theory, because it relates the microculture of communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality, confronting macro social constraints on language behavior […]. (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 72)

In other words, ideologies deal with the conjunction of "diverse cultural categories as language, spelling, grammar, nation, gender, simplicity, intentionality, authenticity, knowledge, development, power, and tradition" (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 72). However, studies and research on themes such as politeness, purism and pronoun use have just provoked the question of whose demand is fulfilled by the present language ideology and what consequences its meaning has for society (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 72). Similarly, studies have started to examine the controversial use of generic language as a possible ideological problem (Abudalbuh 2012: 17).

3.2. Feminist Language Ideology

As mentioned in the introduction, the generic male pronoun use is an aspect of the English language that is slowly changing due to the efforts of a certain interest group, namely feminists (Kroskrity 2004: 497). However, the use of generic pronouns is still a controversial topic, which is represented in their differentiating use by multiple interest groups, for example, men and women. It could, therefore, be assumed that those variations in the use of generic pronouns might also depict different ideologies. (Abudalbuh 2012: 17)

In respect to generic pronoun use there are two opposing ideologies that are either for or against the implementation of gender inclusive language. One ideology therefore does advocate the use of a generic male pronoun. "[T]raditional prescriptive linguists and grammarians" (Abudalbuh 2012: 18), the two separate groups representing this androcentric view, have different reasons for enforcing an epicene masculine pronoun. The latter on the one hand worry about the correctness of the English language and how it could be influenced by gender fair language (Abudalbuh 2012: 18). Prescriptive linguists on the other hand do not see the necessity of gender inclusive language as they believe generic male language to be free of any ideological sense (Abudalbuh 2012: 18). This ideology is usually advocated by men who, of course, are

advantaged socially and economically by the implementation of a generic male pronoun (Abudalbuh 2012: 17).

The other ideology is concerned with gender inclusive language use and advocates the use of neutral pronouns such as *they* or at least female and male inclusive forms like *he or she*. This ideology is mostly represented by feminists and women in general whose goal is equality and fairness. (Abudalbuh 2012: 18) Here, the advocates' beliefs are connected to the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, [which makes statements] about how the use of language shapes the speaker's view of the world" (Abudalbuh 2012: 18). Some advocates of such a gender inclusive ideology denounce the unfair effect generic masculine pronouns have while others are interested in the political correctness. In the end, both representatives call for gender inclusive language use in order to include everyone, not only men. (Abudalbuh 2012: 19)

Language and linguistic ideologies can have a big impact on how people view the world. They do not only represent what people want but also influence their communication, their language. The ideas feminist ideology advocates are crucial cornerstones for equal language use and therefore for the inclusion of women. Especially the rejection of generic masculine pronoun use is a big step towards this aim. However, the use of the male generic pronoun is just one of the aspects of the English language that discriminates women. The next section will in addition elaborate on the morphological and syntactic features that build the cornerstone for the development of both gender ideologies and lead to the discrimination and the exclusion of women and sexism in the English language in more detail.

4.   Language Features and Sexism in the English Language

As discussed in section two there are multiple ways a language allocates gender to a noun. English as a so-called genderless language, makes use of lexical, referential and social gender. (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 6) There exist multiple linguistic features in the English language which were partly already mentioned in the second chapter and whose use has led to sexism. "Sexism is a form of prejudice or discriminatory treatment based on a person's sex" (Lorenzi-Cioldi & Kulich 2015: 693). As discussed in the chapter above, language is not only a reflection of the society, but can be seen as "means of constructing and maintaining that society" (Guimei 2010: 332). The linguistic features that will be elaborated on below are examples of how language has the power to influence reality while being a depiction of the society that uses it.

4.1. Morphological Features

On a morphological level, features of sexist language use include derivation and the use of compound words when referring to women. Derivation is a form of word formation where a word is changed with the help of an affix that is normally a bound morpheme. The new word that is formed this way usually carries a different meaning and might belong to another category than the original word. (Guimei 2010: 332) In English the affixes *-ess* and *-ette* are used to build the female version of a male word, leading to the notion of women being a deduction of men (Guimei 2010: 332). Examples of this kind of derivation include words like "*actor/actress, duke/duchess or prince/princess*" (Guimei 2010: 332). However, the attachment of such an affix means more than just the adaption of gender. The female form is often associated with a lesser, more trivial and depending meaning, showing the subordination of women to men. (Guimei 2010: 332)

The affixation might also shed light on the relationship between the female and the male term, as in *governor* and *governess*. Here the former refers to a ruler, someone in power with a lot of influence, while the latter refers to a woman working as a home educator for children. The feminine form is clearly connected to a lower social class. Masculine forms are in addition more commonly used and often have more meanings attached to them than the female version, representing the overall lower status of women in society. (Guimei 2010: 332)

The other morphological feature that expresses sexism in English is the formation of compound words. As already mentioned in the second chapter, English words are usually not marked for gender and therefore grammatically neutral. Nevertheless, many supposedly genderless words,

especially occupational terms, such as *lawyer*, *doctor* or *judge* are seen as either more male or more female. Guimei beautifully illustrated this with the following sentences:

1) "My cousin is an engineer.
2) My cousin is a nurse" (Guimei 2010: 333).

He further explains how in (1) the majority thinks of a male person and in (2) of a female person. This result also shows that well paid, high class occupations are usually connected to men. When a woman holds such a position either a suffix as discussed above or a compound word is added such as *female doctor* or *madam chairman*. (Guimei 2010: 333-334) Pauwels (2008: 553) states that "the structure of the lexicon" usually represents the "'male as norm' principle through the phenomenon of lexical gaps, that is, the absence of words to denote women in a variety of roles, professions, and occupations" (Pauwels 2008: 553). Nevertheless, there are professions that require less education, are paid less and are lower in status and mostly reserved for women. However, as soon as men enter these fields of profession, the existing gaps are immediately filled. In addition, the male form of these terms often becomes the new norm. (Pauwels 2008: 553) A good example can be found in German, the term *Hebamme*, meaning 'midwife', was changed to *Entbindungspfleger*, meaning 'birthing assistant', after more men had entered the professional field. The result is that the feminine term was altered to *Entbindungspflegerin* deriving from the new male term with the help of the suffix *-in*. (Pauwels 2008: 553) A similar situation can be found with the term *Krankenschwester*, meaning 'nurse', which was changed to *Krankenpfleger* and *Krankenpflegerin*. This beautifully reflects how male dominated and androcentric our society still is and how language use can foster such ideologies, especially in the occupational world.

4.2. Syntactic Features

Syntactic features of sexist language use include most notably generic language features that lead to discrimination. The noun *man* is a typical example of the use of a generic noun. While *man* and *woman* are supposed to be two "equal components of human race [they] are actually not equal in English lexicon" (Guimei 2010: 334). Apart from the meaning *male human*, the word *man* also refers to the entire human race as generic noun. Guimei exemplifies this with some examples: "*All men must die. / Man is a social animal*" (2010: 334). This way of using male nouns renders women invisible. The term *man* is usually also much more positively connoted that the female term *woman*, as the following exemplifications show: "*be one's own man*: be able to arrange and decide things independently [versus] *[m]ake an honest woman of*

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somebody: marry somebody having had sexual relationship with her" (Guimei 2010: 335). The idiom including the female term *woman* has here a rather pejorative undertone. Guimei (2010: 355) further states that this phenomenon is also visible when investigating lexicon as the term *man* has a lot more idioms with positive meaning than the term *woman*. Overall, it can again be seen that the English language centers on men.

The maybe most prominent use of generic male forms and also the focal point of this paper and the following study is the implementation of the epicene male pronoun in the English language. Whenever a noun, such as *student*, *teacher* or *doctor* is used in singular form and with a generic reference, the tradition suggests the use of the generic masculine *he*. This epicene pronoun is supposed to refer to both, men and women; however, in reality it leads to the exclusion of women. (Guimei 2010: 335) The following section will elaborate on the background of the generic male pronoun *he* in English. The possible solutions for the existing dilemma will also be discussed in more detail including the arising issues of the gender inclusive alternatives.

4.3. Male Generic Pronoun Use in English

The English language lacks an epicene gender-neutral pronoun which is needed when referring to a genderless singular third person.[1] Finding a solution for this problem has been a very controversial topic for centuries (Everett 2011: 134). There have been multiple attempts to implement a universal version of a genderless pronoun including the singular *they*, the generic *he*, *he and she* versions etc. (Bodine 1975: 133). In 1850 grammar books prescribed the use of the generic male pronoun *he* as a possible answer to the debate. However, the generic masculine is lacking the intended gender inclusiveness as it excludes women from any discourse. (Stringer & Hopper 1998: 209) Before the generic *he* was implemented the singular *they* was the common solution when referring to a genderless singular referent until it was discarded due to it being ungrammatical (Bodine 1975: 131). Prescriptive grammarians tried to highlight the fact that *they* does not work as sex-indefinite option for a singular third person, as it is plural. Even though the alternative, the generic masculine, agrees in number it does not include half of the population, namely women. (Bodine 1975: 131). Bodine (1975: 133) also argues that the decision for the generic *he* and against the other options does not rely on objectivity but rather

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[1] An earlier version of this section was part of a seminar paper written for the course Linguistics Seminar: THE LEXICON (lecturer: Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Christiane Dalton-Puffer) in winter semester 2017/18

on the "androcentric world-view [as] linguistically, human beings were to be considered male unless proven otherwise".

Since the 1970s more and more people started to highlight that the pronoun was everything but gender neutral. The generic *he* has been criticized, especially by feminists, for its discriminating effect. (Stringer & Hopper 1998: 209) According to Everett (2011: 136) there exist multiple studies that show that sexist tendencies are enforced by the use of a generic masculine. This assumption is also supported by Gastil (1990: 638) and Mackay (1980: 357) who both state that the so frequently applied generic *he* is not perceived as gender inclusive as people tend to imagine a male image. As a result, other alternatives such as *he or she* variants, *s/he*, *one*, and the singular *they* are in the picture again. Especially the singular *they* seems to be of more importance again, as an increase from 32 % in Meyers' (1990) to 81 % in Matossian's (1997) study shows. In Lascotte's study most participants applied the singular *they* as well, stressing its gender inclusiveness (2016: 76). However, most of the options have downsides of their own when it comes to their use as a sex-indefinite singular third person pronoun. (Madson & Hessling 1999: 560)

4.4. Gender Inclusive Alternatives

The *he or she* versions, as in *If an artist runs out of paint he or she will not be able to finish the painting.*, are an alternative that agrees in number and includes male and female people. However, there exist studies that show that the *he or she* constructions are actually not used very commonly by English native speakers (Martyna 1978, Meyers 1990). Meyers shows that only in 22 % of the cases *he or she* was used when referring to a singular genderless person (Meyers 1990: 233). In Lascotte's study the *he or she* version was only applied 9 % of the time when referring back to the genderless singular antecedent "the ideal student" (2016: 68). According to Matossian (1997) it is an option that is barley applied in written and spoken context. This might be attributable to the fact that *he or she* variations are often considered too long and ungraceful when used multiple times in writing and also very inconvenient in spoken language (Madson & Hessling 1999: 561).

The *s/he* alternative, as in *If an artist runs out of paint s/he will not be able to finish the painting.*, has the disadvantage of not having case forms and of sounding like *she* when spoken out loud, leading to a generic female form (Madson & Hessling 1999: 561). The generic female *she* would be another possibility, however, it is rarely used by people. In Meyers' (1990: 234) study it was only applied 4 % of the time and in Lascotte's (2016: 68) study it was not used at all to

refer to a singular genderless referent. According to Cameron (1985: 88) applying the generic female *she* might not work as a generic pronoun, but it can help to raise awareness.

Another possibility is the use of *one* which is, however, not always animate as in *The books are colored, one is yellow and the other one is green*. (Everett 2011: 134). The rather simple solution of using pluralization is also an option for avoiding the issue of a lacking genderless singular third person pronoun. However, the implementation of the plural can cause ambiguity, when the *they* can refer to more than one plural noun in a sentence. Another issue might be that rearranging the sentence has the ability to influence the meaning when the text was supposed to talk about a singular person. (Madson & Hessling 1999: 571)

As mentioned before the singular *they*, as in *If an artist runs out of paint they will not be able to finish the painting.*, has one problematic feature as it is still a plural referring to a singular referent. Nevertheless, its usage as genderless singular pronoun has increased again in the last years. (Everett 2011: 134) Madson and Hessling argue that the singular *they* is a very natural alternative, as it does not need the text to be altered or "the use of artificial constructions" (1999: 571). Apart from that the singular *they* is also perceived as best option by people in combination with "corporate or indefinite nouns like 'someone', 'everybody', and 'anyone'" (Madson & Hessling 1999: 572). Mackay underlines this view with the results of a study he conducted, in which people tended to make use of the singular *they* when referring to a sex-indefinite singular third person, despite the partially prescribed generic masculine (Mackay 1980: 355). A more recent study by Lascotte (2016: 62) shows that even though the generic *he* is still often seen as the prescribed option, it does not represent the authentic pronoun use of English native speakers.

Nevertheless, when it comes to people's perception of gender inclusiveness in connection with the singular *they* Madson and Hessling (1999: 572) state that like other words that are supposed to be sex-indefinite, the singular *they* is also only seen as male by men and women. Other authors do not fully support this claim, though. Gastil (1990: 638), for example, argues that it is mainly men who imagine male pictures, while women generally see the singular *they* as genderless. Overall, women tend to use a more gender inclusive language than men and are also more diverse in their use of different options for gender neutral language. (Meyers 1990: 234). Mackay's study reveals that the singular *they* is perceived as gender inclusive by people (1980: 357). In Lascotte's study the participants generally coincided that the singular *they* addresses both men and women (2016: 74). Although Madson and Hessling (1999: 571) highlight the "potential quantitative imperfection" (Madson & Hessling 1999: 571) of the singular *they* and

stress that people might still perceive it as male biased, they agree that it is an acceptable option to avoid the problematic issues that arise with the use of a generic masculine.

As elucidated in the section above, there is a lot of research about the use of generic pronouns and also a lot of different opinions and perceptions in connection with the multiple options that have been in use in order to address a genderless singular referent. One aspect the entire literature agrees on is the fact that a generic male pronoun leads to a sexist worldview as it excludes women from context. The studies mentioned above support the fact that people who are aware of the problematic impact the generic *he* has tend to use the singular *they* as it includes all genders. Other options including *he or she* constructions, the inanimate *one* and the generic female *she* are applied less frequently due to multiple reasons. However, most of these studies, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5, mostly concentrate on the generic pronoun use of English native speakers, while the use of genderless singular pronouns of second language learners and their awareness of its implications is barely examined. It is crucial for people's implementation of gender inclusive language to know, not only how the language they are acquiring depicts gender, but also how their mother tongue might influence them. After having elaborated on multiple, linguistic features that contribute to the discrimination of women in the English language the next chapter will deal with the consequences of gender exclusive language use and demonstrate these with the help of two prominent issues in the occupational world. Afterwards, the question of how people decide to implement gender inclusive language will be discussed (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 943).

5.   People's Language Choice

The feminist language movement was and still is working on reaching an equal representation of women and men in our society and in language. An essential part of achieving women's inclusion and visibility is taking linguistic action. (Pauwels 2008: 554) Use of non-sexist and gender inclusive language in writing is something that was only partly enforced by the government and by "the prescriptive language requirements of scientific and other professional associations" (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 943). The feminist language movement is a bottom-up driven movement and therefore had hardly any access possibilities or contact to language authorities to introduce change in society. These academic or educational language planning authorities were usually not supportive of the idea of gender inclusive language. (Pauwels 2008: 560) Nevertheless, the movement's changes, and discussions concerning gender inclusive or exclusive language use can be seen as a form of language planning (Pauwels 2008: 552). Today, non-sexist language policies are increasingly found in the public spheres and in larger private organizations, like the UNESCO (Pauwels 2008: 561). However, people can still decide whether to implement these gender inclusive prescriptions in their personal everyday language use (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 943).

