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A Short Introduction To English Grammar

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Basil, MDCCXCIV [1794]

Universitätsbibliothek Basel

Persistent Link: <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-95615>

Pronoun

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The chief use of Gender, in English is in the Pronoun of the Third Person; which must agree in that respect with the Noun for which it stands.

P R O N O U N .

A PRONOUN is a word standing *instead of a Noun*, as its Substitute or Representative.

In the Pronoun are to be considered the Person, Number, Gender, and Case.

There are Three Persons which may be the Subject of any discourse: first, the Person who speaks may speak of himself; secondly, he may speak of the Person to whom he addresses himself; thirdly, he may speak of some other Person.

These are called, respectively, the First, Second, and Third, Persons: and are expressed by the Pronouns, *I, Thou, He*.

As the Speakers, the Persons spoken to, and the other Persons spoken of, may be many; so each of these Persons hath the Plural Number; *We, Ye, They*.

The Persons speaking and spoken to, being at the same time the Subjects of the discourse, are

supposed to be present; from which and other circumstances their Sex is commonly known, and need not to be marked by a distinction of Gender in their Pronouns: but the third Person or thing spoken of being absent and in many respects unknown, it is necessary, that it should be marked by a distinction of Gender; at least when some particular person or thing is spoken of, which ought to be more distinctly marked: accordingly the Pronoun Singular of the Third Person hath the Three Genders; *He, She, It.*

Pronouns have Three Cases; the Nominative; the Genitive, or Possessive; like Nouns; and moreover a Case, which follows the Verb Active, or the Preposition, expressing the Object of an Action, or of a Relation. It answers to the Oblique Cases in Latin; and may be properly enough called the Objective Case.

P R O N O U N S ;

according to their Persons , Numbers , Cases ,
and Genders.

P E R S O N S .

1.	2.	3.	1.	2.	3.
Singular.			Plural.		
I,	Thou,	He ;	We,	Ye or You,	They.

C A S E S .

Nom.	Poss.	Obj.	Nom.	Poss.	Obj.
First Person.					
I,	Mine,	Me ;	We,	Ours,	Us.
Second Person.					
Thou, Thine, Thee ; Ye or You, Yours, You (1).					

(1) Some Writers have used *Ye* as the Objective Case Plural of the Pronoun of the Second Person ; very improperly , and ungrammatically.

“ The more shame for *ye* : holy men I thought *ye* .”

Shakspeare, Hen. VIII.

“ But tyrants dread *ye*, left your just degree
Transfer the pow'r, and set the people free .”

Prior.

“ His wrath, which one day will destroy *ye* both .”

Milton, P. L. ii. 734.

Milton uses the same manner of expression in a few other places of his *Paradise Lost*, and more frequently in his

Third Person.

Maf. He, His, Him;

Fem. She, Hers, Her; They, Theirs, Them.

Neut. It, Its (1), It;

Poems. It may perhaps be allowed in the Comic and Burlesque style, which often imitates a vulgar and incorred pronunciation: as, "By the Lord, I knew *ye*, as well as he that made *ye*." Shakspeare, 1 Henry IV. But in the serious and solemn style, no authority is sufficient to justify so manifest a solecism.

The Singular and Plural Forms seem to be confounded in the following Sentence: "Pass *ye* away, *thou* inhabitant of Saphir." Micah, i. 11.

(1) The Neuter Pronoun of the Third Person had formerly no variation of Cases. Instead of the Possessive *its* they used *his*, which is now appropriated to the Masculine. "Learning hath *his* infancy, when *it* is but beginning, and almost childish; then *his* youth, when *it* is luxuriant and juvenile; then *his* strength of years, when *it* is solid and reduced; and lastly *his* old age, when *it* waxeth dry and exhaust." Bacon, Essay 58. In this example *his* is evidently used as the Possessive Case of *it*: but what shall we say to the following, where *her* is applied in the same manner, and seems to make a strange confusion of Gender? "He that pricketh the heart maketh *it* to show *her* knowledge." Eccles, xxii. 19.

"Oft have I seen a timely-parted ghost,
Of ashy semblance, meagre, pale, and bloodless,
Being all descended to the lab'ring heart,
Who, in the conflict that *it* holds with death,
Attracts the same for aidance 'gainst the enemy."

Shakspeare, 2 Hen. VI.

The Personal Pronouns have the nature of Substantives; and, as such, stand by themselves: the rest have the nature of Adjectives, and, as such, are joined to Substantives; and may be called Pronominal Adjectives.

Thy, My, Her, Our, Your, Their, are Pronominal Adjectives: but *His*, (that is, *He's*) *Her's, Our's, Your's, Their's*, have evidently the Form of the Possessive Case: and by Analogy, *Mine, Thine* (1), may be esteemed of the same rank. All these are used, when the Noun, to which they belong, is understood: the two latter sometimes also instead of *my, thy*, when the Noun following them begins with a vowel.

Beside the foregoing, there are several other Pronominal Adjectives; which, though they may

It ought to be,

“ *Which*, in the conflict that *it* holds ” —

Or, perhaps more poetically,

“ *Who*, in the conflict that *he* holds with death.”

