

SEMINAR 8B – PRONOUNS 2

- **reflexive** (basic v. emphatic use) - **reciprocal** pronouns (*each other, one another*) – **possessive** pronouns — **relative** pronouns – **interrogative** pronouns – **demonstrative** pronouns

I. REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

- are always coreferential with a noun or another pronoun and agree with it in *gender, number* (i.e. end with *-self* or *-selves*) and *person*
- there is also an indefinite reflexive pronoun *oneself*
- they have **two distinct uses**:

- a) **basic** – e.g. *They helped themselves.*
She allowed herself a rest.
He is not himself today. (= He doesn't feel well)
The café pays for itself.
- b) **emphatic** – *We couldn't come ourselves.*
We ourselves couldn't come.
Myself, I feel quiet happy about the plan.

A) Basic use

- the basic reflexive pronoun **always corefers to the subject** of its own clause
- it may function as an object, a complement or a prepositional complement, but cannot itself be a subject!

Compare: He saw *himself* in the mirror. (reference to the subject)
He saw *him* in the mirror. (reference to some other person)

He and his wife poured *themselves* a drink.
He and his wife poured *them* a drink.

Kathy begged Jane to look after *her*. (=Katy)
Kathy begged Jane to look after *herself*. (= Jane)

- the **imperative** clauses are understood to involve **2nd** person

e.g. Look at *yourself* in the mirror.
Help *yourselves*.

- in **nonfinite clauses** the reflexive '*oneself*' may be used

e.g. Voting for *oneself* is unethical. (also: *yourself*)
Pride in *oneself* was considered a deadly sin. (also: *yourself*)

Obligatory reflexive pronoun

1) Some **verbs** require the reflexive pronoun:

a) **reflexive verbs** – have a reflexive object

e.g. *She always prides herself* on her academic background.

absent oneself (from)
avail oneself (of)
demean oneself (formal)

b) **semi-reflexive verbs** – the reflexive pronoun may be omitted with little or no change of meaning

e.g. *Behave yourself* now!
Behave now!

adjust (oneself) to *identify (oneself) with*
hide (oneself) *prove oneself (to be)*
wash (oneself)
dress (oneself)

Compare: Jane's mother dresses *her* before 8 a.m. (=Jane)
Jane's mother dresses (*herself*) before 8 a.m. (= mother)

c) **nonreflexive verbs** – verbs which are transitive but are not particularly associated with the reflexive pronoun – e.g. *blame, accuse, admire, amuse, dislike, feed, get, hurt, persuade*

e.g. Williams publicly blamed *himself* for the accident.
Nobody blamed *him* for the accident.

Note:

Many verbs can have different constructions, e.g. enjoy:

e.g. I enjoyed *myself*. (=I had a good time)
I enjoyed *the party*. (= I took pleasure in it.)
I enjoyed *the guests*. (=liked, esp. AmE)

2) Some **prepositions** require reflexive pronouns

a) with prepositional objects, where the preposition has a close relationship with the verb:

e.g. Mary stood *looking at herself* in the mirror.
Do look after yourselves!
He thinks too much of himself.
Janet took a photo of herself (=Janet) x *Janet took a photo of her.* (*someone else*)

b) with prepositional phrases following a noun which refers to a work of art, a story, etc:

e.g. Every writer's first novel is basically *a story about himself*.
Rembrandt painted *many remarkable portraits of himself*.
Do you have *a recent photograph of yourself*?

Optional reflexive pronoun (= it may be replaced by objective pronouns)

a) in some **spatial prepositional phrases**

e.g. She's building a wall of Russian books *about her*. (*herself*)
He stepped back, gently closed the door *behind him* (*himself*), and walked down the corridor. (= the reflexive expresses emphasis)

But: many prepositional phrases that are **adverbials of space or time** require the **object** pronoun:

e.g. He looked *about him*.
Have you any money *on you*?
I have my wife with *me*.
She pushed the cart *in front of her*.
We have the whole day *before us*.

On the other hand, there are **idiomatic phrases** where we must use the **reflexive**:

e.g. They were *beside themselves with rage*.
I was sitting *by myself*.

b) after the prepositions '*like, than, as, but (for), except (for), as for*'

e.g. For someone like *me / myself*, this is a big surprise.
Except for *us / ourselves*, the whole village was asleep.
According to the manager, no one works as hard as *him (himself)*.

c) when a reflexive pronoun is coordinated with another phrase

e.g. They have never invited Margaret and *me / myself* to dinner.

B) Emphatic use

- reflexive pr. in emphatic use occur in apposition and have nuclear stress
- may be used in different positions:

e.g. I *myself* wouldn't take any notice.
I wouldn't take any notice *myself*. → all these mean - *speaking personally*
Myself, I wouldn't take any notice of her.

- in other context, the meaning can be '*X and nobody else*':

e.g. Do you mean that you spoke to *the President himself*?

II. RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS

- i.e. *each other* (= more common in informal style) and *one another* (more common in formal contexts)

e.g. Meg and Bill are very fond of *each other*.

All the children trust *one another*.

The party leaders promised to give *each other* their support.

They *each* blamed *the other*.

The passengers disembarked *one after another*.

- they have genitive forms
e.g. The students can borrow *each other's* / *one another's* books.
- express a 'two-way reflexive relationship' but have a different meaning than reflexive pronouns

Compare:

Adam and Eve blamed <i>themselves</i> .	X	Adam and Eve blamed <i>each other</i> .
(A. blamed himself, E. blamed herself).		(he blamed her, and she blamed him)

III. POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

- differ in form – may function as **determiners**: my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- or as **independent items**: mine, yours, his, hers, (its), ours, theirs

Compare:

These are *her* books.

These books are *hers*.

That is *my* bicycle.

That bicycle is *mine*.

Which are *their* clothes?

Which clothes are *theirs*?

Is this *his* car?

Is this car *his*?

- '*its*' is extremely rare in independent function
- the independent possessive also occurs as prepositional complement in:

e.g. I have been talking to a friend *of yours*. (= one of your friends)

The only opera *of his* I know is

- **the only form of modification** of possessive pronouns is '*own*'

e.g. This book doesn't belong to the library – it's *my own* copy.

Sam cooks *his (own)* dinner every evening. (=cooks dinner for himself)

Do you like this cake? It's *my own* recipe.

- the combination '*your own, her own*' etc. can follow '*of*' in:

e.g. I would like to have *a home of my own*.

Have you got a *car of your own* / *your own car*? (but not: ~~an own car~~)

- there is **no difference** between **determiner** and **independent** function:
e.g. That is *my own* car. That car is *my own*. (not: ~~mine~~ own)

IV. RELATIVE PRONOUNS

- introduce relative clauses: *who (whom), whose, which, that, (-)* = zero
e.g. The man *who* we met at the party was Jane's cousin.
I'd like to come and see the house *which / that* you have for sale.
I'd like to come and see the house you have for sale. (=zero)

We distinguish **two basic types of relative clauses**:

- restrictive** – **define** the person or thing they refer to; can contain all kinds of relative pronouns or *zero*; do not have commas
e.g. *The man who / that* was standing on the corner was waiting for his friends.
- nonrestrictive** – **describe but do not define** the person or thing; can contain 'who, which, whose' **but not 'that', or zero**; contain commas
e.g. Prague, *which* is the capital of the Czech Republic, is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. (*that* is not possible)

The pronouns

- *who / whom* - personal gender
e.g. The man *who* greeted me is a neighbour. (who = subject)
The man *who / whom* I greeted is a neighbour. (who / whom = object)
The man *to whom* I spoke is a neighbour.
The man (who) I spoke to is a neighbour.
whom – is largely restricted to formal style when it functions as the object of the relative clause, **but (!)** it must be used if a preposition follows (e.g. 'to whom' ~~not~~ 'to who')
- *which* – nonpersonal gender
- *whose* – usually personal, but can also be nonpersonal
e.g. That is *the doctor whose* number I gave you.
That is *the hospital whose* phone number I gave you.
(= That is the hospital *the number of which* I gave you.)
- **that** – has no reference to gender but **cannot be preceded by a preposition** and can be used **only in restrictive relative clauses**
e.g. The *play that* pleased me is new to London.
The *actor that* I admired
The *play that* I told you *about* was (but not: ~~about that~~ I told you)

- 'that' is especially common after: 'all, every (thing), some(thing), any(thing), no(thing), none, little, few, much, only' and also after *superlatives*:

e.g. Is this *all that's* left?

Have you got *anything that* belongs to me?

It's *the best film that's* ever been made on this subject.

All that you need is here. (not: ~~what~~)

- *pet animals* can be regarded as 'personal' esp. by their owners:

e.g. Rover, *who* was barking, frightened the children.