5.1. Consequences of Exclusive Language Use

As already mentioned before, language use in daily life has an impact on gender stereotyping, as it "functions as a device not only for transferring information but also for expressing social categorizations and hierarchies" (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 943). An example for this phenomenon can be the perception of occupational role nouns. The word *doctor* usually makes people imagine a male person, while the word *secretary* tends to create a female picture in people's minds. (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 943). It is, therefore, interesting and important to have a closer look at why people choose to use gender inclusive language or not and whether it is a deliberate act (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 943-944).

Male centered language use leads to the exclusion and invisibility of women in society. A reason why gender exclusive language had and still has such an enormous impact is that it is a very subliminal way of creating pictures about women and men. (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 944) A very demonstrative example of this phenomenon is the effect of job advertisements using masculine generics (*he/his*) on female applicants. Here, women tend to feel a distance between themselves and the position that is being advertised and therefore might

not even consider an application. (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 944) According to Sczesny, Moser and Wood (2015: 944) "due to the close link between language and cognitive representations, language use activates associated cognitive concepts and schemata and may thereby perpetuate stereotypical thinking and expectations".

At this point two additional features that discriminate women in the occupational world will be discussed before addressing the topic of motivating people to make use of gender inclusive language.[2]. Not only the use of the male generic pronoun *he* has an excluding effect on women. The first additional item that will be elaborated is the practice of referring to grown women as *girls*. Women are placed underneath men again, this time in terms of age (Sigley & Holmes 2002: 139). Referring to women as *girls* is a well-researched phenomenon that is confirmed by many linguists. Among them is Bolinger who states that women are much more commonly referred to as *girl* than men as *boy*. (Sigley & Holmes 2002: 139) It was also Bolinger who made the famous statement "a female never grows up" (Bolinger 1980: 100). This comment beautifully depicts the concerning impact the issue has on women's stance, especially in the workplace (Sigley & Holmes 2002: 139). Lakoff and Buchholtz (2004) give further examples of this disparity between men and women. They argue that while men are usually not addressed with the term *boy* unless it is supposed to create "an air of adolescent frivolity and irresponsibility" (Lakoff & Bucholtz 2004: 56), women are much more commonly referred to as *girls*, regardless of their actual age and the appropriateness of the situation (Lakoff & Bucholtz 2004: 56). Another example is the habit of women to call their own grown up female friends *girlfriends*. Men, however, rarely refer to their male friends as *boyfriends*. (Lakoff & Bucholtz 2004: 56). The same schemata are true for the term *girls' night*, which can also be found in German 'Mädlsabend'.

It can of course be argued that calling someone *girl* is supposed to be a compliment referring to the youthfulness of the person addressed with the term. Yet, it much more likely highlights their immaturity (Lakoff & Bucholtz 2004: 56). Bolinger (1980: 90) underlines this statement that indicates the need of further upbringing by claiming that children "apt to be cherished when they keep their place and disciplined when they do not". The fact that women are connected to the attributes of a child depicts how low their stance in society and in people's minds is (Lakoff

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[2] An earlier version of this section was part of a pro-seminar paper written for the course Proseminar Linguistics 1, Group 4, (lecturer: Mag.a Beate Clayson-Knollmayr, M.A.) in summer semester 2016

& Bucholtz 2004: 56). "Would you elect president a person incapable of putting on her own coat?" (Lakoff & Bucholtz 2004: 56) is the perfect question to look at the issue from a different angle. Here, Lakoff and Buchholtz (2004: 56) also emphasize that even though the wife of a male president is called *First Lady*, there is no equivalent term for the husband of a female president. That is how unlikely a female president is for the society in which women are supposedly equal to men.

In the occupational world women's reputation and power is undermined by referring to them as *girl* (Holmes & Sigley 2002: 258). The term *girl* is also often used to address and describe women in low-income jobs in order to refer to their level of responsibility. This habit creates "a linguistic version of the 'glass ceiling'" (Holmes & Sigley 2002: 260) meaning the phenomenon of keeping well-educated women from reaching higher position in the workplace (Bosse & Taylor 2012: 52). Professional organizations prescribe not to use the term *girl* to refer to grown up women due to its discriminating effect. It is only appropriate when addressing a child or a female person in adolescence. (Cralley & Ruscher 2005: 300). According to Sigley and Holmes (2002: 153) the use of the term has only started to decrease slightly.

All these examples above show that the generic *he* is just one of the many features of the English language that excludes and discriminates women. The term *girl* for a woman is obviously something that should not be used anymore as well. Nevertheless, people are still applying the word *girl* when referring to a woman without being aware of the consequences. Raising awareness and encouraging people to rethink their everyday language use is a start to change women's place in society and in the occupational world. Another discriminating feature that is still very prominent today is the form of address used to refer to women and men. It once more makes women inferior and dependent on men in everyday life. Nowadays, there exist three options in English in order to address a woman, namely *Mrs.*, *Miss*, or *Ms.* (Holmes 2000: 142). When addressing a male person, there is however, only one option, namely *Mr.* (Holmes 2000: 142). With the two versions *Mrs.* and *Miss* women are defined trough their marital status, using *Mrs.* for married and *Miss* for unmarried women (Atkins-Sayre 2005: 8). When all the feminist movements took place in the nineteen seventies, women began to realize the impact titles and forms of address have on the way people are perceived and started to reject these discriminating terms (Atkins-Sayre 2005: 8). As a result, the new option *Ms.* emerged with the goal of diminishing the effects of the terms that had been used before (Atkins-Sayre 2005: 8). It was supposed to "create a new woman […] as an independent human being" (Atkins-Sayre 2005: 8).

Women that decided or even demanded to be referred to by *Ms.* instead of *Mrs.* or *Miss* were labeled as extremely feminist and liberal (Kuhn 2007: 1). Hence, especially married women, therefore, often wanted to be referred to as *Mrs.* instead of *Ms.* in order to openly show their status and distance themselves from the feminist movement (Magner 2002: 274). Hellinger and Bussmann (2002: 16) added that the new form of address can also "transmit (originally) unintended messages, as in the case of Australian English *Ms.* 'divorced' or 'feminist'". The option *Miss* highlighting that a woman is unmarried is also still applied, especially in the context of beauty contests using terms like *Miss America* (Magner 2002: 274). Laine and Watson (2014: 15) claim that the majority of women is still "usually classified according to their marital status". Nevertheless, according to them the use of *Miss* has declined. Laine and Watson (2002), however, also reveal the probably most problematic issue with the new alterative. The term *Ms.* simply functions as substitute for *Miss*, thereby enabling the society to keep addressing women with "androcentric social titles" (Laine & Watson 2014: 15). Kuhn supports this argumentation by claiming that *Ms.* completely failed to fulfill its original purpose of freeing women from discrimination (Kuhn 2007: 4). Furthermore, she suggests abolishing the two terms *Miss* and *Ms.* and their discriminating features altogether and proposes to only use the form of address *Mrs.* as counterpart of the male version *Mr.* (Kuhn 2007: 4).

The issues discussed above show how many features of the English language are used to exclude and discriminate women. There are multiple attempts to even out this gender unbalance by trying to introduce alternative terms and by making people aware of their language use. Nevertheless, it is difficult to really achieve a change as the attempts are often undermined by habit and tradition. These circumstances leave women out, thereby suppressing them in everyday life and language. The more important it is to find ways to motivate people to use gender fair language and making them aware of its consequences for all the women in the society.

5.2. Motivations for Inclusive Language Use

There are multiple assumptions concerning the reason why people use gender inclusive language. Quite some research comes to the conclusion that "gender-related belief systems" (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 944) have the ability to make people choose particular language forms (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 944). Gender ideologies are therefore also an important factor when it comes to gender inclusive language use. In Rubin, Greene and

Schneider's (1994) study, for example, participants with a more male-oriented world view also implemented more gender exclusive language than participants with a more gender fair view (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 944). Another study by Jacobson and Insko (1985), in which the participants had to fill out sentence completions tasks by combining personal pronouns (*he*/*she* etc.) and nouns (*the client*/*the lawyer*), also revealed that participants with sexist tendencies implemented gender inclusive language less frequently (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 944). Sczesny, Moser & Wood (2015: 951) support these findings with their studies which revealed that people who promote sexist gender ideologies also make the conscious decision to use gender exclusive language, in order to uphold their patriarchic world view. Overall, men also tend to make more use of gender exclusive language, for example, by using male generic pronouns more frequently (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 944). It can be seen that personal attitudes and beliefs concerning gender equality are closely connected to the use of gender inclusive language (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 944).

Lascotte (2016) conducted a study on the pronoun use of English native speakers in free response to open questions. The study was conducted via an online social media portal and was accessible to multiple people from the United States (Lascotte 2016: 64). Overall, responses of 38 men and women aged 18 to 59 were analyzed in the study (Lascotte 2016: 66). The participants were not aware of the topic of the study when starting the survey in order to achieve authentic language use (Lascotte 2016: 64). The main questions the respondents had to answer were "What does it mean to be an ideal student? What does an ideal student need to do? If the student doesn't do this, what are the consequences?" (Lascotte 2016: 64). Afterwards, the participants were also asked about their personal preferences on pronoun use in formal and informal situations (Lascotte 2016: 65). The results of Lascotte's study (2016) show that most participants (79%) made use of a gender fair option (*he or she* variants or the singular *they*) when referring back to a singular, genderless referent. 68 % of the participants in Lascotte's study that used a gender inclusive form chose the singular *they* (Lascotte 2016: 62).

Abudalbuh (2012) conducted a study on pronoun use and gender roles that included not only English native speakers but also second language learners of English with an Arabic language background. The group of English native speakers consisted of 50 participants and they were all undergraduate students at the University of Kansas (Abudalbuh 2012: 57). The group of Arabic native speakers consisted of 100 participants and they were all majors at Yarmouk University in Jordan. All participants were in the age group of 18 – 24 years. The participants had to fill in a survey consisting of two parts. The first part was a sentence completion task in

which the respondents had to complete sentences like "If a mechanic is paid on time," (Abudalbuh 2012: 62). In the second task participants had to allocate a gender to the nouns used in the sentences from task one (Abudalbuh 2012: 62). The results of the sentence completion task showed that 51 % of the native speakers made use of gender fair language in these sentences. 49 % of them chose the singular *they* to refer back to the noun in the sample sentence. (Abudalbuh 2012: 66) The results of Lascotte's (2016) and Abudalbuh's (2012) studies indicate that English native speakers tend to prefer the use of the singular *they* when referring to a singular genderless noun. The majority of second language learners of English with an Arabic language background (71%) made use of the male generic pronoun in Abudalbuh's study (2012: 67).

Sczesny, Moser and Wood (2015) also conducted studies on gender inclusive language use. The first study focused on the participants' attitude towards gender fair language in connection with their use of personal nouns. The 278 participants were all native speakers of German and were asked to fill in an online questionnaire consisting of 10 sample texts with blanks. In addition, the participants were asked about their past language behavior and about their personal attitudes towards gender inclusive language. (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 946). The whole questionnaire was repeated with the same participants two weeks later to get a clearer picture of their authentic language use (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 945). The second study also included 10 sample texts with blanks to fill in, however, the follow-up questions focused on the participants' sexist beliefs (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 949). As discussed above, language use is often affected by personal beliefs and broader belief systems which together "contribute to the attitudes and social norms that guide behavioral intentions" (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 945). This influenced habitual behavior then again has a big impact on whether people use or are even aware of gender inclusive language, without them even realizing it (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 945). Thus, language use in general can not only be guided by controlled decisions, but also by unintentional mechanisms which might be triggered "habitually by environmental cues" (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 945). Such language habits might be learned through imitation of social standards a society holds or through deliberate practice that later becomes a habit. No matter how these habits are developed, as soon as they are engraved they are usually used automatically without intention. (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 945). Even though it is a well-known fact that gender exclusive language leads to discrimination and the exclusion of women in society, the studies of Sczesny, Moser and Wood (2015: 953) revealed that the implementation of gender fair language was low among German and Swiss participants as the majority of them almost exclusively used male centric language. Beyond

that, the studies confirmed that potential use of gender inclusive language stems from conscious and habitual mechanisms. These results also mean that in order to broadly implement fair language use it might be expedient to implement such structures as soon as possible in people's everyday language use. Moreover, people should be made aware what their own language practice might lead to and how important gender fair language use is in diminishing gender inequality and the exclusion of women in order to change their habit of male generic language use. (Sczesny, Moser & Wood 2015: 951-953)

The question now is how to convince people to accept and to actually use gender fair language. To answer this problem Koeser and Sczesny (2014) conducted a study in which they tried to persuade people to use gender inclusive language with the help of strong arguments. Their results show that confronting people with arguments for gender fair language does increase the implementation of gender inclusive forms (Koeser & Sczesny 2014: 555). Women tended to adapt gender inclusive language more frequently after reading persuasive messages, while men were more stable in their gender exclusive language use. This might also be explained with people's attitudes that already existed. This outcome also means that it is possible to influence language behavior with training. (Koeser & Sczesny 2014: 555) Participants were willing to change their language use on a behavioral level, however, attitudes were not really altered. Koeser and Sczesny (2014: 556) state that it might need a more intensive and longer exposure to reasons for gender inclusive language use and its forms in order to achieve a shift in people's mindset and make gender fair language use a habit.

As elucidated in the chapter above, it is very important to confront people with the effects of gender exclusive language. Most people know that gender inclusive language is something that should be used. Nevertheless, it is still crucial to give them arguments for using gender fair language and especially doing this over a long period of time in order to create habitual usage. All these suggestions are good starting points for native speaker. When it comes to second language acquisition, however, another aspect is very crucial for the use of gender inclusive language, namely learning the differences between linguistic features of the languages. Knowing the different ways languages have in order to depict and express gender can be an important cornerstone for using gender inclusive language correctly. This also means that higher language proficiency can possibly influence people's use of gender fair language. In the following, the study of the present thesis will be introduced and the results will be analyzed in detail.

6.   The Present Study

As mentioned above, it is crucial to make people aware of their language use in order to influence their use of gender inclusive language. Therefore, the present study investigates the generic pronoun use of people in connection with occupational role nouns. There are multiple studies about the generic pronoun use of English native speakers, however, not so much research has been conducted on the personal English language use of second language learners. Although it would be very important for second language learners to have a detailed knowledge about how the language they are acquiring depicts gender and how their own mother tongue influences them when implementing gender inclusive language. This thesis therefore focuses on second language learners of English that have a German language background. The study is supposed to make the participants aware of their own language use and show them how important gender fair language is and, even more crucial, that it is also possible in the English language. The survey used in the study consists of three main parts that are supposed to raise the participants' awareness of the points mentioned above. The first section includes a riddle the respondents should try and solve.

> A young man and his father are in an auto accident; the father is killed and the young man is rushed to the hospital. The surgeon, upon entering the room and seeing the patient, exclaims, ['Oh my God, I can't operate; it's my son!'] How is this to be explained? (Kramarae & Treichler 1985: 436)

The second part consists of an open gap task in which the participants are asked to fill in a referent for a certain job related role noun. The gaps in the sentences are designed in a way that prompts the participants' pronouns use. Afterwards, people are asked to allocate a gender to the personal nouns used in the second task. Finally, respondents get a chance to solve the riddle again and give their opinion on gender inclusive language use.

6.1. Hypotheses and Questions

Overall, the study is supposed to shed light on whether second language learners of English who have a German language background and study at the University of Vienna use gender inclusive language and whether they are aware of its meaning and implications. Research questions for the first main part of the questionnaire, the gap filling task, include:

1) Are second language learners able to solve the riddle?
2) Do the participants that solve the riddle use gender inclusive language more frequently in the gap filling task than those who do not solve the riddle?

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3) Do students of the English department of the University of Vienna solve the riddle more often?

4) Are the participants who did not solve the riddle the first time able to give the right answer after the gap filling and the allocation tasks?

5) Does the ideology of participants influence their ability to solve the riddle?

Hypotheses for the first part of the questionnaire:

1) A rather significant part of the participants is not able to solve the riddle.

2) Participants who solve the riddle are more likely to implement gender inclusive language in the following task.

3) Students of the English department of the University of Vienna solve the riddle more often.

4) The participants that did not solve the riddle the first time are able to solve the riddle after finishing the gap filling and the allocation task.

5) The ideology of the participants influences their ability to solve the riddle.

Research questions for the open gap filling task:

1) What pronouns or other strategies do the participants apply to fill in the gap in the sentences and refer to the chosen, supposedly gender neutral, role nouns?

2) Do second language learners of English that study at the University of Vienna use gender inclusive language?

3) Do participants with a more positive attitude towards the feminist ideology tend to use more gender inclusive language?

4) Are the participants aware of the implications of the generic masculine?

5) Does the majority of second language learners of English with a German language background make use of singular *they* when using gender fair language, or do they rather choose *he or she* variants due to their language background?

6) Do students of the English department of the University of Vienna tend to use gender inclusive language more frequently than the other students?

7) Do students of the English department of the University of Vienna tend to use the singular *they* more frequently than the other students?

Hypotheses for the open gap filling task:

1) The majority of second language learners of English that study at the University of Vienna use some kind of gender inclusive language.

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2) Participants with a more positive attitude towards the feminist ideology tend to implement gender inclusive language more often.

3) The students' awareness of the implications of the generic masculine is dependent in their attitude towards the feminist ideology and towards the gender inclusive language use.

4) The German language background of the participants leads to an increased use of *he or she* variants in comparison to the use of singular *they* as gender inclusive alternative.

5) Students of the English department of the University of Vienna tend to use gender inclusive language more frequently.

6) Students of the English department of the University of Vienna tend to use the singular *they* more often.

Research questions for the gender allocation task:

1) What gender role, if any, do the participants of the study associate with the given personal nouns?

2) Do the participants allocate the same gender to the noun as anticipated by the allocations of the study conducted by Misersky et al. (2014).

3) Does the use of gender inclusive language, or a positive attitude towards a feminist ideology have any impact on the perception of the role nouns of the participants?

Hypotheses for the gender allocation task:

1) A big part of the participants will not allocate a male or female gender to the given role noun which will, however, most likely be a conscious decision. The rest of the students will allocate the gender according to the stereotypical pictures they grew up with.

2) The gender allocation will mostly coincide with the findings of Misersky et al. (2014).

3) The gender inclusive language use does influence people's conscious decision not to assign a gender to the role nouns. However, it does not influence their inner picture when thinking about the role nouns yet, as their thoughts and stereotypical images are shaped by the society they grew up in.

6.2. Methods

6.2.1. Participants

The study was conducted with the help of an online survey tool called sociosurvey.de. The link to the survey was distributed through the social media platform Facebook in three different

student groups of the University of Vienna ('Anglistik Wien', 'LehrerInnenbildung Uni Wien' and 'Uni Wien Studentinnen und Studenten') and the students had the possibility to participate over the course of one week. After this week, the survey was closed and 214 people had participated in the study. From these 214, 117 people finished the questionnaire and also qualified otherwise for the study due to being a student at the University of Vienna and having a German language background. The participants fall within the age group of 18 – 52 and consist of 98 female and 19 male students. Due to the uneven number of female and male students the study will not compare the results regarding the gender of the respondents. From the 117 students 29 are in the age group 18-21, 47 students in the age group 22-25, 26 students in the age group 26-30 and 15 in the age group 30-52. The respondents are expected to have finished a high school education and therefore acquired English up to a B2 level. According to the Common European Framework of Reference of Languages (CEFR 2001) there are six reference levels that "[give] an adequate coverage of the learning space relevant to European language learners" (CEFR 2001: 24). These levels include "Breakthrough, Waystage, Threshold, Vantage, Effective Operational Proficiency and Mastery" (CEFR 2001: 24). In order to simplify the translation, the six levels were again summarized under the three broader levels "Basic User (A), Independent User (B) and Proficient User (C)" (CEFR 2001:24). The requirements for the level B2, also referred to as Vantage and relevant for the participants of the present study, are outlined underneath.

> [Students] [c]an understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options (CEFR 2001: 25).

Especially the understanding of "abstract topics" (CEFR 2001: 25) and ideas is essential for grasping the consequences of language use. Therefore, a higher language proficiency and a close contact to the language probably also fosters a reflected implementation of gender inclusive language use. 91 participants stated that they use or have close contact with English every day (91 female and 0 male), 17 claimed once a week (6 female, 11 male), 5 once a month (0 female and 5 male) and 4 less than once a month (1 female, 3 male). Overall, the respondents still have a rather close connection with the English language. This frequent and very close contact with the second language might also be attributed to the fact that 65 participants currently study at the English Department of the University of Vienna, where they are either in the teacher's program or enrolled for the English and American studies Bachelor. Of the 52 remaining students are 10 more in the teacher's program studying other subjects, 11 are enrolled

for studies in STEM-fields, 9 study economics, 9 other languages, 4 architecture, 3 participants each study history, law and medicine.

6.2.2.   Materials

The materials for the study consist of a language riddle taken from Kramarae and Treichler (1985) and of a list of job related role nouns taken from Misersky et al. (2014). Misersky et al. (2014: 841) "collected norms on the gender stereotypicality of an extensive list of role nouns in Czech, English, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, and Slovak, to be used as a basis for the selection of stimulus materials in future studies". In order to prohibit the discrimination against women through the use of the male form of nouns in grammatical gender languages, like German, they presented all nouns in masculine and feminine versions and defined them lexically for gender in genderless languages like English (Misersky et al. 2014: 842). With their study, Misersky et al. (2014) tried to offer a solution to the extreme variations across language studies in order to allow for comparison between them. The study gives norms on up to 422 social and occupational role nouns across seven languages (Misersky et al. 2014: 843). The participants of the questionnaire had to state their native language, agree to the conditions, enter their demographic data and finally should "estimate, on an 11-point scale, the extent to which the presented social and occupational groups actually consisted of women and men" (Misersky et al. 2014: 844).   In other words, the participants were asked about their own gender stereotyping of certain role nouns, meaning whether they see these role nouns held by one gender or the other as an effect of their belief system (Misersky et al. 2014: 842).

For the present study 40 job related role nouns in the English language were chosen from Misersky et al. (2014). These nouns are supposed to be gender neutral, meaning the noun itself does not hold any specification about a certain gender, but at the same time be seen as either more male or more female by the English and German participants of Misersky et al. (2014). Altogether, 22 nouns connoted as male, 18 nouns connoted as female were selected for this study. In Misersky et al. (2014) words with higher values on the 11-point scale were seen as made up of mainly women and (> 0.5) and words with values on the lower end of the scale as rather male dominated (< 0.5). The list below shows all the nouns that were chosen for the present study divided into female and male words. Most of these nouns are at the top end of their category, representing terms that are seen as very gender specific by people. Only the two nouns *artist* and *dental hygienist* are an exception as they are at the lower end of their category, but still seen as female.

female (> 0.5)	male (<0.5)
artist	architect
assistant	astronaut
au pair	car mechanic
babysitter	chair person
beautician	chemist
birth attendant	cook
cashier	dentist
cheerleader	detective
cleaner	economist
dental hygienist	electrician
flight attendant	engineer
florist	Executive
hairdresser	film director
housekeeper	Firefighter
infant teacher	head teacher
kindergarten teacher	hotel manager
nurse	IT consultant
secretary	judge
	lawyer
	medical doctor
	pilot
	police officer

Table 1: List of role nouns

For the gender allocation task of the present study the nouns were ordered alphabetically, and the participants had the possibility to either allocate the term *female*, *male* or *neutral* to the noun. In order to motivate the respondents to answer truthfully the instruction for this task states 'Choose the option that comes to your mind first!'. Nevertheless, there are limitations due to it being an online survey, as there is a lack of control over the respondents' answers when filling out the questionnaire. However, the advantage of reaching a rather big group of people and possible participants outweigh the disadvantages for this study. The fact that some people might not had the courage to answer the task truthfully in a possibly stereotypical way will be considered when analyzing the results.

For the gap filling task, the nouns listed above (Table 1) were used to create sentences including a gap like *An astronaut has to be very sportive so _____ can fly to the moon.* in order to trigger the use of personal pronouns. The task was inspired by the study conducted by Abudalbuh (2012) who used a sentence completion task providing the beginning of a sentence "When a citizen wants to get a passport," (Abudalbuh 2012: 62) in order to investigate the use of pronouns of English and Arabic native speakers. Since the participant group of the present questionnaire are non-native speakers of English and do not necessarily study English as a foreign language at University, the tasks were slightly modified, only leaving a gap open. This decision was also made in order to motivate possible participants to fill out the questionnaire without worrying about the grammatical correctness of their language use. Some examples from the questionnaire can be seen below:

1. An architect has a lot of responsibility because _____ must build stabile houses.
2. A birth attendant must be calm so _____ will not scare the mothers.
3. If a cashier gives you too little money, you should tell _____ immediately.
4. A chemist should be careful, as _____ might work with dangerous chemicals.

As visible in the sentences above, modal verbs were implemented as they do not take the ending –s in the third person singular and also do not require the addition of *do* in the negative from or when forming questions. This is supposed to prevent participants from being seduced to use a generic male or female form as opposed to the singular *they*. The sentences were presented in the same alphabetical order as the nouns of the gender allocation task which was located after the gap filling task in the study. The entire questionnaire is provided in the Appendix.

The rather big number of sentences to fill out and nouns to allocate is not only supposed to provide the study with a sufficient number of examples to analyze, but it is also meant to really show the respondents how their own language use might influence their worldview and how unaware of it they might be. Nevertheless, due to this rather large number of examples the majority of students simply chose the neutral option, with some exceptions, in the gender allocation task. Overall, 40 participants seemed to have answered the task honestly by really choosing the option that came into their minds first when reading a certain occupational role noun. In order to get a clearer picture on the real images people have of the nouns, a word was considered male or female when allocated a certain gender more than 30 times, which corresponds with 75 % of the 40 participants who answered honestly and 25 % of the overall participants. The riddle in the beginning is also expected to trigger participants' curiosity and keep them going when filling out the rest of the study. Giving the students a second try to solve

the riddle should provide information on whether confronting people with such tasks makes them realize how language does influence what they are picturing in their minds. Following the three main parts, participants were asked to answer some general questions about their thoughts and use of gender inclusive language and finally they had to provide information about their English use and sociodemographic data. Overall, it took the respondents 7 to 12 minutes to fill out the questionnaire.

6.3. Results

The following section will present the results of the study introduced above. The results of the three main parts, the riddle, the gap filling task and the gender allocation task will be displayed one after another and possible connections will be drawn if interesting and relevant for the topic. For each part, an overview of the outcome will be given. Then the results for students at the English department of the University of Vienna will be contrasted to the results of the other students. Another aspect that will be included in the analysis is the amount of contact the participants have to the English language in their everyday lives. Finally, the findings of each main part will be analyzed according to the personal attitude of participants towards gender inclusive language, investigating whether ideological beliefs influence the decisions of the students to implement gender exclusive or gender inclusive language, despite of what is being said by University or other official institutions on the topic. In the end, the results of each section will be summarized in connection with the research questions and hypotheses stated above. After the analysis of the three main sections of the questionnaire, the students' final reflections will be investigated. Finally, there will be a combined discussion of the results including the conclusion.

6.3.1.   Riddle

In the first part participants were unaware of the nature of the study, they only knew that it revolved around their personal language use in English. They were presented with the following riddle

> A young man and his father are in an auto accident; the father is killed and the young man is rushed to the hospital. The surgeon, upon entering the room and seeing the patient, exclaims, ['Oh my God, I can't operate; it's my son!'] How is this to be explained? (Kramarae & Treichler 1985: 436)

They had the possibility of leaving the question blank and move on to the next part of the questionnaire. Nevertheless, only 11 out of the 117 (98 female, 19 male) respondents did not

give an answer, while 106 participants all provided some kind of solution for the riddle. Of the 11 participants, 3 are studying at the English department of the University of Vienna and the remaining 8 are enrolled for other studies. Among the 106 respondents are 62 students from the English department of the University of Vienna and 44 study in other fields.

A very large number, namely 76 participants (65 %), were able to solve the riddle as opposed to only 41 students (35 %) who did not figure it out.
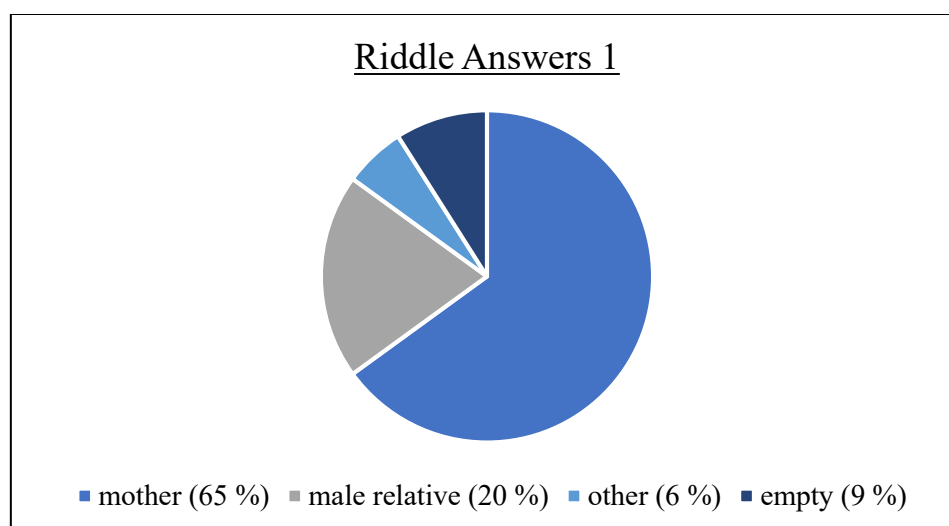
Figure 1: Riddle Answers 1

- Riddle answer mother:

   "The young man's mother is the surgeon." (female, 27)

   "The surgeon is a woman, she's the patient's mother" (female, 27)

   "The doctor is a woman, obviously." (female, 31)

Here, 42 participants are currently studying at the English department of the University of Vienna and 34 are enrolled in other fields of study. A rather big number, namely 52, of the students who found the answer also mentioned that they had heard the riddle before and had not been able to solve it the first time around.

- Riddle heard before:

   "The surgeon is a woman (heard it before and assumed gay couple)" (female, 23)

   "The surgeon is a woman and the man's mother. (I've known this riddle beforehand but couldn't find the answer.)" (female, 21)

Apart from the eleven students that did not give an answer, 23 participants of the 41 not solving the riddle stated that the surgeon might be a male relative, either his stepfather or the other half

of a homosexual couple. The remaining 7 students came up with other answers to the riddle including:

> "it's a dream' (female, 19)
>
> "The father lives in two bodies" (female, 28)
>
> "The patient is not the young man mentioned above but the person that was in the other car involved in the accident." (female, 21)

Overall, of the 65 students studying at the English department of the University of Vienna 42 (65 %) solved the riddle and 23 (35%) gave another or no answer. The same ratio, 34 versus 18, can be found for the participants of this study that are enrolled for other study fields. In addition, of the participants that solved the riddle 58 (76 %) stated that they use or have close contact with the English language every day, 13 (17 %) said that they use it every week and only 5 (7 %) have less contact than that.

When looking at the personal attitudes of the students towards gender inclusive language use in general, 72 (62 %) see it as important, 25 (21 %) as unnecessary and 20 (17 %) see it as normal or neutral. In connection with the answers of the riddle, out of the 76 participants that solved the riddle, 59 % see gender inclusive language as essential, 20 % stated that they think of gender inclusive language as something stupid or as a waste of time. Another 21% do not really mind gender inclusive language but see it as something rather positive. All in all, it can be seen that the majority that answered the riddle correctly had a very positive or at least moderately positive attitude towards the implementation of gender inclusive language. Furthermore, of the remaining 41 participants who did not find the right answer to the riddle 66 % highlighted how important gender fair language is to them and 10% see it as normal. 24 % argued that they do not see such a neutral language use as necessary or important.

Of the 76 students who answered that the surgeon is female 45 (59 %) used a gender neutral pronoun in the gap filling task and so did 25 (60 %) of the 41 participants that did not find the correct solution. After the gap filling and the gender allocation task 24 of the 41 students that were not able to provide the correct solution where then able to find the right answer. The number of participants who thought that the father is a male person, either his stepfather or the other half of a homosexual couple, shrunk from 23 to 7, the number of students that stated something else from 7 to 6 and the number of students that left the task blank the first time around from 11 to 4.

The results that are displayed above clearly show that second language learners are able to solve the riddle in question. Surprisingly, there was no difference between students who study at the English department of the University of Vienna and students who are enrolled for other studies. This might also be due to the fact that a very high percentage of the participants that solved the riddle have a close connection to the English language in their everyday life. This intensive contact could also be the reason why so many of the participants already knew the riddle in advance. Nevertheless, the riddle seems to stay in people's minds once they hear it which is already a good sign.

Furthermore, a connection between a certain ideology or attitude towards gender fair language and the ability to solve the riddle is not really visible. 80 % of the respondents who answered correctly feel positive or neutral about gender inclusive language. However, almost the same percentage, 76 % of the students who could not solve it, see it as essential. The same is true for the participants who have a negative attitude towards gender fair language. 20 % of the respondents who solved the riddle and 24 % who did not solve it despise such a use. It can therefore be said that the participants' ideology did not necessarily influence their ability to find the correct answer for the riddle in this study.
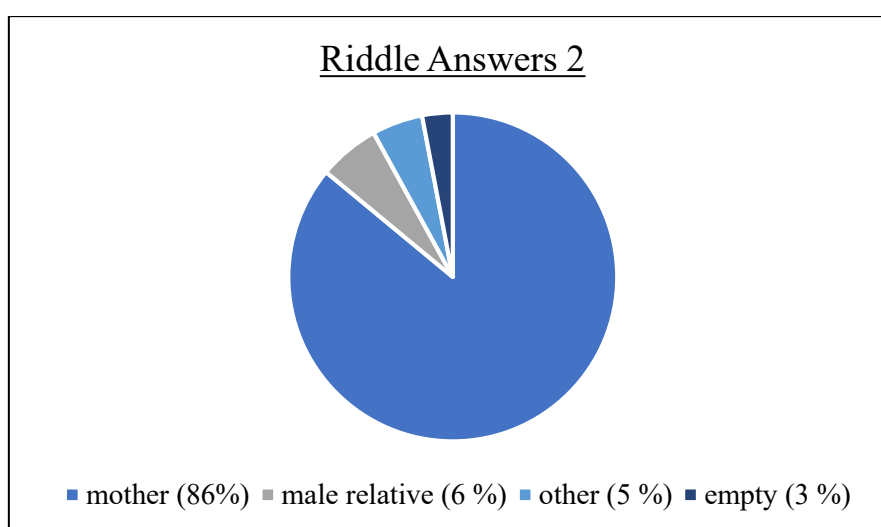
Figure 2: Riddle Answers 2

The assumption that students who solve the riddle also use gender inclusive language in the gap filling task more often was also falsified by the results of the present study. It shows that even though people do implement gender fair language in their own language use, this does not inevitably mean that they also reflect the reasons behind it and vice versa. Participants do apparently not really connect the gender fair pronoun use to the riddle they had to solve in the beginning of the questionnaire. This is one aspect the study is supposed to influence, by

confronting the participants with a rather big amount of exercises focusing on gender inclusive language use before giving them the chance to solve the riddle again. 24 more participants were able to provide the right answer to the riddle in the end, showing that the tasks do have an effect on people reflecting on the topic of gender fair language use and its consequences for women.

6.3.2.   Gap Filling Task

This section of the questionnaire forms the core part of the study as it revolves around the pronoun use of the second language learners of English with a German language background. In this task the participants had to fill in a gap in 40 sentences which included the nouns, 18 female and 22 male, from table 1. The students had to choose a way to refer back to the antecedent in question (see the complete list of sentences in the Appendix). The aim of these exercises was to find out what pronouns or other strategies second language learners of English with a German language background use in order to talk about a genderless noun. Apart from that, the task was also supposed to influence the participants' perception of job related role nouns and make them aware of their own generic language use. Here, the difference between respondents that are enrolled at the English department of the University of Vienna and the ones that study other subjects is particularly interesting. In addition, the amount of contact with the English language in the students' everyday lives is also a factor that might influence the pronoun choice. Another relevant variable could be a certain ideology or the attitude students have towards gender fair language. All these features will be examined in connection with this gap filling task.
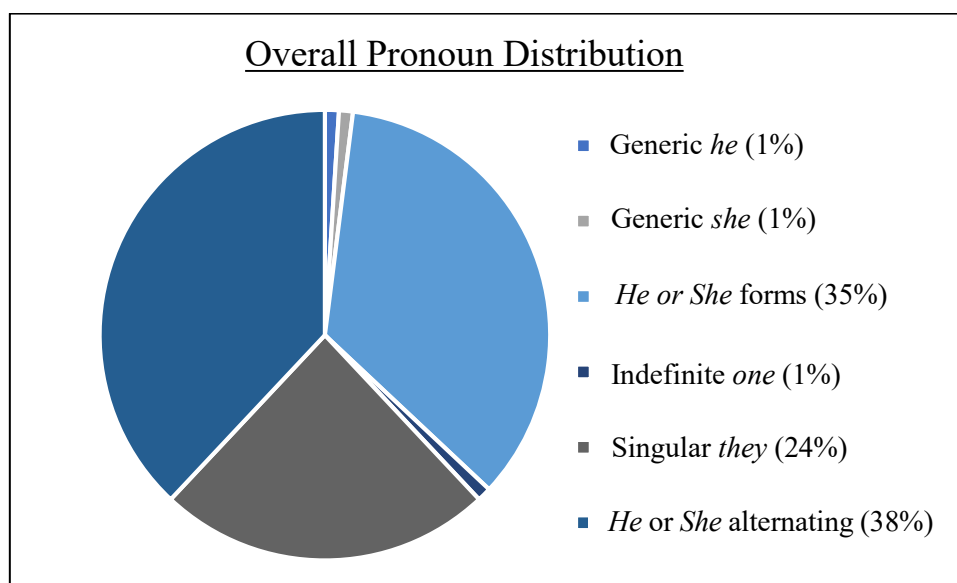
6.3.2.1. Overall Pronoun Use

Figure 3: Overall Pronoun Distribution

All of the 117 participants managed to fill out the 40 gaps in the sentences without disqualifying themselves due to ungrammatical answers. Participants that would have made more than three mistakes would have been excluded from the study. The students' answers were put in to one of the five categories, 'generic *he'*, 'generic *she'*, '*he or she* forms', 'indefinite *one'*, 'singular *they'* when they showed consistent use of the respective gap filler. Consistent here means that they did not implement another form more than three times. Other forms included, apart from the possibilities mentioned above, also reuse of the noun itself or the use of synonyms. Participants who alternatingly implemented the generic *he* or the generic *she* in order to refer to nouns that are connoted as male or female, instead of being consistent with the use of one group, were put into the group '*he or she* alternating'.

Overall, the results show that 70 participants (60 %) made use of some form of gender inclusive language. 41 (35 %) implemented *she or he* forms, 28 (24 %) chose the singular *they* and one person decided to use the indefinite *one* in order to refer to the gender neutral nouns in the sentences. Altogether, only two participants stuck to either the male or female generic from throughout the task using gender exclusive language. However, 45 students (38 %) implemented either the generic *he* or the generic *she* aligned to the way they viewed the gender of the respective noun. As presented in Figure 3 above, Austrian university students chose *he or she* forms for the most part when implementing gender inclusive language, closely followed by the use of singular *they*. Even though the majority of the students made use of gender fair

alternatives, 40 % still implemented the generic male or female variant when referring to a genderless third person.
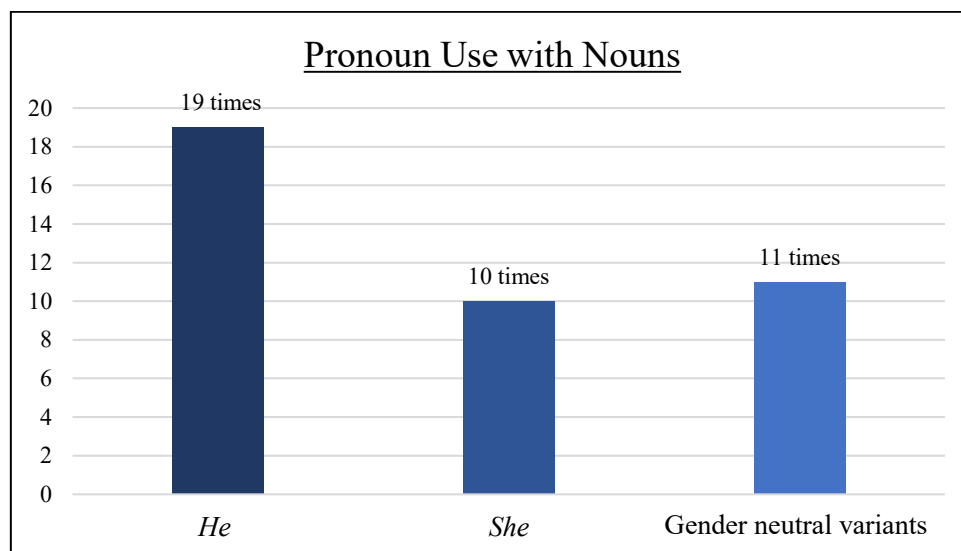
Figure 4: Pronoun Use with Nouns

As the majority of the participants made use of gender fair pronouns in order to refer to the nouns, there are only four instances in which the word was more often referred to with a generic male or female form. The male words *electrician* and *firefighter* were both referred to with *he* more often than with the gender inclusive variants in the sentences:

1. When an electrician is not careful _____ might receive an electric shock.
2. A firefighter must be very brave, so _____ can save lives.

The same is visible for the terms *cheerleader* and *nurse* that are defined as female in the following sample sentences:

1. If a cheerleader cannot do _____ routine properly, the team will be angry.
2. If a nurse has too many patients, _____ cannot care properly for all of them.

Nevertheless, it is still possible to get a clear picture of whether a noun is rather used in connection with a *he* or a *she*. In the present study, the noun is seen as connected to the male form *he* when used with it more than 30 times (> 25 %) and as connected to the generic *she* when used with it more than 30 times (> 25 %). This means that the word was referred to with the generic male or female form more often than with any of the other variants. If that was not the case the words had been used with gender inclusive variants such as *he or she* or *they* most of the time.

As visible in Figure 4 above, there were 19 nouns with which the generic *he* was used more than 30 times (> 25%) and 10 nouns with over 30 instances (> 25%) where generic *she* was implemented. The remaining 11 nouns were referred to with gender neutral forms so many times that the generic male or female version did not reach 30 (> 25%) and was consequently not higher than a gender inclusive version. Even though the nouns chosen for the present study are, according to Misersky et al. (2014), all either female or male, the participants of this questionnaire did not entirely agree in terms of their pronoun use.
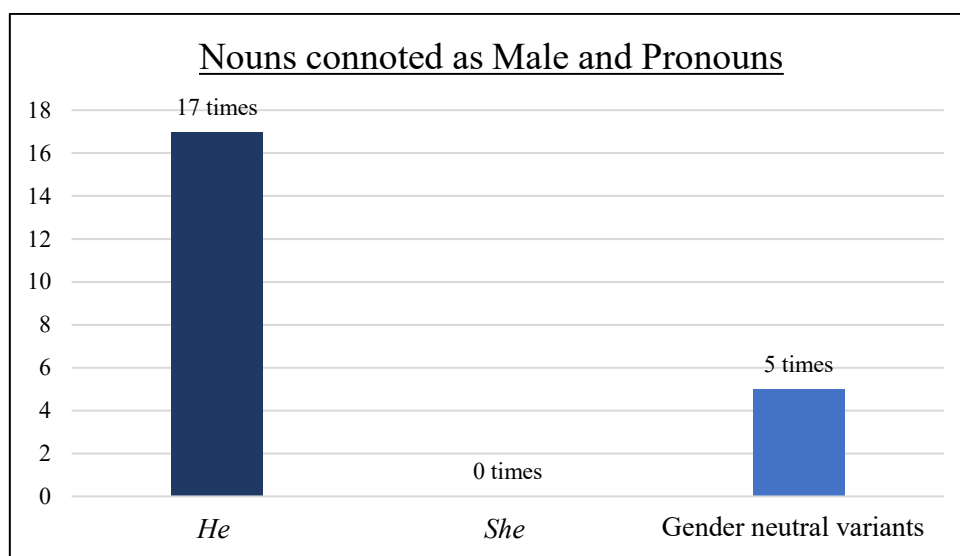
Figure 5: Nouns connoted as Male and Pronouns

As depicted in Figure 5 above, the 22 male nouns according to study of Misersky et al. (2014) are connected to the generic *he* rather often. Nevertheless, there are 5 nouns that are supposedly male that were predominantly used with gender inclusive variants. None of these nouns, however, was connected to the generic *she* more than 30 times (> 25%). In comparison, there are instances in which female nouns were used with the generic masculine more often than with the generic, as can be seen in figure 6 below.

Almost half of the nouns that are supposedly female are either referred to with the male form over 30 times (> 25%) or with gender neutral variants. Only 10 out of 18 nouns were used more than 30 times with the generic *she*. Even though the terms are according to Misersky et al. (2014) supposed to be seen as female or male, the participants in the present study did not necessarily implement a generic male or female pronoun. Instead they used a gender inclusive form in order to refer to the respective noun. Interestingly, the words *artist* and *cashier* that are seen as rather female by the English and German participants of the study conducted by Misersky et al. (2014) are referred to with the generic pronoun *he* over 30 times (> 25%) in the present questionnaire.
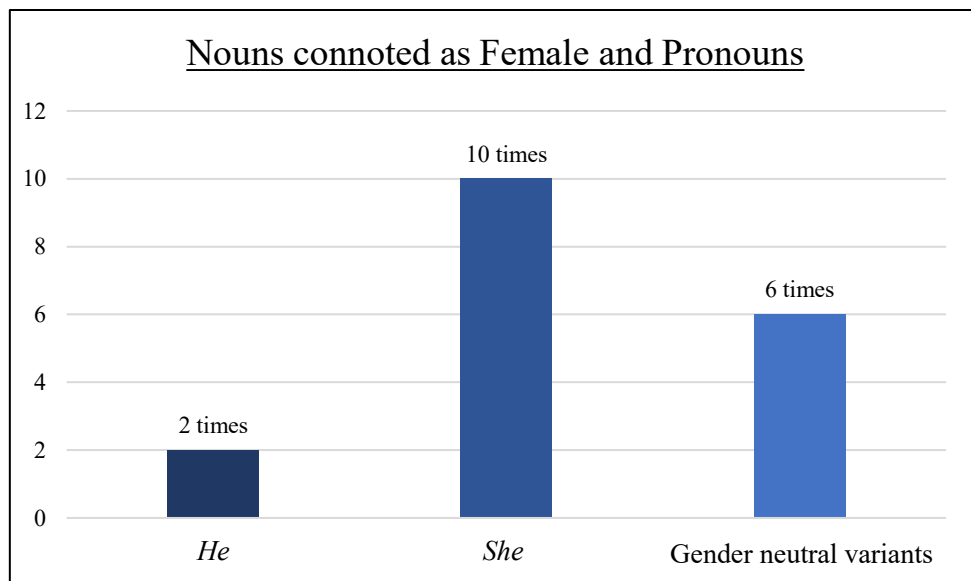
Figure 6: Nouns connoted as Female and Pronouns

6.3.2.2.   English Language Use and Pronouns

Figure 7 below depicts the distribution of the pronoun use in the gap filling task among 65 students from the English department of the University of Vienna. Gender inclusive forms were used by 46 participants (71 % of the 65 students), while 19 respondents (29 %) implemented gender exclusive forms. The gender fair variants of *he and she* and the singular *they* were both chosen 23 times (35 %) by the students. One participant made use of the generic *she* and 18 (28%) implemented *he* or *she* alternatingly with the respective nouns.
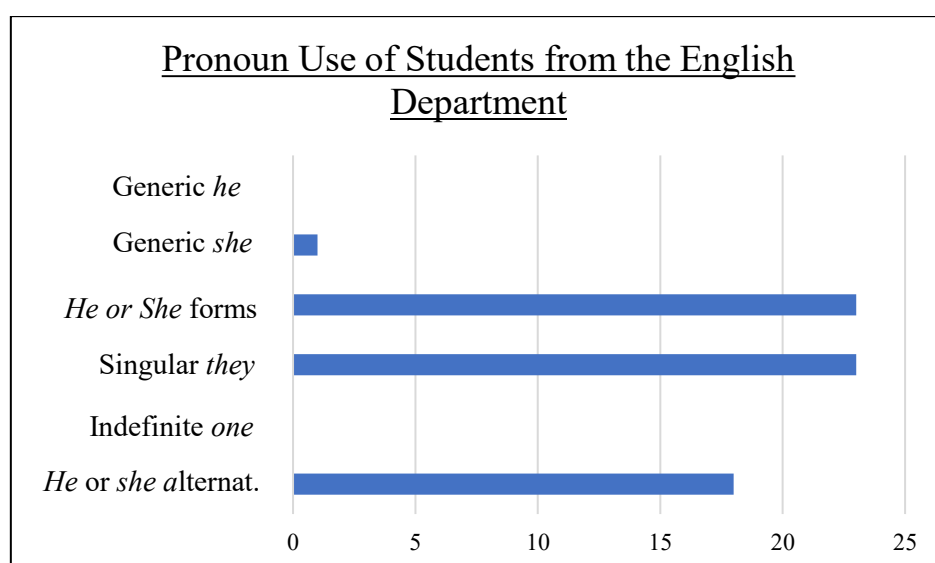
Figure 7: Pronoun Use of Students from the English Department

Figure 8 below depicts the pronoun use of 52 students of other departments of the University of Vienna. Here, the gender inclusive language was used by 24 respondents (46 % of the 52 students) and gender exclusive language was chosen 28 times (54 %) by the participants. The gender exclusive variants were implemented more often, especially the version in which *he* and *she* are used alternatingly (52%). The *he or she* variant was, here, with 18 times (34 %) the more common gender inclusive form. While the students of the English department used the *he or she* variants and the singular *they* equally often to refer to a genderless third person, the students from other departments use the singular *they* less frequently, only 5 times (10 %).
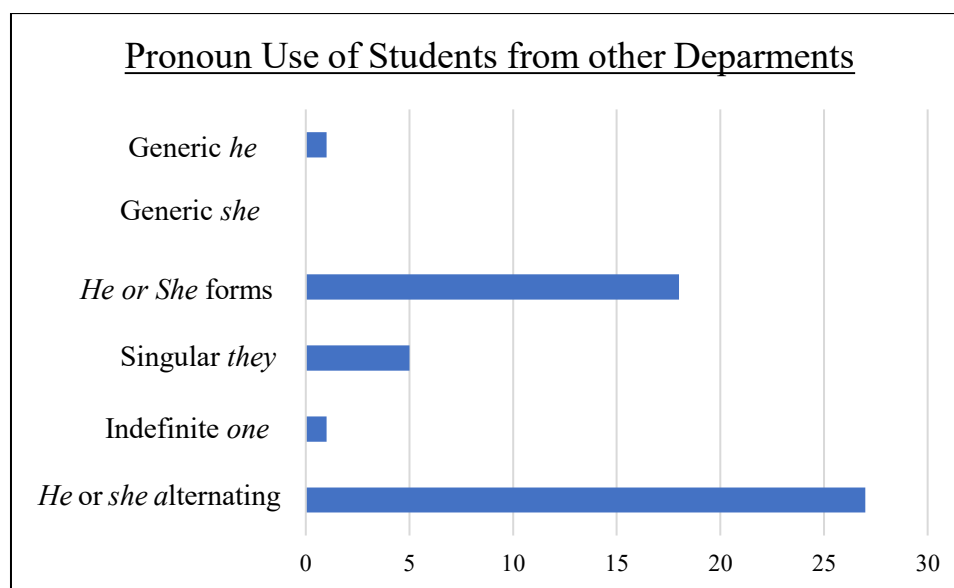
Figure 8: Pronoun Use of Students from other Departments

Independently from whether participants study at the English department of the University of Vienna or not, students also had to state how much contact they have with the English language in their everyday lives. 78 % claimed that they have very close contact to the language every day, 15 % every week, 4 % once a month and 3 % less than once a month. Overall, it can be said that 93 % of the respondents use English frequently in their lives and only 7 % have hardly any contact. From the 108 students with close contact to the second language, 68 (63 %) chose a gender inclusive form to fill in the gap in the sentences. The *he or she* variants were used 39 times, the singular *they* 28 times and the indefinite *one* once. From the remaining 9 students that almost have no contact with the English language, 2 respondents made use of the gender neutral *he or she* variants and 7 filled in the gaps with either *he* or *she* in an alternating pattern in connection to the respective nouns.

The participants were also asked how often they generally make use of gender inclusive language. On a scale from one ('close to never') to five ('always in written and frequently in

spoken language') the respondents had the possibility to estimate their gender neutral language use. 40 students (34 %) claimed that they implement such a gender fair language 'always in written language' (option four), among these students 32 actually used a gender inclusive form in the present study and 20 chose an exclusive form. The option five was chosen by 28 (24 %) students from which 22 provided a gender neutral version and nine did not. The third option ('frequently in written language') was ticked off by 29 participants (25 %). Among this group only 14 implemented a gender inclusive form, while 15 students chose a gender exclusive variant. Option two ('sometimes in written language') was selected by 14 respondents (12 %) and they provided gender fair and gender unfair language in equal shares. 'Close to never' was only picked by 6 students (5 %) and, here, only one person made use of gender inclusive language. Overall, it can be said that people who use gender neutral language rather frequently or always in their everyday lives also tended to implement gender inclusive forms more often in the gap filling task as visible in table 2 below. Table 2 above shows the connection between students' own estimation on their gender inclusive language use compared with their actual use of gender fair language in the study. Up to 80 % of the participants that stated that they use gender inclusive language 'always in written language' also chose such a gender fair form in the present study.

Connection: Gender Inclusive Language According to Participants and in Task			
Students → Options	Total number of students	Students who used gender inclusive language in numbers	Students who used gender inclusive language in percent
1) Close to never	6	1	17 %
2) Sometimes in written language	14	7	50 %
3) Frequently in written language	29	14	48 %
4) Always in written language	40	32	80 %
5) Always in written and frequently in spoken language	28	22	79 %

Table 2: Connection: Gender Inclusive Language in Reality and in Task

6.3.2.3. Gender Inclusive Language Use and Ideology and Pronouns

The ideology the participants support in connection with gender inclusive language or the attitude they have towards it might also be an indicator of a fair or unfair language use. As briefly mentioned before, 72 participants (62 %) see gender inclusive language use as something important, 25 students (21 %) claim to find it unnecessary and 20 (17 %) do not mind using it.
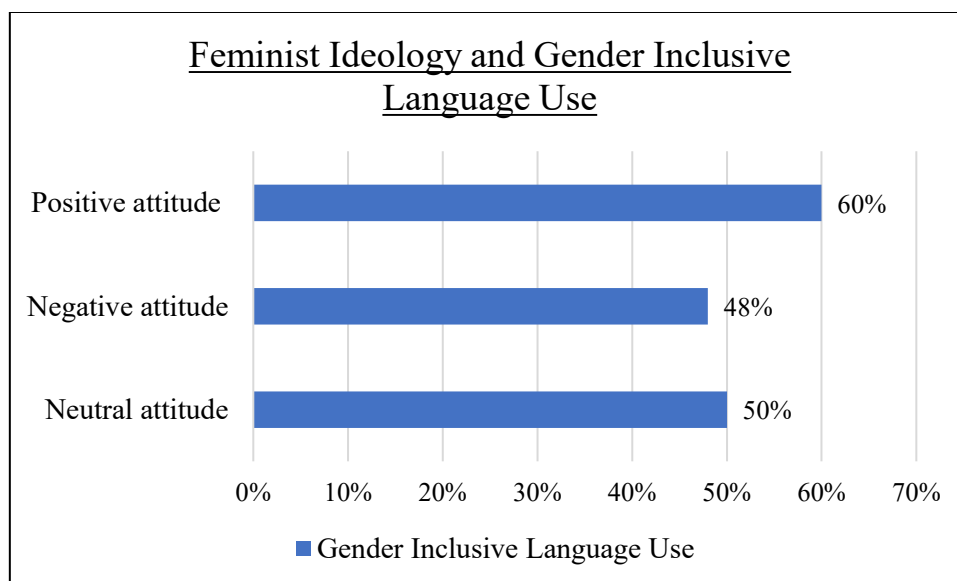
Figure 9: Feminist Ideology and Gender Inclusive Language Use

- Support for the feminist ideology and for gender inclusive language:

"[Gender fair language is] the only way since there shouldn't be a difference between male and female." (female, 22)

"[It is] very important, because "language creates reality" (male, 52)

"[Gender inclusive language use is] important especially in written discourse as to not discriminate against certain groups of society" (female, 22)

Participants that argued for the feminist ideology and for inclusive language use also implemented gender fair language 60 % of the time in the gap filling task. They made use of the singular *they* 19 times and of *he or she* variants 24 times to refer to the respective nouns in the exercise.

- Arguments against a feminist ideology and gender exclusive language:

"[It is] unnecessary nonsense, women are included anyways" (female, 22)

"Not a necessity if I'm addressing a crowd. […] I am not inclined to butcher our current, organically grown complex of vocabulary to expressively voice my attention towards this topic. The stating of both forms is mostly an eye sore and the contraction [disturbs] the reading flow." (female, 23)

"[Gender inclusive language is] not really necessary because it doesn't change anything except the fluidity of reading" (female, 27)

The pronoun use of students that see the proposition of the feminist ideology and consequently also the use of gender inclusive language as something unnecessary is less neutral with only 48 % providing a gender fair answer in the gap filling task. This group mainly used the alternating version providing either *he* or *she* with the respective nouns. The participants who had a rather neutral stance concerning the feminist ideology used gender inclusive language 50 % of the time.

All in all, the respondents of the present study made use of six different strategies in order to refer to the nouns in the sample sentences in the gap filling task. The gender inclusive versions singular *they*, *he and she* forms and the indefinite *one*. The gender exclusive generic *he* and generic *she*. In some individual cases a couple of students also chose to use the noun itself again in order to avoid the use of a pronoun option. Overall, more than half of the second language learners of English in the present study make use of gender inclusive language forms. The *he or she* variants were used most of the time when a gender fair form was provided. The increased use of these *he or she* forms is most likely due to the participants' German language background. As mentioned in chapter 2 grammatical features of the first language have the ability to influence properties of a second language (Franceschina 2005: 38). In German one uses the equivalent *er oder sie* ('he or she') in order to refer to a genderless third person. In English the shorter singular *they* is most commonly applied by native speakers, as Lascotte's study (2016) confirmed. Students of the English department implemented the singular *they* and the *he or she* variants both 35 % of the time. This is also the result of a small study that was conducted as part of a linguistics seminar paper at the University of Vienna in 2018.[3] In this study the participants, who were all students form the English department of the University of Vienna, implemented the singular *they* and the *he or she* form also equally frequently. Here, a

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[3] The study was part of a seminar paper written for the course Linguistics Seminar: THE LEXICON (lecturer: Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Christiane Dalton-Puffer) in winter semester 2017/18

higher proficiency level in English, a more detailed knowledge and more input in the target language probably led to the increased use of the singular *they*. The influence of the German language background is lower than with students not studying at the English department in the present study.

As assumed beforehand, the students from the English department of the University of Vienna provided gender inclusive language use more often (71 %) than students enrolled in other studies (46 %). Both, the field of study and the degree of contact with the English language, were indicators for the frequency of gender inclusive language use in the present study. From the 93 % of the participants that use the English language from every week to every day, 62 % implemented a gender fair answer in the gap filling task. Furthermore, the attitude towards the feminist ideology and towards a gender inclusive language use also influenced the participants' pronoun choices, as the respondents with a more positive view of the topic used gender fair versions with 60 %, 12 % more often than the people that argued against a gender inclusive use of language.

The participants' awareness of the implications of the use of the generic masculine is indeed dependent on their personal attitude towards gender inclusive language use. Students in the present study that support the feminist ideology show a detailed understanding of the importance of a gender fair language use, especially in connection with the occupational role nouns.

- Examples of students' awareness and positive attitude:

> Using gender inclusive language helps in addressing men as well as women, the later which is often ignored in the English language. Making use of it helps encouraging women and girls to identify with roles and jobs that are usually regarded as male and thereafter are dominated by men. Furthermore, as language shapes our thinking, women would be rather visualized in male dominated jobs when using gender inclusive language, and vice versa, compared to when we refrain from using it. Overall, I regard gender inclusive language as very important for the present and especially for the future, for young girls and boys, who might as well grow up thinking they can truly become whatever they set their mind to. (female, 21)

"[A]cknowledging that nouns such as professions can refer to both men and women, therefore using the pronoun "they" to include both" (female, 26)

"In order to achieve equality in society, words should not implement a certain gender/sex. Otherwise some words as 'nurse' will always be seen as mainly feminine and others as purely masculine." (female, 20)

"It is important to make women more visible by naming them. […] Language was limping behind changes in society but is no[w] catching up, which is good and necessary. If you, as a girl only get to read books with male pilots and engineers and judges you are less likely to choose one of these jobs." (female, 40)

- Examples of students' awareness and negative attitude:

"If gender inclusive language would help or change anything like equally paying or so on - well, but for me this is not happening, so in my opinion it is useless." (female, 27)

"I am convinced that saying or writing everything in gender inclusive language won't change the really important topics that should be discussed and worked on" (female, 27)

Interestingly, the students that are opposed to the gender inclusive language use the most are also the ones that were sometimes not able to solve the riddle in first section one of the questionnaire. The two female students that wrote the comments quoted above both stated that the surgeon in the riddle might be a male relative, even after completing the whole questionnaire. "Could be his second father" (female, 27) and "Maybe his killed father was gay and the young man got adopted years before" (female, 27). They also did not provide gender inclusive answers in the gap filling task but implemented *he* and *she* according to how they perceived the respective nouns.

