Pronouns

In German:

1. All articles can become pronouns: German articles (der, die, das and their variations) are flexible and can act as pronouns to replace nouns. This is essential for understanding German sentence structure, as these pronouns adapt to gender, number and case.

Here is an example of our text: *Keinen mehr, keinen mehr!* (No one else, not anymore!)

2. The subject is always named: Unlike some languages where the subject can be omitted, German requires the subject to be explicitly stated, even in cases where it might feel repetitive. This consistency makes German syntax very clear and helps to maintain sentence clarity, especially with complex verb positions.

Example of the text: *Das war unmöglich.* (It wasn't possible.)

Personal Pronouns (Nominative)

Singular

ich

The subject pronoun ich corresponds to the English "I" and is used to refer to oneself in a sentence. The text contains a total of 25 instances of *ich*: one in the first part, three in the second and as many as twenty-one in the third. This marked increase in the use of '*ich*' in the last part of the story suggests an overemphasis on the self, overshadowing the other characters.

du

The subject pronoun *du* is the English equivalent of 'you' and is used to address someone in a familiar,

friendly or informal way. When the narrator enters the room, he adopts a more intimate tone with the baby's mother, addressing her as *du*. There are three instances of *du* in the text.

er

The subject pronoun *er*, equivalent to "he" in English, is used to refer to the person or object under discussion. When the protagonist mentions the girl's husband, he describes him as a "giant" or a "big ugly stranger" (*Riese, fremder Riesenkerl*). However, when this bewildered giant pauses on the threshold, the intruder shifts to using the simple pronoun *er* ("he") to refer to him. This reflects a symbolic duel between two supposed equals: *ich* ('I') vs. *er* ('he'), although the balance is tipped when the narrator remarks: *Ich fühlte mich viel größer als er* (I felt much bigger than he). Instances of *er* (referring to the man, the giant) in the text: three.

sie

The subject pronoun *sie* is used to refer to the person or object under discussion. If we look at the development of the female character in the story, we see that in the first part she is introduced as *das kleine Mädchen* (the little girl), accompanied by the pronoun *es*. Later, when she is twenty, the pronoun changes to *sie* ("she"), and in the second part she is referred to as "the mother", again using *sie*. This progression is intentional: in German, different pronouns are used according to age - *es* for *das kleine Mädchen* (the little girl), sie for *das Mädchen* (the girl) and sie for *die Mutter* (the mother). Instances of *sie* (referring to the twenty-year-old girl and the mother) in the text: two.

es

Apart from the little girl introduced at the beginning, later in the story, when she has grown into a mother, her sick child is referred to with the pronoun *es*, as if the child had taken her place. Instances of *es* (referring to the sick child) in the text: three.

Personal Pronouns (Accusative)

The pronoun *mich* is the accusative form of the personal pronoun *ich*, which corresponds to 'me' in English. It is used to indicate the direct object of an action, i.e. the person who undergoes the action of the verb. In the passage we also find *dich* (2nd person singular), *ihn* (3rd person singular masculine), *sie* (3rd person singular feminine), *es* (3rd person singular neuter). Here is the list of personal singular pronouns in the nominative and accusative:

Person	Nominative (Subject)	Accusative (Direct Object)
1st Person	*ich* (I)	*mich* (me)
2nd Person	*du* (you)	*dich* (you)
3rd Person (Masc.)	*er* (he)	*ihn* (him)
3rd Person (Fem.)	*sie* (she)	*sie* (her)
3rd Person (Neut.)	*es* (it)	*es* (it)

Personal Pronouns (Dative)

To complete the declension of the singular personal pronoun, we add the dative to the nominative and accusative.

ich — mich — mir (to me)

du — dich — dir (to you)

er — ihn — ihm (to him)

sie — sie — ihr (to her)

es — es — ihm (to it)

The third-person singular pronouns in German closely mirror the definite articles in the nominative, accusative and dative cases:

er - ihn - ihm resembles *der - den - dem*,

as *sie - sie - ihr* has the same declension as *die - die - der*,

and *es - es - ihm* is very similar to *das - das - dem*.

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