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## Contrastive Study of Personal Pronouns in English and Spanish

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to describe similarities and dissimilarities of the uses of personal pronouns in English and Spanish. A contrastive and descriptive research were carried out to find and to analyze the data. The study findings show that there are some similarities of the uses of personal pronouns in English and Spanish. Both English and Spanish have the same function as nominative, occupying the subject, and as accusative occupying the function of the object. The dissimilarities are on the fact that on Spanish, most pronouns have a gender, namely ; masculine and feminine and Spanish has pronouns in addressing anyone whom we respect, someone that older than us, someone whom we meet for the first time the second person singular and plural in the formal form. Pronoun in different position in spanish has the same form, Spanish does not have the specific forms for neuter gender

keywords : spanish personal pronoun, similarities, dissimilarities

### Introduction

Language is a tool/ system of human communication to convey information, to do things, express idea and to entertain ((Syafryadin, 2020; Syafryadin, et al. 2020; Syafryadin, et al. 2020; Noermanzah, et al. 2020; Noermanzah, et al. 2020). According to Geoffery Leech ( 1974 ) “ language can have an expressive function : that is, it can be used to express its originator’s feelings and attitudes- swear words and exclamations are the most obvious instance of this “All languages in the world must have a pronoun as one of the elements of the sentences. Instead of replacing the place of noun, pronoun is also used to avoid repetition in the sentence. Cuak Aik Kam and Kai Hui Kam ( 1992 ) states in Longman Dictionary of Grammar and usage , Pronoun is defined as a word that is used in the place of a noun or noun phrase. Usually when a noun or noun phrase has been used once . ( Aik dan Hui 1992 : 198 ). Pronoun in English as well as in Spanish, can be classified and differentiated from their types, forms, functions, and positions. When they are classified and differentiated in such a way, there must be some similarities and dissimilarities which can be found. This topic which is concerned with personal pronouns in English and Spanish is quite significant as it covers various syntetic aspects which are useful for the learners of the language.

### Research Methodology

Research can be defined as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. The purpose of this research were :



- To give a clear description about personal pronouns in English and Spanish
- To find out how the form, usage and function of personal pronouns in English are related to those in Spanish
- To give contribution to the theory of linguistics so that the learners of the two languages may take some advantages from this work,
- To improve and develop writer's knowledge about linguistics, especially about personal pronouns in the two languages.
- To motivate the readers of this study to make a linguistics studies about other aspects from the two languages,
- To find out similarities and dissimilarities of English and Spanish.

This study was the result of a research in which the data were obtained from various sources. Most of the data were taken from Grammar books. However, some of the data were not only acquired from the written texts but also from lectures and friends who have a good command on the subject matter.

The sources of data were taken from written tests that are written by some famous linguists such as Aik Kam and Kai Hui Kam (1992), Geoffrey Leech (1974), Silvia (2004) and many more.

The library research that was conducted in this study is following Herbert's theory (1990), in which he says that a library research is a research to collect ideas' theories, and reported empirical data within the context of scholarship in the library. In this type Library research, the methods were obtained by:

1. Analyzing of historical record

The techniques for this methods such as recording of notes, content analysis, tape and Film and song listening and the last was analysis.

2. The next method was analysis of documents that collected from library.

The techniques for this method was statistical compilations and manipulations, reference and abstract guides, contents analysis. The descriptive qualitative approach (Neuman 2000) was used for the analysis is presented in descriptive form which is qualitative in nature.

## Findings and Discussion

### I. Findings Similarities

Both English and Spanish have some types of personal pronouns, the first person singular, the second person singular, the third person singular. The first person plural, the second person plural, the third person plural

**Table 1: Form**

No		ENGLISH	SPANISH
1	Singular Plural	I We	Yo  Nosotros/ Nosotras

2.	Singular Plural	You  You	TÚ ( Informal ) Usted (formal )  Vosotros/ Vosotras Ustedes
3.	Singular	He, it She, it	Él Ella
	Plural	They	Ellos/ Ellas

Both English and Spanish have two grammatical number, that is singular and plural. English and Spanish construe numerosity in similar ways despite the substantial morphological and syntactic differences in both languages.