6.3.3. Gender Allocation Task

In the gender allocation task the participants of the present study had to choose either the category 'female', 'neutral' or 'male' for the 40 nouns listed in table 1 above. The goal of this task was, among others, to investigate what gender role the students assign to the respective nouns in order to see whether there is a difference between the respondents of the present study and the study conducted by Misersky et al. (2014). In addition, it might be interesting to see if there are connections between the chosen pronouns of the gap filling task and the gender that was predominantly assigned to the words here. The results will again be examined in connection with the participants' field of study, their English use in everyday life and their attitude towards gender inclusive language and their ideological beliefs. Apart from these aspects the task is also supposed to raise the students' awareness of the implications a generic male language use can have on their own perception of the world.
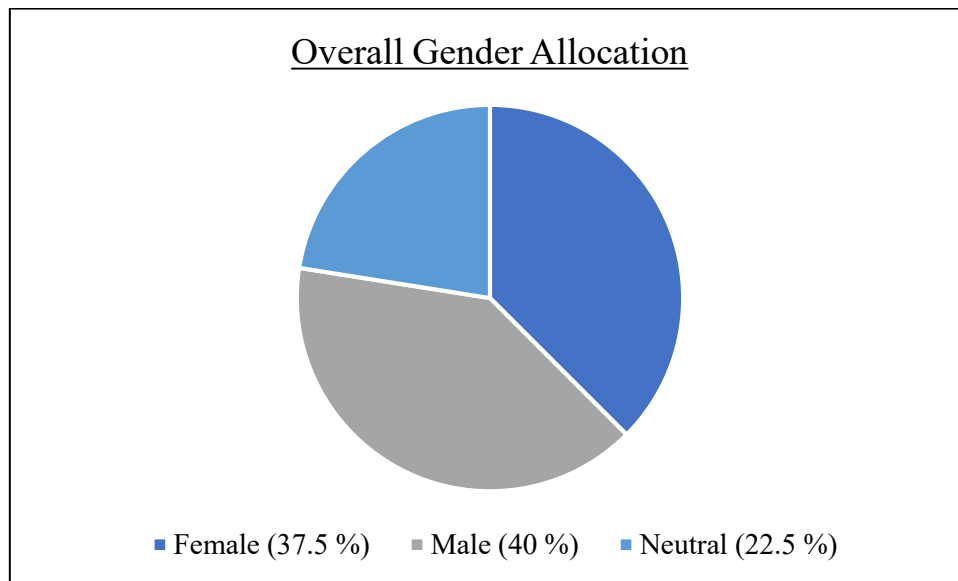
Figure 10: Overall Gender Allocation

The participants were encouraged to answer truthfully, nevertheless, the fact that some participants might not dare or want to reveal their stereotypical thoughts about occupational role nouns will be considered in the analysis. As explained in section 6.2.1. above, nouns will be considered as male when selected as such over 30 times ($> 25\%$), the same goes for female nouns. When the noun was not ticked as male or female more than 30 times ($> 25\%$), it will be categorized as gender neutral in the present study.

Overall, 16 (40 %) of the nouns are considered as male by the students, 15 (37.5 %) as female and 9 (22.5 %) as gender neutral. The table below depicts the nouns and their gender allocations in the present study. Of the 22 nouns that are connoted as male in the study of Misersky et al. (2014) six nouns are considered as gender neutral in the present study. But none of the nouns that was previously seen as male is viewed as entirely female. Three of the words connoted as female are perceived as rather gender neutral in this questionnaire. Here, also none of the originally female terms is seen as male. It can be said that the participants of the two studies generally agree on the gender distribution, with the exception of nine words that do not seem to match a specific gender stereotype according to the respondents of the present survey.

Female (> 30)	Male (> 30)	Gender Neutral
assistant	architect	artist
au pair	astronaut	chair person
babysitter	car mechanic	cashier
beautician	chemist	dentist
birth attendant	cook	dental hygienist
cheerleader	detective	head teacher
cleaner	economist	judge
flight attendant	electrician	lawyer
florist	engineer	medical doctor
hairdresser	executive	
housekeeper	film director	
infant teacher	firefighter	
kindergarten teacher	hotel manager	
nurse	IT consultant	
secretary	pilot	
	police officer	

Figure 11: List of Nouns and Gender Allocations

Of the 16 words that are connoted as male the six words *astronaut*, *engineer*, *firefighter*, *IT consultant*, *pilot* and *cook* were either never or only once ticked as female by the participants. Even the participant that generically chose the female option in this task switched to the male option when confronted with the terms *firefighter* and *IT consultant*. The same phenomenon is visible with the noun *nurse* which was never allocated a male gender, even by the participant that generically selected the male option. The noun *secretary* is only seen as male by one participant. It is interesting to see that even occupational nouns such as *infant teacher* or *florist* are perceived as less female and are combined with a male gender more often than the two nouns stated above. This shows how strong the stereotypical images people grow up with can be and what consequences the permanent assigning of a certain gender to an occupation can have on their perception.

The nine words that are seen as gender neutral in the present study are all connoted as male in the study of Misersky et al. (2014) except for the noun *dental hygienist*. Included are the nouns *judge*, *lawyer* and *medical doctor* that are imagined as male. Especially the term *medical doctor* is of interest in this study as it is a partial synonym for the word *surgeon* which is at the center

of the riddle. Even though 35 % of the participants could not connect the occupation of a doctor to a female person when solving the riddle, the majority of the respondents then allocated the gender neutral option to the noun.

Students' Gender Allocation of Nouns and their Pronoun Use				
	Students' Gender Allocation of Nouns in Numbers	Nouns referred to with *he*	Nouns referred to with *she*	Nouns referred to with Gender Neutral Variants
Female	15	0	10	5
Male	16	15	0	1
Gender neutral	9	4	0	5

Table 3: Gender Allocation and Pronoun Use

Table 3 above shows the pronouns that were used in the gap filling task by the participants to refer to the nouns in connection with the gender that was allocated in the present study. Of the 16 words that are seen as male in the present questionnaire 15 were commonly referred to with *he*, and one noun, namely *executive* was addressed more often with a gender neutral form. With 10 out of the 15 female nouns the pronoun *she* was used most of the time and the remaining five terms were all combined with a gender fair variant. These remaining nouns are *cleaner*, *assistant*, *flight attendant*, *hairdresser* and *housekeeper*. The nouns defined as gender neutral were referred to with *he* 4 times including *cashier*, *chair person*, *artist* and *medical doctor*. The other five terms were all most commonly referred to with gender neutral forms. It can be said that especially the nouns referred to with *he* are also seen as male by the participants in this study.

6.3.3.2. English Use and Gender Allocation

Gender Allocation of Students from English Department and from other Studies		
	English department	**Other studies**
Female	15	16
Male	12	20
Neutral	13	4

Table 4: Gender Allocation of Students from English Department and from other Studies

The results of the gender allocation task were also investigated with a focus on the participant's field of study. The allocations provided by the students of the English department of the University of Vienna were compared to the results of participants that are enrolled for other

study fields. The former group of respondents allocated the male gender 12 times (30 %) and the female gender 15 times (37.5 %). The remaining 13 nouns (32.5 %) are all seen as gender neutral by the students from the English department. In comparison, the other group of students only chose the gender neutral option for 4 nouns (10 %), namely for the words *artist*, *cashier*, *chair person* and *head teacher*. The female gender was allocated to 16 nouns (40 %) and the male gender 20 times, which means that these respondents apparently see 50 % of the nouns as male. Overall, students from the English department seem to have a less androcentric view in connection with occupational nouns than their fellow students. They therefore chose the gender neutral option significantly more often with 32.5 % to 10 %. The allocation of the female gender is rather similar with 37.5 % and 40 %, except for the noun *dental hygienist* which is seen as gender neutral by the participants studying at the English department.

Gender Allocation per Noun			
	English Department	Other Studies	Overall Allocations
Architect	M	M	M
Artist	N	N	N
Assistant	F	F	F
Astronaut	M	M	M
Au pair	F	F	F
Babysitter	F	F	F
Beautician	F	F	F
Birth attendant	F	F	F
Car mechanic	M	M	M
Cashier	N	N	N
Chair person	N	N	N
Cheerleader	F	F	F
Chemist	N	M	M
Cleaner	F	F	F
Cook	N	M	N
Dental hygienist	N	F	N
Dentist	N	M	N
Detective	M	M	M
Economist	M	M	M
Electrician	M	M	M
Engineer	M	M	M
Executive	N	M	M

Film director	M	M	M
Firefighter	M	M	M
Flight attendant	F	F	F
Florist	F	F	F
Hairdresser	F	F	F
Head teacher	N	N	N
Hotel manager	N	M	M
Housekeeper	F	F	F
Infant teacher	F	F	F
IT consultant	M	M	M
Judge	N	M	N
Kindergarten teacher	F	F	F
Lawyer	N	M	N
Medical doctor	N	M	N
Nurse	F	F	F
Pilot	M	M	M
Police officer	M	M	M
Secretary	F	F	F

Table 5: Gender Allocation per Noun

Table 5 shows the gender allocations for every single noun as chosen by the participants from the English department of the University of Vienna, the students enrolled for other studies and by the respondents overall. The overall allocation of the male gender was 10 % higher than the one of the students studying at the English department and 10 % lower than the allocation of the remaining participants studying other subjects at the University of Vienna. The nouns that are seen as female represent 37.5 % of the nouns. This percentage is also true for the words seen as female by the participants studying at the English department. The respondents enrolled for other fields of study allocated a female gender to one additional noun (40 %), namely *dental hygienist*. This occupational noun was also determined as female by the participants of the study conducted by Misersky et al. (2014). Overall, the gender allocations of the students not studying at the English department from the present study coincided much more with the original study than the results of the respondents studying at the English department.

It can be said that the students from the English department of the university of Vienna, maybe due to them studying a language and having closer contact to English, view more job related role nouns as gender neutral that the other participants of the study. The students not studying English tend to allocate a certain gender to the noun instead of classifying it as genderless.
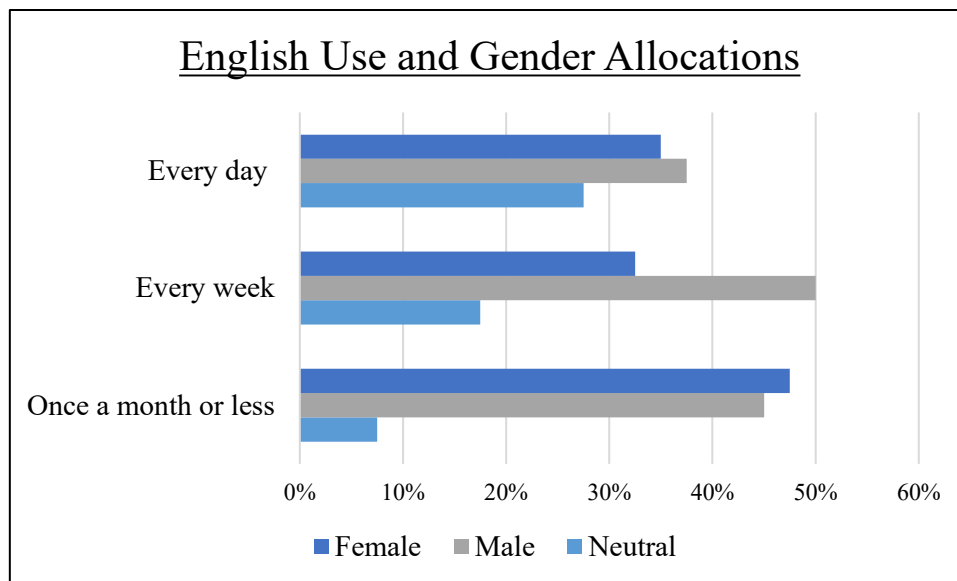
Figure 12: English Use and Gender Allocations

Figure 12 above depicts the gender allocations of the participants in connection with their English use. Students that have a very close contact to the English language every day chose the male gender for 37.5 % of the nouns. 35 % of the occupational terms were allocated a female gender and 27.5 % are seen as neutral. Students using English every week created a similar gender distribution as they allocated the male gender most frequently (50 %) followed by the female gender with the a slightly lower percentage as the former group (32.5 %) and then the gender neutral nouns with 17.5 %. This division also corresponds with the overall gender allocations. The last two categories, 'once a month' and 'less than once a month' were put together into one group as they only have a very small number of members. These participants, surprisingly, chose the female option most frequently with 47.5 %. The term *dentist* is also seen as primarily female, which is the only word so far with a gender change from male to female from the original study conducted by Misersky et.al. (2014) to the present one. The other participant categories investigated in this questionnaire and the overall results all view the occupational noun *dentist* as gender neutral or male. The group with the least contact to the English language also connected the fewest words to the gender neutral option. This correlates with the use of the gender neutral category of the group not studying at the English department of the University of Vienna.

The results of this study show that a closer contact to the English language leads to a more genderless perception of certain nouns. This means that the participants that use the English language less in their everyday lives tend to allocate a certain gender to the occupational nouns in English more commonly than their fellow students that either study at the English department

or have an increased contact to the language otherwise. Overall, the male gender is, nevertheless, still the one that is used to refer back to occupational nouns of a certain status most frequently.

6.3.3.3. Gender Inclusive Language Use and Gender Allocation
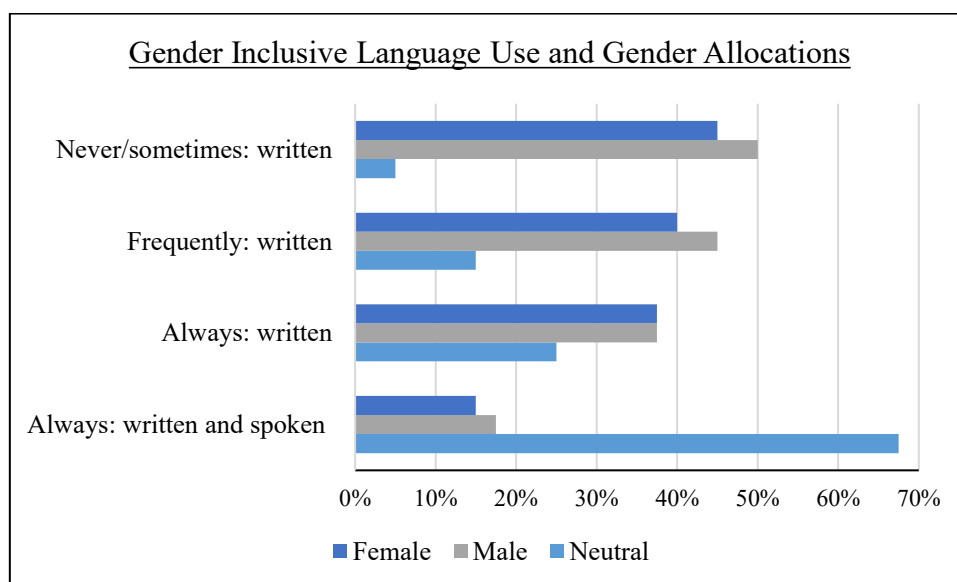
Figure 13: Gender Inclusive Language Use and Gender Allocations

As visible in figure 13 above, the gender allocation of the 40 nouns in the present study was also analyzed according to the participants' implementation of gender inclusive language. As mentioned before, 28 participants (24 %) chose option five 'always in written and frequently in spoken language', 40 (34 %) option 4 and 29 (25 %) option three. The two remaining categories 'sometimes in written language' and 'close to never' were combined for the analysis of the gender allocation task and therefore represent 17% of the answers. This category allocated the male gender to 50 % of the nouns and the female gender to 45 % of the terms. The neutral option was chosen for 5 % of the words.

The participants of the second category 'frequently in written language' see 45 % of the occupational nouns as male, 40 % as female and the remaining 15 % as gender neutral. The 40 students that claimed to use gender inclusive language 'always in written language' ticked the male and the female gender for 37.5 % of the words each. The neutral option was chosen for 25 % of the terms. The last group of respondents who stated that they implement gender fair language 'always in written and frequently in spoken language' views 17.5 % of the nouns as male, 15 % as female and 67.5 % as gender neutral.

Overall, the findings indicate that the more frequently the participants use gender inclusive language themselves, the more of the 40 job related role nouns are perceived as gender neutral by them. The percentage increased 62.5 % from the first group including the options 'sometimes in written language' and 'close to never' to the last group. The male and female choices decreased significantly from 50 % to 17.5 % for the male gender and from 45 % to 15 % for the female gender category. The first group chose the male option most frequently, while the last group of students provided the gender neutral option for the majority of the nouns. Especially a lot of the occupational nouns previously connoted as female are seen as genderless by the last group.