- human babies can be regarded (although rarely by their parents) as nonpersonal

e.g. This is the baby *which* needs inoculation.

- *collective nouns* can be regarded personal or nonpersonal:

e.g. The *committee who were* responsible for this decision

The *committee which was* responsible for this decision

Zero = omitting the pronouns

- we can leave out the relative pronoun, but **only when it refers to the object** and only in **restrictive relative clauses**

e.g. The man (*who*) I phoned didn't help me at all.

The girl (*who*) he came with was very attractive.

The story (*that*) he told me was really incredible.

But! The man **who** phoned in the morning wanted to order some goods. (subject)

The girl **who** was waiting for me was my sister. (subject)

Further notes:

- 'when' and 'where' can be used after nouns referring to times and places instead of 'at which' or 'in which':

e.g. I know a wood *where* you can find wild strawberries.

Can you suggest a time *when* it will be convenient to meet?

- sometimes the relative clause refers not just to the noun before it, but to the **whole sentence** before:

compare: He showed me a photo *that* upset me. (=the photo was upsetting)

He tore up my photo, *which* upset me. (the fact that he tore it up was upsetting)

- with determiners (e.g. *all, many, few, none*) we can use 'of whom':

e.g. It's a family of eight children, *all of whom* are studying music.

We tested three hundred types of boot, *none of which* is completely waterproof.

V. INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS

= who, whom, whose, which, what

- **who, whom, whose** – refer only to items of personal gender
- ‘*whom*’ can function only as the objective case
- ‘*who*’ can be both subjective and objective except after a preposition

e.g. *Who* owns this house?
Who(m) does this house belong to?
To whom does this house belong (=formal!) / *Who* does this house belong *to*?
Whose is this house?

- ‘*which*’ – reference can be personal or nonpersonal

e.g. Of these cars, *which* is best?
Of these students, *which* do you like most?

- ‘*what*’ used as a pronoun – the reference is assumed nonpersonal
e.g. *What* is in that box?

But! **What** and **which** can also be **determiners** – in this function the noun phrase can be personal or nonpersonal, ‘*which*’ assumes a limited choice of known answers:

e.g. *What* doctor(s) would refuse to see a patient?
Which doctor(s) gave an opinion on this problem? (i.e. of those we are discussing)

Also: *Which* is you? (a person looking at an old photo)
Which of the three girls is the oldest? (= ‘of’ phrase indicates definite number)

Compare:

Who is his wife? – The novelist Felicity Smith.
What is his wife? – A novelist.
Which is his wife? – The woman nearest the door.

VI. DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

- ‘*this / these*’ – suggest relative proximity to the speaker
- ‘*that / those*’ – suggest relative remoteness
- they can refer both to countable and uncountable nouns

e.g. We shall compare *this* (picture) here with *that* (picture) over there.
We shall compare *these* (pictures) here with *those* (pictures) over there.

- they can be used as **pro-forms** as substitutes for a noun phrase:

e.g. This chair is more comfortable than *that*. (or *that one*)
Those apples are sweeter than *these*. (or *these ones*)
I attended to *that* patient but not *this* (one).

- they can refer to some **unspecified object(s)**:
 - e.g. Come and have a look at *this*.
 - Have you heard *this*? (=this joke, this piece of news)
 - Can I borrow *these*? (i.e. these books)

- the demonstrative pronouns can be **a subject of a 'be-clause'**:
 -
 - e.g. *That* is my kitten.
 - These* are the children I told you about.
 - This* is Mr. Jones.
 - That's* my stepmother. (*pointing to a photograph*)
 - This* is Sid. Is *that* Paul? (*on the telephone*)

- '*this v. that*' can refer not only to **space**, also **time**
 - e.g. *this morning* (refers to today)
 - that morning* (refers to a more distant morning, past or future)

- '*this / these*' tend to be associated with **cataphoric** reference
 - e.g. Watch carefully and I'll show you: *this* is how it's done.

- '*that / those*' with **anaphoric** reference:
 - e.g. So now you know: *that's* how it's done.
 - And *that* was the six o'clock news.

- 'that' refers to degree or measurement in contexts such as:
 - e.g. My brother is six feet tall, but yours must be even taller than *that*.

Note:

Especially in informal English '*this / these*' tend to indicate the *speaker's approval*, '*that / those*' the speaker's *disapproval*

e.g. How can *this intelligent girl* think of marrying *that awful bore*?