(1) So the Saxon *Ic* hath the Possessive Case *Min; Thu*, Possessive *Thin; He*, Possessive *His*: from which our Possessive Cases of the same Pronouns are taken without Alteration. To the Saxon Possessive Cases, *hire, ure, eower, hira*, (that is, *her's, our's, your's, their's*,) we have added the *s*, the Characteristic of the Possessive Case of Nouns. Or *our's, your's*, are directly from the Saxon *ures, eowers*; the Possessive Case of the Pronominal Adjectives *ure, eower*; that is, *our, your*.

sometimes seem to stand by themselves, yet have always some Substantive belonging to them, either referred to, or understood: as, *This, that, other, any, same, one, none*. These are called Definitive, because they *define* and limit the extent of the Common Name, or General Term, to which they either refer, or are joined. The three first of these are varied, to express Number; as, *These, those, others* (1); the last of which admits of the Plural form only when its Substantive is not joined to it, but referred to, or understood: none of them are varied to express the Gender; only two of them to express the Case; as, *other, one*, which have the Possessive Case. *One* is sometimes used in an Indefinite sense, (answering to the French *on*,) as in the following phrases; “*one* is apt to think;” “*one* sees;” “*one* supposes.” *Who, which, that*, are called Relatives, because they more directly refer to some substantive going before; which therefore is

(1) “Diodorus, whose design was to refer all occurrences to years, — is of more credit in a point of Chronology, than Plutarch or any other, that write Lives by the lump.” Bentley, Dissert. on Themistocles’s Epistles, Sect. vi. It ought to be *others, or writes*.

called the Antecedent. They also connect the following part of the Sentence with the foregoing. These belong to all the three Persons; whereas the rest belong only to the Third. One of them only is varied to express the three Cases; *Who*, *whose*, (1), (that is, *who's* (2),) *whom*: none of them have different endings for the Numbers. *Who*, *which*, *what*, are called Interrogatives, when they are used in *asking questions*. The two

(1) *Whose* is by some authors made the Possessive Case of *which*, and applied to things as well as persons: I think improperly.

“The *question*, *whose* solution I require,
Is, what the sex of women most desire.” Dryden.

“Is there any other *doctrine*, *whose* followers are punished?” Addison.

The higher Poetry, which loves to consider every thing as bearing a Personal Character, frequently applies the personal Possessive *whose* to inanimate beings:

“Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden Tree, *whose* mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe.”

Milton.

(2) So the Saxon *hwa* hath the Possessive Case, *hwæs*. Note, that the Saxons rightly placed the Aspirate before the *w*: as we now pronounce it. This will be evident to any one that shall consider in what manner he pronounces the words *what*, *when*; that is, *hoo-at*, *hoo-en*

latter of them have no variation of Number or Case. *Each, every* (1), *either*, are called Distributives; because they denote the persons, or things, that make up a number, as taken *separately* and singly.

Own, and *self*, in the Plural *selves*, are joined to the Possessives, *my, our, thy, your, his*, (2), *her, their*; as, *my own hand; myself, yourselves*: both of them expressing emphasis, or opposition; as, "I did it *my own self*," that is, and no one else: the latter also forming the Reciprocal Pronoun; as, "he hurt *himself*." *Himself, themselves*, seem to be used in the Nominative Case

(1) *Every* was formerly much used as a Pronominal Adjective, standing by itself: as, "He proposeth unto God their necessities, and they their own requests, for relief in *every* of them." Hooker, v. 39. "The corruptions and depravations to which *every* of these was subject." Swift, *Contests and Dissensions*. We now commonly say, *every one*.

(2) The Possessives *his, mine, thine*, may be accounted either Pronominal Adjectives, or Genitive Cases of the respective Pronouns. The form is ambiguous; just in the same manner as, in the Latin phrase "*cujus liber*," the word *cujus* may be either the Genitive Case of *qui*, or the Nominative Masculine of the Adjective, *cujus, cuja, cujum*. So likewise, *mei, tui, sui, nostri, vestri*, have the same form, whether Pronouns, or Pronominal Adjectives.

by corruption instead of *his self*, *their selves* (1): as, "he came *himself*;" "they did it *themselves*;" where *himself*, *themselves*, cannot be in the Objective Case. If this be so, *self* must be, in these instances, not a Pronoun, but a Noun. Thus Dryden uses it:

"What I show,
Thy *self* may freely on thyself bestow."

Ourselves, the Plural Pronominal Adjective with the Singular Substantive, is peculiar to the Regal Style.

Own is an Adjective; or perhaps the Participle *owen*, (2) of the verb *to owe*; to be the right owner of a thing (3).

All Nouns whatever in Grammatical Construction are of the Third Person; except when an

(1) *His self* and *their selves* were formerly in use, even in the objective Case after a Preposition: "Every of us, each for *his self*, laboured how to recover him." Sidney. "That they would willingly and of *their selves* endeavour to keep a perpetual chastity." Stat. 2 and 3 Ed. VI. ch. 21.

(2) Chaucer has thus expressed it:

"As friendly, as he were his *owen* brother." Cant. Tales, 1654, edit. 1775. And so in many other places; and, I believe, always in the same manner.

(3) "The Man that *oweth* this girdle." Acts, xxi. 11.

address is made to a Person: then the Noun, (answering to what is called the Vocative Case in Latin,) is of the Second Person.

A D J E C T I V E.

AN ADJECTIVE is a word *added* to a Substantive to express its quality (1).

In English the Adjective is not varied on account of Gender, Number, or Case (2). The

(1) Adjectives are very improperly called *Nouns*; for they are not the *Names* of things. The Adjectives *good*, *white*, are applied to the Nouns *man*, *snow*, to express the Qualities belonging to those Subjects; but the Names of those Qualities in the Abstract, (that is, considered in themselves, and without being attributed to any Subject,) are *goodness*, *whiteness*; and these are Nouns, or Substantives.

(2) Some few Pronominal Adjectives must here be excepted, as having the Possessive Case; as *one*, *other*, *another*: "By *one's* own choice." Sidney.

"Teach me to feel *another's* woe."

Pope, Univ. Prayer.

And the Adjectives, *former*, and *latter*, may be considered as Pronominal, and representing the Nouns, to which they refer; if the phrase in the following sentence be allowed to be just: "It was happy for the state, that Fabius continued in the command with Minucius: the *former's* phlegm was a check upon the *latter's* vivacity."