

CHAPTER 11

“Personal Pronouns Ego and Tu; Pronouns Is and Idem”

THE ENGLISH PERSONAL PRONOUNS

You know what a pronoun is. It's a word which takes the place of a noun in a sentence. The word it's replacing is called the antecedent. So we can ask, “What is the antecedent of this pronoun”, whenever we see a pronoun in a sentence. That is, we are asking, “To what noun is this pronoun pointing?” Read the following paragraph and pick out the pronouns; ask yourself what the antecedent is for each pronoun.

“George asked Larry to go pick up the apple. He wanted an apple so he told him to get it. But Larry couldn't find it, so he couldn't give it to him. Larry told him, ‘If I had found it, I would have given it to you, but I couldn't find it.’ He turned to Sue sitting nearby and said to her, ‘He's a failure. Can you find it for me?’ Sue said she didn't know where it was either. ‘I guess you're just out of luck’, she told him”.

Alright, that's enough of that. You see how useful these pronouns are. If it weren't for pronouns, you'd have to repeat every noun and every name each time you wanted to refer to them, no matter how obvious the reference was. If you don't believe me, try reading the paragraph again substituting the antecedent for each of the pronouns. Pronouns are useful, and in this

paragraph you saw all kinds of pronouns in all kinds of shapes and varieties, referring to different antecedents and performing different grammatical task in their sentences. This variety in form is not merely random. The differences among “he, she, it”, among “his, her, its”, and “him, her, it” are critical; they tell you (1) what the likely antecedent is, and (2) how the pronoun is being used in the sentence of which it’s a part.

If the speaker is referring to him/herself, or to a group of people of which he/she considers himself to be a part, in a sentence, he/she uses the first person pronoun. In English, the first person pronoun has three forms to indicate different cases (grammatical function).

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	I	we
Possessive	my	our
Objective	me	us

If the speaker is referring to the person or people to whom he/she is directly talking, he/she uses the second person pronoun. (Notice that the cases are not so clearly visible in the morphology of this pronoun; notice also that English makes no distinction between second person pronoun in the singular and plural.)

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	you	you
Possessive	your	your
Objective	you	you

Now take a close look at these pronouns. What don't they tell you about their antecedents? You can see the difference in number in the first person pronoun, but you can't in the second. What else don't you know about the antecedents? Do you know their genders? Do you know simply by looking at the form of, say, "me" whether the person referred to is male, female, or neuter? No. In English (as well as in Latin), the first and second pronouns make no distinction in the forms among the possible genders of their antecedents. Think about this for a moment. Why should the languages have evolved this way? Why is it not important for a speaker to be able to indicate differences in gender in the first and second persons? Try to figure it out. Well, let's take a step backwards for a moment: what is the first person? It's the speaker or speakers of the sentence, right? And what is the second person? It's the person or people whom the speaker(s) is (are) directly addressing. So should it be necessary for someone who's speaking to indicate his or her own gender to the listener(s)? Look, I surely know what gender I am, so there's no reason to indicate in the grammar of my sentence what gender I am. Furthermore, the psychology of language is such that there is an assumed (or real) audience to whom I am directing my thoughts. There is always an implied second person in everything written. So, if I'm standing directly in front of you, talking to you, you should have no doubt about my gender, because you can see me. Therefore it would be superfluous for me to add special gender markings to my first person pronouns to tell you what gender I am. That is plainly visible. For this reason, then, the first person pronouns make no distinctions among the genders of their antecedents.

Can you guess now why the second person makes no

distinctions among the genders, either? Right, because if I (the first person) am directly addressing you (the second person), then I should be able to tell your gender too. You know my gender, and I know your gender, because we're standing in front of each other. As the first person in our conversation, I don't need to remind you, my audience, of your own gender, do I?

Now let's look at the first and second pronouns in Latin. They'll make distinctions in number. And, to be useful in Latin, they'll have to decline through all the cases just like Latin nouns. Here they are:

	1st Person	2nd Person
N/V.	ego	tu
[Gen.	mei	tui]
Dat.	mihi	tibi
Acc.	me	te
Abl.	me	te
N/V.	nos	vos
[Gen.	nostrum/nostri	vestrum/vestri]
Dat.	nobis	vobis
Acc.	nos	vos
Abl.	nobis	vobis

Look at the following examples. You'll see how useful these pronouns are.

1. Mittam ad vos filium meum. (I will send my son to you.)
2. Ego scribo has litteras. (I write this letter.)

3. *Ego vos video, atque vos me videtis.* (I see you, and you see me.)
4. *Cum vobis in terram illam veniam.* (I will come into that land with you.)
5. *Cum te in terram illam veniam.* (I will come into that land with you.)

THE “WEAK” DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVE IS, EA, ID

So what about the third person pronouns? Here there’s a problem, one which plagued, and continues to plague, the Romance languages derived from Latin. First off, the third person pronoun is going to have to tell you more about their antecedents than the first and second person pronouns did. If I (the first person) am talking to you (the second person) directly, I certainly know what gender you are. But if I am talking to you about something else (which is the third person) or if I am talking to you about several things, it would be nice if I could refer the gender of these topics of conversations. Look at the following passage.