**Table : 2 Number**

ENGLISH	SPANISH
I cook the cheese cakes We She sings well They always	Yo cocino las tartas de queso Nosotros cantamos canciones tradicionales Ella canta bien Ellos siempre llegan tarde

Just as the English pronouns he/ she denote gender, that means both English and Spanish distinguish gender for the third person singular.

**Table. 3 Gender for the Third Person Singular**

ENGLISH		SPANISH	
Male	Female	Male	Female
He	She	Él	Ella

Both English and Spanish have the same cases functioning as subject, object, direct object and indirect object.

**Table .4 Function  
As subject**

ENGLISH	SPANISH
I love my dogs so much	<b>Yo</b> amo tanto a mi perro
<b>We</b> will give the best to our children	<b>Nosotros</b> daremos lo mejor a nuestros hijos
<b>You</b> are my everlasting love	<b>Tú</b> eres mi amor eterno

<b>You ( all )</b> will take Reyna in the airport	<b>Vosotros</b> ibais a aeropuerto por Reyna
<b>They</b> ate pizza this morning	<b>Ellos</b> comieron pizza esta mañana
<b>He</b> does not want eat at all	<b>Ello</b> no quiero comer nada

**Table 05: As object**

ENGLISH	SPANISH
She loves <b>me</b>	Ella <b>me</b> ama
The woman teaches <b>us</b> english	La mujer <b>nos</b> enseña ingles
I need <b>you</b>	<b>Te</b> necesito
I see <b>her</b> there	Yo <b>la</b> veo ahí
She gives <b>him</b> some money	Ella <b>lo</b> dio el dinero

**Table 06 : As Direct Object**

ENGLISH	SPANISH
Clarita saw <b>them</b> last night	Clarita <b>los</b> vio anoche

**Table 07: As Indirect Object**

ENGLISH	SPANISH
Jonna gave <b>the book to Mary</b>	Jonna <b>le</b> dio <b>el libro a mary</b>

**Table 06 :As Possessive pronouns**

ENGLISH	SPANISH
This is book is <b>mine</b>	Este libro es <b>el mio</b>
The small haouse is <b>hers</b>	La casa pequeña es <b>de ella</b>
This pen is <b>ours</b>	Estos boligrafos son <b>nuestra</b>
The big cars are <b>theirs</b>	Los carros grandes son <b>da ellas</b>
<b>Yours (all )</b> is the black one	<b>Los suyos</b> es negro

**B. DISSIMILARITIES**

Spanish personal pronouns agree in gender, For each grammatical numbers have genders, namely masculine and feminine.

**Table 7 : Gender for the most pronouns**

	SPANISH	ENGLISH
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1st person singular	<b>Nosotros ( masculine/ mixed groups )</b> <b>Nosotras</b>	<b>We</b>
2nd person Plural	<b>Vosotros ( masculine/ mixed groups )</b> <b>Vosotras ( feminine )</b>	<b>You</b>
3rd person singular	<b>Él ( masculine )</b> <b>Ella ( feminine )</b>	<b>He</b> <b>She</b>
3rd person plural	<b>Ellos ( masculine )</b> <b>Ellas ( feminine )</b>	<b>They</b>

The object pronouns in Spanish go immediately before the verb, but in English it comes after verb,

**Table 07 : Position**

<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>SPANISH</b>
I Love <b>You</b>	<b>Te</b> amo
I hate <b>You</b>	<b>Te</b> odio
I see <b>him</b>	<b>Lo</b> veo

### Discussion

The findings of this contrastive study that Spanish personal pronouns are similar to those in English, but note that there is no equivalent for the English *it* form, in Spanish all things are either masculine or feminine ( **él, ella** ), which means most pronouns in Spanish agree in Gender. Spanish pronouns need to be changed depending on who you are speaking about. Unlike English, the plural pronouns “ **we** “ ( **nosotros/ nosotras** ) “ **you all** ( **vosotros/ vosotras** ) , and “ **they** “ ( **ellos/ellas** ) need to be changed to match the gender of the group.