Finally, the gender allocation was investigated in connection with the participants' attitude towards the feminist ideology and towards gender inclusive language use in general. Students with a positive mindset towards the ideology chose the female option most frequently with 15 times (37.5 %), followed by the male option with 14 times (35%) and lastly the gender neutral option with 11 times (27.5 %). Participants who see the ideas behind the feminist ideology and gender inclusive language use as something unnecessary connected most of the nouns, namely 21 (52.5 %), with a male and 16 (40 %) with a female gender. The gender neutral version was only chosen 3 times (7.5 %). The group of respondents that have neither a very positive nor a negative attitude toward the gender inclusive language use also implemented the male option most frequently with 40 % compared to the female option with 37.5 % and the gender neutral version with 22.5%.

This outcome demonstrates that a positive mindset towards the feminist ideology leads to a more common allocation of the gender neutral option to occupational nouns. In the present study these participants also picked the female gender for most of the nouns, which means that more of the previously as male connoted nouns are seen as female or gender neutral by them. The students with a rather negative mindset towards the implementation of gender inclusive language chose the male gender for over 50 % of the nouns and see only a very small number as gender neutral including the words *artist*, *cashier* and *head teacher*. The first two nouns were originally allocated a female and the third one a male gender in the study of Misersky et al. (2014). In the present questionnaire all three words are viewed as gender neutral by the majority of the participants.
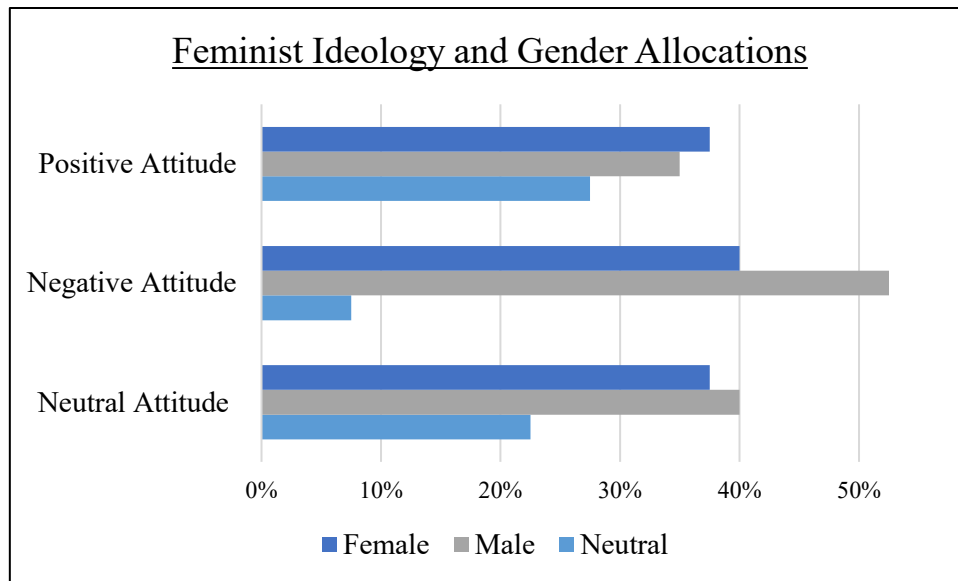
Figure 14: Feminist Ideology and Gender Allocations

Lastly, a few of the 40 nouns that have interesting or varying results concerning their gender allocations will be looked at in connection with the different groups that were used to analyze the gender allocations above. In addition, the word *medical doctor* that is essential for the study as it represents another term or the umbrella term for the noun *surgeon* will be examined in more detail.

Overall, 12 of the nouns showed differentiating gender allocations by the different groups and categories used to analyze the elements above. The results show that the participants who have a closer contact to the English language use gender inclusive language more frequently or always and have a positive attitude towards the ideas of the feminist ideology allocated more nouns to the gender neutral option than the overall students of the study. Especially the students using gender inclusive language 'always in written and frequently in spoken language' chose the gender neutral version for nine terms that are seen as male and for eight that are perceived as female. The other categories that use English and gender inclusive language less frequently and see the feminist ideology as something unnecessary, however, assigned a specific gender more frequently than the overall allocations show, creating a stereotypical perception of the occupational nouns.

The nouns in question, visible in table 6 below, include seven of the terms that are seen as gender neutral by the students in the present study. In addition, the male nouns *chemist* and *hotel manager* and the female words *assistant* and *flight attendant* are in this group as well. First, the words viewed as neutral will be analyzed, starting with the noun *artist*, which was allocated a female gender twice, correlating with its original gender classification in the study

conducted by Misersky et al. (2014). The term *head teacher* was also changed to a 'female profession' twice, interestingly this noun was allocated a male gender in the original study (Misersky et al. 2014). The word *dental hygienist*, which was classified as gender neutral by students in the present study, was the neutral word the female gender was chosen most often for by the different groups analyzed in this questionnaire. This term is also seen as female in Misersky et al. (2014), while the remaining four nouns are all seen as male in the original study. The noun *chair person* was allocated the male gender twice and the terms *dentist* and *judge* were both assigned a male gender three times and a female gender once. Finally, the nouns *lawyer* and *medical doctor* are also seen as male six and four times by the groups analyzed in this study.

The term *dentist,* which is seen as male in the present study, was combined with the neutral option four times and with the female gender once. The other male term *hotel manager* was chosen to be a gender neutral noun three times. The female word *assistant* was also connected to the gender neutral option in five cases. The last word of this group *flight attendant,* which is also a female occupational term in the present and in the original study (Misersky et al. 2014), was connected to the male gender twice and to the neutral option once.

Nouns with the most varying gender allocations across participant groups		
Female Nouns	**Male Nouns**	**Neutral nouns**
assistant	Dentist	Artist
flight attendant	hotel manager	chair person
		Dentist
		dental hygienist
		head teacher
		Judge
		Lawyer
		medical doctor

Table 6: Nouns with the most varying gender allocations across participant groups

Especially the noun *medical doctor* is of interest for this study and will be therefore looked at in more detail below. The noun is not only a partial synonym for the noun *surgeon* from the riddle but was also referred to by participants as such.

- surgeon as doctor:

"The doctor is his mother." (male, 32)

"The doctor is the boy's mother." (female, 29)

Even though most of the students in the present study were able to solve the riddle, 35 % still did not manage to find the right answer. This is also represented by the high number of participants that used the generic male pronoun *he* in order to address the noun *medical doctor* in the gap filling task. However, in the following gender allocation task, 75 % of the respondents chose the gender neutral option for the occupational word. It seems that the participants, when actively confronted with the choice, already want to view the job *doctor* as genderless. Nevertheless, when confronted with the riddle or asked to refer back to the noun, the male centric picture of a male surgeon is still quite dominant in people's minds.

In connection with the field of study, students studying at the English department see the term *medical doctor* as gender neutral, while the group enrolled for other subjects allocated a male gender. The groups of students that made less use of gender inclusive language also connected the male option much more frequently with the noun in question, while the students with a more frequent implementation of gender fair language see it as neutral. The same pattern is visible for the different participant groups and their attitude towards the feminist ideology. These results correlate with the outcome of the whole study. Participants that have closer contact with the English language and a positive attitude towards gender inclusive language and a feminist ideology also see occupational nouns as more neutral.

Overall, the findings of the gender allocation task indicate that the participants of the present study chose to tick the neutral gender option most of the time. However, as mentioned above, the fact that some students generically provided the gender neutral option in order not to reveal their stereotypical mental picture of certain job related nouns, has to be considered. In order to get a meaningful picture of the participants' gender perception all nous that were allocated a specific gender by more than 25% of the students are viewed as such in the present study. The gender allocations differ slightly from the original gender allocations from the study conducted by Misersky et al. (2014) as the students in the present questionnaire did not only make use of the female or male gender but also connected nine job related role nouns most frequently to the gender neutral option. All in all, 16 nouns are seen as male, 15 as female and nine as neutral. As mentioned above, a close contact and use of the English language in the everyday life and studying at the English department of the University of Vienna lead to a more frequent use of the gender neutral option. The remaining students that do not study at the English department might be influenced by their German language background more severely. The fact that certain nouns like *Sekretärin*, meaning 'female secretary', or *Arzt*, meaning 'male doctor', are often

only used in the female or male form in German might also influence the participants' image of the profession. Lastly, the participants with a positive attitude towards the feminist ideology and an increased use of gender inclusive language also have a more gender fair view of the job related role nouns.

6.3.4. Reflection of Students

This section will elaborate on people's reflection on gender inclusive language use after participating in the present survey. In the study the students had the possibility to state their opinion on gender inclusive language. Afterwards, they were asked whether their attitude changed or not. The reply was voluntary, meaning that the respondents had the possibility to skip the question. The analysis will show if the participants, whether they make use of gender fair language or not, actually see the impact something seemingly small like the generic masculine can have on people's worldview and the status of half of the world's population. In addition, it is supposed to reveal whether the study had an influence on people's awareness concerning the topic.

From the participants 75 % gave an answer and 25 % chose to leave the question blank. From these 75 % 36 students stated that the questionnaire did encourage them to rethink their language use and 19 argued that the study did not change their attitude towards gender inclusive language as they already saw it as essential for equality. 32 participants claimed that the study did not influence their view and that gender inclusive language is not important for the equality of women. Interestingly, some of them did make use of gender fair language in the gap filling task. They, however, do not reflect on its importance and therefore also had a rather gendered view of the job related role nouns as they mostly allocated a specific noun to the respective term. Some examples of the students not reflecting the importance of gender inclusive language are quoted below:

"I am still convinced that bare saying or writing everything in gender inclusive language won't change the really important topics that should be discussed and worked on." (female, 27)

"I still think gender language is crippling the language, any language, the solutions they propose are far from economic nor beautiful in look and sound." (female, 26)

These participants are both aware of the existence of gender inclusive language and of the problem of equality, nevertheless, they do not seem to understand the connection between the language people use in their everyday lives, the worldview it creates and consequently also its

power to "change the really important topics" (female, 27). Nevertheless, there were also a lot of students that stated that the study did inspire them to rethink their opinion on gender inclusive language and its value for society.

- Students' reflections

"The surgeon riddle blew [m]y mind for a second and got me thinking if I should be more careful about these things in the future. I do have to say, however, that my native language (German) has influenced my thinking as the unmarked form is always male in German." (female, 25)

In the quote above, the student reflects on her language use and also stated that her German language background had an influence. It is interesting to see, as in German one could technically use both the male and the female form of a noun due to being a gender language. Nevertheless, the generic male form is mostly used in order to refer to both men and women, creating the same problematic situation as in the English language.

- Students' reflections

"It made me more aware of the importance of using gender inclusive language." (female, 41)

"I haven't thought about gender inclusive English so much before, I think it's interesting that in a language with no explicit female form of jobs, there is still a strong association with the male gender." (female, 23)

"I realized that I had been assuming the gender of many professions such as teacher, secretary as female." (female, 22)

"Some occupations were clearly associated with a gender, didn't think I'd still have these associations." (female, 23)

"This survey made me once more aware of the power of language." (female, 22)

All these answers demonstrate that, even though a lot of participants have made use of gender fair language before and are partially aware of the problem they still have a rather androcentric worldview when it comes to occupational terms. Even if not all of the participants rethink their language use and its importance, the riddle, the gap filling and the gender allocation task seem to have an impact on the awareness of the respondents. The answers given indicate that the students are realizing that even though they might be using gender fair language themselves, it

is still a long way and a lot of work until it will change the mental picture in people's minds as the long implementation of the male generic pronoun has fostered this male androcentric world view.

7.   Discussion and Conclusion

The core question of the present study is to find out what pronouns second language learners of English with a German language background use in order to refer to occupational nouns as these pronouns have a big influence on how women and men are perceived. The use of the generic *he* had impacts on women since they were excluded from context altogether. (Guimei 2010: 335) Many alternatives including *he or she* variants *s/he*, *one*, and the singular *they* exist in order to avoid the troubling side effects of the use of a generic male pronoun. In the present study *he or she* forms were most commonly implemented with 35 % as gender inclusive alternative followed by the singular *they* with 24 %. These findings contradict, for example, the findings of Lascotte (2016) who found that most of the participants in his study made use of the singular *they*. Here, it is important to mention that in Lascotte's (2016) study the respondents were all English native speakers and therefore did not have the influence of a German language background like the students in the present study.

The German version of gender inclusive pronoun use is an equivalent to the *he or she* form, due to which a lot of German native speakers resort to this exact version of gender fair language when referring back to a genderless singular noun like *surgeon*. This beautifully depicts how people's language use is often influenced by their mother tongue, even without them realizing it. Genderless languages, like English, have other than gender languages, like German, no grammatical gender and therefore different ways of conveying gender (Hellinger & Bussmann 2001: 6). One participant even stated: "We should come up with a new, shorter version of *she or he* or *he or she*". (female, 41) Here, the respondent clearly did not know or did not think about the already existing shorter versions including the singular *they*. It is crucial to make sure that students are not only introduced to gender inclusive language use in their native language but also in every other language they acquire. This again means explaining the ways in which gender can be depicted in the different languages. A better understanding of the language does have a positive impact on the implementation of authentic gender inclusive language. From the students studying at the English department of the University of Vienna 71 % made use of gender fair forms in the gap filling task, while from the other students only 46 % implemented such variants. The singular *they*, which is, as stated above, also the preferred version of English native speakers, was also chosen much more frequently by the English students with 35 % as opposed to the student enrolled for other subjects with 10 %. Nevertheless, it can be said that

second language learners that study at the University of Vienna implement gender fair language, with 60 % of the participants, rather frequently.

In addition to the contact with the English language and consequently also the proficiency level, the attitude towards the ideas of feminism in connection with pronoun use is also crucial when it comes to the implementation of gender neutral language. The participants with a positive mindset towards the feminist ideology implemented gender inclusive language quite often (60 %). This group of students also showed an awareness of the dilemma created by the use of the generic masculine *he*. One participant beautifully stated "language creates a big part of your world […]" (female, 19) expressing precisely the point of gender inclusive language, especially pronoun use. From the group of students that have a rather negative attitude towards the ideas of the feminist ideology 48 % implemented gender fair language in the present study. This percentage is surprisingly high, nevertheless, these participants mostly did not reflect on the implications their language use has on women around the world. Instead, they stated how useless and unnecessary this form of language use is for them: "unnecessary nonsense women are included anyways" (female, 23) or "not really necessary because it doesn't change anything except the fluidity of reading" (female, 27). These instances show how important it still is to not only give guidelines on what form to use, but to also explain the reason behind these regulations in more detail, giving the people arguments for their language choices. This supports the results of Koeser & Sczesny (2014) who found that participants that were confronted with strong arguments for gender inclusive language also increased their use of gender fair forms. In order to really achieve a change in attitude, they argue that a more intensive and longer involvement with these arguments is necessary (Koeser & Sczesny 2014: 556). It is essential to really confront people with the impact gender exclusive language use can have not only on society but also on their own lives. It would be of great importance to implement the idea of gender fairness as soon as possible in order not to give people a feeling of compulsion later in life, when suddenly being confronted with the mandatory use of gender inclusive language.

The fact that generic language use has an effect on people's perception of the world and also of job related role nouns is visible when looking at the findings and results of the gender allocation task. Despite the overall rather high use of gender inclusive language in the gap filling task, the participants still have a rather gender stereotypical view of most of the occupational nouns. Apart from nine nouns that were seen as neutral, all of the chosen terms were connoted with the same gender as in the study of Misersky et al. (2014). The findings of the present study

show that 16 (40 %) of the nouns are considered as male and 15 (37.5 %) as female by the students. Here, the contact with the English language and the proficiency level also had an impact on the gender allocations. Students of the English department of the University of Vienna chose the gender neutral option for nine more nouns than students enrolled for other studies. This again clearly depicts that a more intense use of and more knowledge about the English language also fosters the understanding of the importance of gender inclusion. These students have a more genderless perception of certain nouns, but 77.5 % of the terms are still connected to a specific gender. Another aspect that apparently influences the participants' gender allocations is their attitude towards the ideas of the feminist ideology in connection with language. In the present study students that had a more positive mindset towards gender inclusive language use also made use of the gender neutral option more often than the respondents with a negative opinion. The latter group of participants belongs to the opponents of the feminist ideology that worry about the grammatical correctness of the English language and seem to believe that the generic male pronoun does not influence people's perception (Abudalbuh 2012: 18). However, these students chose the male gender for 52.5 % of the nouns showing that the use of the generic pronoun does have an impact on the way the participants view the world and certain job related role nouns. The respondents with a positive attitude believe that gender inclusive language is essential for equality (Abudalbuh 2012: 18). These students only chose the male option for 35 % of the nouns. In addition, the genderless alternative was chosen for 20.5 % more nouns by the respondents with a positive mindset. An example for this phenomenon is the occupational term *doctor*. As mentioned before, it is seen as synonym for the word *surgeon* in the present study. While 35 % of the participants were not able to connect a female person to the noun in the riddle, 75 % allocated a neutral gender to the word *medical doctor* in the gap filling task. When considering the students' attitudes towards the ideas of the feminist ideology it becomes visible that those with a negative mindset chose the male option most frequently for the job related role noun as opposed to the other group with a positive opinion of gender inclusive language who most commonly made use of the neutral option. These results support the findings of many other studies that show how gender exclusive language leads to the discrimination of women and gender inequality (Everette 2011: 136). In the present study, all participants are enrolled for studies at the University of Vienna and are therefore also confronted with gender inclusive language use on a daily basis. It is all the more concerning that 21 % of the students still see gender fairness in language as something unnecessary. In order to decrease this number, it would again be important to educate people in

more detail about the consequences of gender exclusive language use, instead of just forcing rules on them that they as a result start to detest.

All the findings and results summarized above demonstrate how important it is to inform language users of the use of gender inclusive language in order to achieve gender equality in our society. Since language is a common tool for expressing personal attitudes and beliefs, it reflects and simultaneously fosters people's mental picture. According to Sczesny, Moser and Wood (2015: 945) language use is not only influenced by conscious decisions but also by unintended mechanisms that are controlled by people's environment. In their study, the gender inclusive language use among the German language speakers was rather low, despite the participants' knowledge about the excluding effects of gender unfair language use. Similar results are found in the present study among the students that detest gender neutral language use, despite being aware of its devastating consequences.

- Awareness and ignorance by students

"I see the point, but I still think gender language is crippling the language […]." (female, 26)

"I know the issue but never thought gender inclusive language was important, it is really annoying that we have to use it in essays at university. I think nowadays we know that there are women in male jobs without showing it with language." (female, 22)

"I find it, very unpractical as I think it creates a lot of effort in not only producing but also consuming texts or spoken language." (female, 25)

The examples above show how some of the participants feel about gender inclusive language use. It is somehow concerning that educated people who study at a university are still not able to grasp the importance and need for gender inclusive language in order to achieve equality for themselves and others. Here, the simple confrontation with a brief questionnaire was not enough to change or influence the participants' mindset, partially probably also due to their very negative attitude towards the regulations that were forced upon them at a rather late point in their language education. Nevertheless, there were also some students that did rethink their habit of just implementing gender fair language without reflecting its importance after finishing the survey.

- Students' reflections on the survey

"The surgeon riddle blew my mind for a second and got me thinking if I shouldn't be more careful about these things in the future." (female, 25)

"I was a bit shocked because I realized that when I hear the word "nurse", for instance, I always think about a female person although a man can also be a nurse." (female, 21)

"I was surprised by the automaticity that goes with some words to be male or female, and the need to explicitly state that someone is a FEMALE director, instead of immediately thinking that it can be either." (female, 24)

"Well I didn't know before that professions have such a strong connection to gender. I haven't thought about it before but I'm sure I'll in the future." (male, 22)

The quotes above are all from participants that claimed to not necessarily favor the use of gender inclusive language. After finishing the questionnaire, they apparently started to rethink the significance of such language use for the society. Even though the riddle in the beginning was already familiar to some students, it still surprised multiple respondents and made them aware of their discriminating perceptions. While it might be too late to accustom all of the people already studying at universities to gender inclusive language with the help of intense use in early stages of their education, it is still possible to confront them with their own language use and give them as much information on the topic as possible. As seen in the present study, a riddle can be a good start to give people a gist of what gender exclusive language can lead to.

One of the participants of the survey beautifully summarized the core issue that people face when it comes to gender fair language use: "I still associate certain professions with a certain gender. This is not a surprise, as I was (and we all were) raised with these stereotypes but I think that this kind of thinking can change when, amongst other things, gender inclusive language is used more often." (female, 21) In order to diminish the influence of these stereotypes it is essential to start using gender neutral language as soon as possible, meaning in school and not only at university when people already have certain connotations and developed a stereotypical way of perceiving the world around them. The present study shows that despite the well-known fact that gender exclusive language leads to discrimination of women, quite a number of people still does not seem to be able to draw this connection or simply does not believe it exists. The findings indicate that it is still a long way to go until gender inclusive language use is perceived as what it is, namely an essential step towards equality for women in society. Therefore, it is all the more crucial to keep raising people's awareness on that matter.

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9. Appendix

Questionnaire

1. **Please try and answer the following riddle. If you cannot think of an answer you can leave it blank.**

A young man and his father are in an auto accident; the father is killed and the young man is rushed to the hospital. The surgeon, upon entering the room and seeing the patient, exclaims, 'Oh my God, I can't operate; it's my son!' How is this to be explained?

2. Please fill out the gap in the following sentences.

1	An architect has a lot of responsibility because _____ must build stabile houses.
2	If an artist runs out of paint _____ will not be able to finish the painting.
3	When an assistant is late for work _____ boss will not be happy.
4	An astronaut has to be very sportive so _____ can fly to the moon.
5	An au pair spends some time in another country because _____ might want to improve _____ language skills.
6	If a babysitter is too tired _____ might fall asleep.
7	A beautician must be good, if _____ can work under time pressure.
8	A birth attendant must be calm so _____ will not scare the mothers.
9	If a car mechanic does not have the right tools _____ will not be able to repair anything.
10	If a cashier gives you too little money, you should tell _____ immediately.
11	A chair person must work hard in _____ position.
12	If a cheerleader cannot do _____ routine properly, the team will be angry.
13	A chemist should be careful, as _____ might work with dangerous chemicals.
14	A cleaner knows exactly what cleansers _____ can use.
15	If a cook has a cold _____ cannot taste the food.
16	If a dental hygienist is not sensitive _____ might have the wrong job.

17	A dentist can earn a lot of money with _____ job.
18	A detective must be very attentive because _____ should not overlook anything.
19	If an economist makes a statement about the economy _____ should be aware of the consequences.
20	When an electrician is not careful _____ might receive an electric shock.
21	The engineer should be a good mathematician, so _____ will not make any mistakes.
22	An executive can ask _____ personal secretary to make copies.
23	If a film director does not like the actor, _____ might look for another one.
24	A firefighter must be very brave, so they _____ can save lives.
25	If people do not listen to the flight attendant, _____ might get angry.
26	A florist should like flowers as _____ must work with them every day.
27	If a hairdresser does not like to chat, _____ might lose customers.
28	A head teacher has more responsibility than _____ colleagues.
29	If a hotel manager stays in another hotel, _____ might be extra critical.
30	If a housekeeper is not given any tip, _____ might not change your bedsheets.
31	An infant teacher must have a lot of patience because _____ should show an interest in every kid.
32	If an IT consultant cannot solve the problem, _____ might just restart the computer.
33	A judge must make careful decisions as _____ may influence someone's entire life.
34	A kindergarten teacher should like to sing and play, as _____ must work with kids.
35	A lawyer must know a lot of laws in order to help _____ clients.
36	If a medical doctor has a 36-hour shift _____ must be really tired afterwards.
37	If a nurse has too many patients, _____ cannot care properly for all of them.
38	A pilot should be well trained as _____ must be able to land planes safely.
39	If a police officer stops a car, _____ must give a reason.
40	A secretary should be very organized, as _____ can be responsible for a lot of things.

| 41 | A social worker must be thick skinned, as _____ might see a lot of sad things. | | | |

3. Please allocate a gender to the noun.

(Choose the option that comes to your mind first!)

		Female	Neutral	Male
1	Architect			
2	Artist			
3	Assistant			
4	Astronaut			
5	Au pair			
6	Babysitter			
7	Beautician			
8	Birth attendants			
9	Car mechanic			
10	Cashier			
11	Chair person			
12	Cheerleader			
13	Chemist			
14	Cleaner			
15	Cook			
16	Dental hygienist			
17	Dentist			
18	Detective			
19	Economist			
20	Electrician			
21	Engineer			
22	Executive			
23	Film director			
24	Firefighter			
25	Flight attendant			
26	Florist			

27	Hairdresser			
28	Head teacher			
29	Hotel manager			
30	Housekeeper			
31	Infant teacher			
32	IT consultant			
33	Judge			
34	Kindergarten teacher			
35	Lawyer			
36	Medical doctor			
37	Nurse			
38	Pilot			
39	Police officer			
40	Secretary			
41	Social worker			

4. Please try and answer the following riddle again. If you cannot think of an answer you can leave it blank.

A young man and his father are in an auto accident; the father is killed and the young man is rushed to the hospital. The surgeon, upon entering the room and seeing the patient, exclaims, 'Oh my God, I can't operate; it's my son!' How is this to be explained?

5. How often do you use gender inclusive language?

(On a skale from 1 to 5.)

1	2	3	4	5
close to never	Sometimes in written language	Frequently in written language	Always in written language	Always in written and frequently in spoken language

6. Please, complete the following sentence with one or more words.

For me, gender inclusive language use is

7. What did you think about the ideas of the feminist ideology and gender inclusive language use before finishing this survey? (optional)

You can use German to answer this question in more detail.

8. Did the survey change/influence your view on gender inclusive language?

If yes, why? If no, why not? (optional)

You can use German to answer this question in more detail.

9. What is/are your home/native language(s)?

10. I use/have close contact with English.

1	2	3	4
Every day	Once a week	Once a month	Less than once a month

11. Do you currently study or have you ever studied at the Department of English at the University of Vienna?

yes	no

12. How old are you?

I am _____ years old.

13. What is your gender?

	female
	male
	Other _____

14. What is your field of study?

10. Abstract

Gender inclusive language use is a well-researched issue in the English language. Nevertheless, there are few studies that focus on the gender fair language use of second language learners of English. Therefore, the present thesis is supposed to shed light on the gender neutral language use of second language learners of English with a German language background in connection with occupational role nouns. One of the main aims of this work is to find out whether second language learners of English make use of gender inclusive language and whether their German language background influences their pronoun choices. Contrasting the results in terms of personal attitude towards the ideas of the feminist ideology, frequency of language use and field of study is supposed to foster the understanding of the importance of educating people on the impact of gender exclusive language and on the varying ways languages have to depict gender. Furthermore, the work also aims at showing how gender fair or unfair language use can influence peoples' perception of gender roles.

In order to achieve these objectives a study was conducted, focusing on the participants' pronoun use in English. The participants were all students from the University of Vienna with a German language background. The questionnaire that was accessible via an online link consists of two parts. The results of the first part, a sentence gap task, revealed that the majority of the participants (60 %) made use of gender inclusive language. The influence of the German language background is also visible as a *he or she* version was the most common gender inclusive language choice. Furthermore, a more frequent language use and a positive attitude towards the ideas of the feminist ideology also influenced the participants' gender fair language use positively in the present study. The findings of the second part of the study, a gender allocation task, indicate that the participants' perception of occupational role nouns is stereotypical. Nevertheless, the participants' attitude towards the ideas of the feminist ideology and the frequency of their language use had an impact on these results as well. Overall, the results of the study show that even though the majority of participants used gender inclusive language a rather big part (40 %) still made use of gender exclusive forms, despite the well-known fact that gender exclusive language leads to discrimination of women. Although further research is necessary to fully explore the gender inclusive language use of second language learners of English, this work does show the importance of a continuous education on gender inclusive language in all acquired languages.

11. Zusammenfassung

Obwohl im Englischen viel zum Thema geschlechtergerechter Sprachgebrauch geforscht wird, existieren relativ wenige Studien zum geschlechterneutralen Sprachgebrauch von Personen, die Englisch als Zweitsprache erwerben. Um etwas Licht auf dieses Thema zu werfen, untersucht die gegenwärtige Arbeit den geschlechterinklusiven Sprachgebrauch von deutschsprachigen Personen, die English als Zweitsprache lernen. Die Arbeit konzentriert sich auf die Verwendung von geschlechterneutralen Pronomen in Englisch im Zusammenhang mit Nomen aus der Arbeitswelt. Die Ergebnisse sollen aufzeigen, ob deutschsprachige Personen, die English als Zweitsprache lernen, geschlechtergerechte Sprache verwenden und, ob dieser Sprachgebrauch von ihrer Erstsprache beeinflusst wird. Die Ergebnisse der Studie wurden hinsichtlich der persönlichen Einstellung der TeilnehmerInnen gegenüber der feministischen Ideologie, der Häufigkeit des Sprachgebrauches der Zweitsprache und der Studienrichtung der TeilnehmerInnen untersucht. Diese Vergleiche sollen aufzeigen, wie wichtig die Aufklärung über die Auswirkungen von geschlechterexkludierendem Sprachgebrauch ist. Des Weiteren ist es auch essentiell zu wissen, auf welche Art und Weise die unterschiedlichen Sprachen gendern. Letztlich, soll die Arbeit aufzeigen, wie geschlechtergerechter oder -ungerechter Sprachgebrauch die Wahrnehmung von Geschlechterrollen beeinflusst.

Im Rahmen dieser Arbeit wurde eine Studie durchgeführt, die vor allem die Verwendung von Pronomen im Englischen untersucht. Die TeilnehmerInnen, welche StudentInnen der Universität Wien mit Deutsch als Muttersprache sind, hatten die Möglichkeit mittles eines Online-Links an der Studie teilzunehmen. Die Studie beinhaltet zwei Hauptteile, wobei die TeilnehmerInnen im ersten Teil lückenhafte Sätze mit Pronomen vervollständigen mussten. Im zweiten Teil hatten sie die Möglichkeit berufsbezogenen Nomen ein Geschlecht zuzuteilen. Die Ergebnisse des ersten Teils zeigen, dass die Mehrheit der TeilnehmerInnen (60 %) geschlechterneutrale Sprache verwenden. Die Beeinflussung der Erstsprache, Deutsch, ist auch sichtbar, da von den 60 % vor allem die *he or she* Version (er oder sie) verwendet wurde. Ein häufiger Gebrauch der Zweitsprache und eine positive Einstellung der feministischen Ideologie gegenüber hat in der gegenwärtigen Studie positive Auswirkungen auf die Verwendung von geschlechtergerechter Sprache der TeilnehmerInnen. Eine positive Auswirkung haben diese Aspekte auch auf die Ergebnisse des zweiten Teils der Studie. Hier zeigt sich, dass die Mehrheit der TeilnehmerInnen berufsbezogenen Nomen stereotypisch wahrnimmt. Die Resultate zeigen, dass auch wenn die Mehrheit der TeilnehmerInnen genderneutrale Sprache verwendet, 40 %

immer noch genderexkludierende Sprache bevorzugen, obwohl die diskriminierende Wirkung solch eines Sprachgebrauches gegenüber Frauen bereits nachgewiesen ist. Auch wenn noch weitere Forschung notwendig ist, um den geschlechtergerechten Sprachgebrauch von Personen, die Englisch als Zweitsprache erwerben vollkommen zu ergründen, zeigt diese Arbeit auf wie wichtig es ist, geschlechtergerechten Sprachgebrauch in jeder erlernten Sprache zu thematisieren und zu verstehen. Weiters, ist es essentiell sich kontinuierlich mit dem Thema auseinanderzusetzen, um ein besseres Verständnis für dessen Auswirkungen zu schaffen.