“I’ve got to tell you a story. Yesterday I saw Betty and Steve. He asked her for an apple. She told him that she didn’t have any. When he asked her again, she told him to go buy his own apples”.

Let’s look at this little narrative more closely. The first “He” -- how do you know that it’s referring to Steve and not to Betty. That’s easy; it’s because “he” is masculine and not feminine. If the antecedent had been Betty, then you would have had “She” in place of “He”. Another thing “He” tells you about the antecedent is that the antecedent is singular. If the

antecedent had been plural, then “He” would have been “They”. Right? One last thing. Look at the antecedent for “He”. What case is it in? It’s in the objective (or accusative) case because it’s the direct object of the verb “saw”. Now look at the pronoun “He”. What case is it in? It’s in the nominative case. Why? Because in its sentence it’s the subject of the verb “asked”. Now look at the pronoun “his” in the last line. What case is it in? This time the pronoun is in the possessive (or genitive) case, again because the grammar of the sentence it’s in requires it to be in the genitive case. Even though all the pronouns are pointing to the same antecedent, they are all in different cases in their own sentences. Here is a rule you must remember:

“A pronoun gets its number and gender from its antecedent, but it gets its case from the way it’s being used grammatically in its own sentence”.

Remember that; you’ll need it very soon. Now let’s get on with the Latin third person pronoun. Here’s what the Latin third person pronoun must do: it must be able to show the number and gender of its antecedent, and it must be able to inflect through the entire case system.

Let’s look once more at the English third person pronoun, so that you can see how unbelievably flaccid and corrupted it is in comparison to the majestic power of the Latin 3rd person pronoun.

Singular

Masculine Feminine Neuter

Nom.	he	she	it
Gen.	his	her	its
Acc.	him	her	it

Plural

Masculine-Feminine-Neuter

Nom.	they
Gen.	their
Acc.	them

As you can see the English third person pronoun is so feeble it's hardly worth learning. In the singular, some of the case forms are identical, and in the plural it makes no distinction among the genders: "They" can refer to a group of men, women, or rocks. So it's not very useful.

But look at the Latin third person pronoun. The third person pronoun starts its life as a weak demonstrative adjective. It means something like "the" and it agrees with the noun to which it's attached: "the book". Then, like the other demonstratives you've seen -- "ille", "hic", and "iste" -- it can be used independently as a pronoun. Let's see how it works.

First the morphology. The stem is "e-" and basically it's declined just like the other demonstratives you've seen before. You remember the heteroclitite declension which has the irregular "-ius", and "-i" for the genitive and dative singulars? The nominative singular of the third person demonstrative is a little odd, and the genitive and dative singular use these alternative endings. Try to fill in the declension. Don't forget, now, the

stem of the demonstrative is “e-” to which the case endings are going to be added. Except for the genitive and dative singular, it will use the standard first and second declension endings which all standard adjectives use.

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
N/V.	is	ea	id
Gen.	_____	_____	

Dat.	_____	_____	

Acc.	_____	_____	

Abl.	_____	_____	

N/V.	ii, or ei	_____	

Gen.	_____	_____	

Dat.	_____	_____	

Acc.	_____	_____	

Abl. -----

First let's see how the weak demonstrative "is, ea, id" works as an adjective. Don't forget that as with the demonstratives "ille", "hic", and "iste", "is" can be used both as an adjective and as a pronoun. When used as a demonstrative adjective, "is" has about the same force as our article "the", although as you'll see Latin doesn't use "is, ea, id" in some places where we would use our "the". Briefly, we may say this: Latin uses "is, ea, id" as a demonstrative adjective to give a little emphasis to something which has already been talked about. Like this:

"I have a book".

"Well, then, give me the book".

"The book is on the table".

"Okay, thanks. I'll get the book myself".

The underscored "the's" are candidates for the Latin "is, ea, id", because the book the two are talking about has already been identified, and the speakers are calling just a little attention to it. Can you see also how "is, ea, id" differs from the strong demonstrative adjectives "ille" and "hic?" Can you feel the difference between saying "Give me the book" and "Give me that book" or "Give me this book?" In English we have a weak "this" that corresponds nicely to the Latin "is, ea, id" used as an adjective. We can say for example "I like this book", without placing much emphasis on the "this". That is, we're not saying

“I like this book [and not that one over there]”.

Here are some examples of “is, ea, id” used as weak demonstrative adjectives. Of course, without a context it may be a little difficult to see precisely the shades of feeling, but at least you can see the grammar involved.

1. *Eos libros vobis dabimus.* (We will give the [or these] books to you.)
2. *Eas litteras ad me mittet.* (He will send the [or this] letter to me.)
3. *Ei libri sunt boni.* (The [or these] books are good.)
4. *Animi earum feminarum valent.* (The courage of the [or of these] women is strong.)
5. *Nulla civitas ea bella tolerare poterat.* (No city was able to endure the [or these] wars.)

Now translate these into Latin, using “is, ea id” for “the”.

1. They will send you the [this] money.

2. I will give you the money of the [these] men.

3. The [these] boys are not thinking.

4. *I will come with the [this] tyrant.*

5. *That man will discover the [this] plot.*

IS, EA, ID AS PRONOUN

Now, how does a mild-mannered weak demonstrative adjective become the redoubtable third person pronoun, the glory of the Latin language? Let's think back. Remember the demonstrative adjectives "ille", "hic", and "iste?" You remember that they can be used as adjectives, to add emphasis to the noun they're modifying.

"Ille liber est bonus." (That book is good.)

"Hic vir est malus." (This man is evil.)

"Cicero videt istas insidias."

(Cicero see this plot.)

"Possum superare vitia illa." (I can overcome those faults.)

“Habeo pecuniam illarum feminarum.” (I have the money of those women.)

That’s all fine and good. But you also remember that the demonstrative adjective can be used, just like all other adjectives, without a noun explicitly stated, but only implied. In order to supply the correct noun, you must do two things: (1) you must examine the form of the demonstrative, and (2) you must examine the context. Watch:

“Illae feminae sunt ibi, sed illas videre non possum”.

How do you translate the “illas?” Well, “illas” is feminine, accusative plural, right? It’s in the accusative because it’s the direct object of the verb “videre”. But why is it feminine and plural? Because the noun which has been left out -- that is, the things to which “illas” is referring -- is feminine and plural. And what is that? Look at the context. “Feminae” is feminine and plural.

“Those women are there, but I can’t see those women” (or, more idiomatically in English, “but I can’t see them”).

When the demonstratives are used without a noun, they are taking the place of a noun. And words which take the place of a noun are called pronouns. Hence the metamorphosis from demonstrative adjective to demonstrative pronoun is complete.

Now let’s take a look at the weak demonstrative adjective “is, ea, id”. It will undergo the same process from adjective to pronoun. Because there is only a weak demonstrative force attached to “is, ea, id”, we can translate it into English simply

as our third person pronoun: “he”, “she”, “it”, etc.

“Videstisne meos amicos?”

“Videō eos”.

“Do you see my friends?”

“I see them”.

All you have to do when you see the weak demonstrative adjective in a sentence without a noun is to treat it just like third person pronoun: check the antecedent and find the appropriate English equivalent. Read these sentences (go very, very slowly and be reasonable):

“Cicero amat Romam, et in ea beatam vitam agit. Atque ego civitatem eius amo. Toti amici eius sunt Romani. Vitae eorum sunt beatae. Et eas magna cum sapientia agunt. Ei igitur sunt beati. Cicero eos amat, et ei eum amant. Olim civitas eorum in periculis magnis erat, sed ea superare poterat, quoniam viros multos bonorum morum invenire poterat”.

(Cicero loves Rome, and he is leading a happy life in it. I also love his city. All his friends are Romans. Their lives are happy, and they are leading them [they are leading their lives] with great wisdom. They are therefore happy. Cicero loves them, and they love him. Formerly their city was in great danger, but it was able to overcome them [the dangers], since it was able to find many men of good character.)

THE DEMONSTRATIVE *idem, eadem, idem*

This is simple. Latin adds an undeclinable suffix to the end of the inflected forms of the demonstrative “is, ea, id” and comes out with “the same”. Like the demonstrative “is, ea, id”, the resulting form can be used either an adjective -- “*eadem femina*” (the same woman), or as a full-blown pronoun -- “*video easdem*” (I see the same (feminine) things). Remember, the syntactically important information comes before the “dem” suffix: “*eisdem*”, “*eaedem*”, etc.

The addition of the suffix cause some distortion of the spelling of “is, ea, id”. First, in the nominative singular masculine, the “s” of “is” collides with the “d” of “-dem” and disappears, but the “i” of “is” becomes long as a result. In the nominative singular neuter instead of “*iddem*” we get “*idem*”. No big surprise here. Finally, and this isn’t much of a surprise either, wherever the case ending of “is, ea, id” ends in an “m”, the addition of “dem” changes the “m” to an “n”. Decline “*idem, eadem, idem*”.

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
N/V.	_____	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____	_____
Abf.	_____	_____	_____

N/V. _____

Gen. _____

Dat. _____

Acc. _____

Abl. _____

VOCABULARY PUZZLES

nemo the pronoun for “nobody” has more than its share of oddities:

- (1) the stem of the word is *nemin-*;
- (2) it uses the third declension endings;
- (3) it’s potentially masculine or feminine -- “no man” or “no woman”;
- (4) like English “nobody”, it’s only singular;
- (5) it uses the genitive singular of the adjective “nullus, -a, -um” instead of its expected form of “*neminis*”;
- (6) in the ablative singular it uses “*nullō*” (m. and n.) or “*nulla*” (f.) instead of the expected “*nemine*”.

(Consequently, the only place “nobody” in Latin distinguishes among the genders is in the ablative. Why that should be I haven’t the foggiest idea.)

Nom. *nemo*

Gen. nullius

Dat. nemini

Acc. neminem

Abl. nullo, nulla

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