The English singular “ **you** “ exist on two forms in Spanish : **tú** ( informal ) and **usted** ( formal ) . Similarly, there are two plural forms, **vosotros** ( informal ) and **ustedes** ( formal ) . In Spain the **vosotros** form is used primarily , but for Latin American, **the ustedes** form is used to say “ **you** “ in both formal and informal contexts. This formality form shows that Spanish allows us to express respect. Both English and Spanish , Subject pronouns are placed at the beginning of a sentences, but in Spanish subject pronouns can be placed in any part of sentence. In Spanish it can be omitted that means it does not exist, however it can not in English. Object pronouns in English use of the same pronouns for both direct and indirect objects. Just like English , we can replace the direct object with a pronoun once we have already established what noun you are referring to. In English it comes after verb, meanwhile in Spanish the object pronouns come before verb . This form can be applied in the

first and second forms, when the speaker and the direct addressee are quite clear generally. Spanish speakers leave out or skip Yo ( I .) And tú.

Examples : **Te** Amo ( yo te amo ) → “ yo “ ( I ) Skipped  
 ( I love you )  
**Te** ( object pronoun of you )

However, the subject pronoun is necessary when first introducing a third person entity into a conversation.

Ex : **The cat** jumped into the box

**El gato** saltó de la caja.

Indirect object or the complemento indirecto in both languages are not the primary action of the verb , but it tells us what/ who is affected by the verb and always a living thing. Indirect objects or the complemento indirecto can be associated with a transitive verb which requires at least two nouns.

Examples : 1. John gave the book to her. → **John le dio el libro**

We have to use se instead of **le** ( to him , to her, to you ) and **les** ( to them, to you ), when you are using the object pronouns **lo, la, los, las**

For Neutral Pronoun , Spanish has ni specific ones as in English that is **it**. Neuter pronoun in Spanish also can be divided into two genders, namely ; masculine and feminine which refers to animal, thing and abstract things. Neuter pronoun in Spanish have the usage and function as well as in the third person singular and plural. Just like English , Spanish use possessive pronouns as shorthand to stand in for a noun which belongs to someone/ something. However it contrast in Spanish which requires a definite article and needs to be changed to match the gender of the replaced noun, because possessive pronouns in Spanish also agree in gender. The appropriate pronoun will need to match both the gender and number of the noun being replaced ( **-a, or -o, -os or -as** ) as well as the person being discussed , which in the case of “ you “ includes plurality as well ( whether addressing one person or multiple )

	Possessive Pronouns	
	Masculine	Feminine
1 <sup>st</sup> person singular	El mio	La mia
plural	El nuestro	La nuestra
2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular	El tuyo	El tuya
plural	El vuestra	La vuestra
3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular	El suyo	La suya
Plural	Los suyos	Las suyas



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## Conclusion and Suggestion

### Conclusion

After describing personal pronouns in English and Spanish some conclusions can be drawn as the following :

- a. Both English and Spanish have similarities and dissimilarities in form, position and function
- b. Both English and Spanish have two grammatical numbers they are singular and plural.
- c. Both English and Spanish distinguish pronouns in terms of gender; that is masculine and feminine.
- d. Both English and Spanish have the same cases functioning as subject and possessive pronouns.
- e. Spanish has different pronouns to distinguish genders, for the first person plural, the second person plural, the third person singular and the third person plural. Meanwhile in English it occurs in the third person singular only.
- f. Spanish is different from English in terms of the position of objective pronoun. In Spanish it comes immediately before the verb whereas in English it comes after verb.
- g. Spanish has formal pronoun for the second person singular and plural in addressing anyone whom we respect or anyone whom we meet for the first time. Spanish has **usted** and **Ustedes**, unlike English, the second person refers only to the informal form
- h. English has neuter pronoun, that is **IT**. Spanish has no specific pronouns for it. The forms are the same as the third person singular and plural pronouns for human beings. Neuter is also divided into genders; masculine and feminine.
- i. The subject pronouns in Spanish are rarely used as it is predicted from the form of the verb
- j. Possessive pronouns agree in genders.

### Suggestion

In this last subchapter, the writer would like suggest the following :

1. It is suggested to readers or students to study English and Spanish because they belong to the International languages.
2. The personal pronouns in English and Spanish are very important to learn and master because they are always used in conversation and writing, therefore they are suggested to learn them thoroughly
3. The writer also suggests that this study be used as a reference for those who want to do research in English and Spanish
4. The writer suggests that the readers should study foreign languages especially, English and Spanish to get successful for life.



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