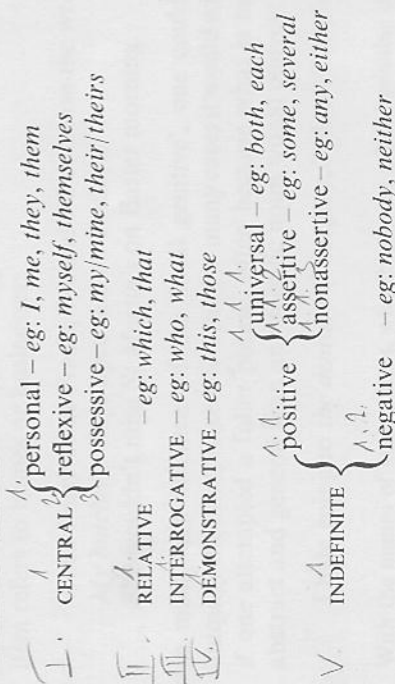


6 Pronouns

6.1 As we noted in 2.9, pro-forms play a vital role in grammar (see especially 12.1*f*). One category of pro-forms is particularly associated with noun phrases and this is the PRONOUN. How wide-ranging and heterogeneous this category is becomes apparent from considering the italicized items in the following:

As it turned out, *somebody* offered Elaine a bicycle at a price *which she and her friends* knew was well below *that* of a new *one*.

But as with pro-forms in general, all these pronouns have one thing in common: their referential meaning is determined purely by the grammar of English and the linguistic or situational context in which they occur. Beyond this, it is necessary to see pronouns as falling into the following classes and subclasses:



I. Central pronouns

A. Personal pronouns

6.2 Like all the central pronouns, the personal pronouns display a *person* contrast; that is, they have separate 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person forms. In the 3rd person, there is a three-way *gender* contrast: masculine, feminine, and nonpersonal. There are also *number* contrasts (singular, plural) and in the personal subclass a 1st and 3rd person contrast in *case* also (subjective, objective). The system of central pronouns is presented as a whole in Table 6.2.

NOTE We follow the tradition of applying the term 'personal pronoun' only to a subclass of the central pronouns. What are here termed 'possessive pronouns' are often treated as a third case (genitive) of the primary pronouns; on the paired forms of possessives (eg: *my/mine*), see 6.16.

Table 6.2 Central pronouns

PERSON	NUMBER AND GENDER	PRIMARY		REFLEXIVE		POSSESSIVE	
		SUBJECTIVE CASE	OBJECTIVE CASE			DETERMINER FUNCTION	INDEPENDENT FUNCTION
1st	{ singular	I	me	myself	my	mine	
	{ plural	we	us	ourselves	our	ours	
2nd	{ singular	you	you	yourself	your	yours	
	{ plural	you	you	yourselves	your	yours	
3rd	{ singular masculine	he	him	himself	his	his	
		she	her	herself	her	hers	
	{ singular feminine						
		it	it	itself	its	(its)	
	{ singular nonpersonal						
		they	them	themselves	their	theirs	

6.3 PERSON distinguishes the speaker or writer (1st person) from the addressee (2nd person) and from those persons or things which are neither (3rd person):

I hope that *you* will express an opinion on *them*.

If pronouns of different persons are coordinated, the sequence is treated as 1st person if it includes *I* or *we*, 2nd person if it includes *you* but not *I* or *we*. Thus:

You and *I* can go together, can't *we*?

You and { *Gillian* } agree with that, don't *you*?
 { *she* }

If neither 1st nor 2nd person pronouns occur in the coordination, the sequence is of course 3rd person:

{ *Fred* } and { *Mona* } met in Tunis, didn't *they*?
 { *He* } { *she* }

The ordering of pronouns in coordination is important from the viewpoint of style and courtesy: the 1st person comes last (especially if it is the singular) and the 2nd person usually comes first: