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Department of English

## **Pronouns in English and Arabic : A Comparative Study**

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Prepared by :

Noor Alhuda Hassan Hashem

Supervised by :

Asst.lect.Fatima Raheem Jabbar

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## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ<sup>ط</sup> وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ  
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أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ<sup>ط</sup>  
وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ<sup>ط</sup> وَتَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تُفْلِحُونَ )

### [ سورة النور: 31 ]

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this research to everyone who has nurtured my love for language and its intricate structures.

To my family, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been a constant source of strength.

To my professors and mentors, whose guidance and wisdom have shaped my academic journey.

To the speakers of English and Arabic, whose linguistic diversity and cultural richness make this study both meaningful and necessary.

And to all who appreciate the beauty of linguistic diversity, may this study contribute to a deeper understanding of English and Arabic pronouns.

This work is a testament to the power of language in connecting people across cultures.

## **Acknowledgment**

Firstly, I am grateful to Almighty God for granting me the ability and perseverance to carry out this research. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, [Assistant Lecturer Fatima Raheem Jabbar], for her valuable guidance and support throughout this study. I also thank the faculty of [University of Maysan] for their assistance. Finally, my deepest appreciation goes to my family for their constant encouragement.

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## **Introduction**

Pronouns are an essential component of language, serving as substitutes for nouns to avoid repetition and ensure coherence in communication. They play a pivotal role in sentence structure, maintaining linguistic economy and clarity. As a grammatical category, pronouns are indispensable in maintaining the fluidity and coherence of communication. In this study, we delve into the characteristics and roles of pronouns in two distinct languages: English, a global language widely used across cultures and disciplines, and Arabic, a language with deep historical roots and a unique grammatical system.

The significance of this study lies in its comparative approach, which not only investigates the types, forms, and functions of pronouns in English and Arabic but also highlights their similarities and differences. This analysis is particularly valuable for learners, translators, and researchers seeking to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between these languages.

The research is structured into three main chapters. The first chapter focuses on pronouns in English, discussing their classification, grammatical functions, and practical applications. The second chapter examines pronouns in Arabic, exploring their unique forms and syntactic roles. The final chapter provides a comparative analysis, identifying parallels and distinctions between the two languages in terms of pronoun use.

The overarching goal of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of pronouns in English and Arabic, emphasizing their importance in linguistic theory and practical language use. By comparing these languages, the study aims to uncover universal principles of pronoun usage while appreciating the unique characteristics of each language.

This research is particularly relevant for linguists, translators, language educators, and anyone interested in the intricacies of language structure and usage. It also serves as a valuable resource for those seeking to deepen their knowledge of English and Arabic grammar, fostering cross-cultural understanding and enhancing communication between speakers of these languages.



# Chapter One

## 1.1 pronouns in English

English grammar consists of eight parts of speech. Each part has its own definition. As for the topic here, the definition of pronouns can be examined according to Eckersley and Eckersley (1960): "A pronoun is a word used instead of a noun". However, Arts (2001) stated that pronouns are lexical elements in the English language. They are a part of closed-system components. The word "pronoun" derives its meaning from the words *pro* and *noun*, indicating that pronouns can be used in place of nouns.

English pronouns are an important part of speech. They improve our communication, and their usage is highly necessary. Along with English nouns, which "represent the most important grammatical category" (Stoian, 2022), English pronouns replace nouns in order to avoid repetition and to make our communication in English fluent and comprehensive. In this study, the types of pronouns were highlighted. Eight types of pronouns were identified, explained, and illustrated with abundant examples, in addition to the functions of pronouns in the English language. Understanding the different types of pronouns and their uses is essential for mastering the rules of the English language, which enables clear and effective communication across different contexts.

## 1.2 Types of Pronouns in English:

### 1.2.1 Personal Pronouns

Speech naturally requires two people: the speaker (the first person) and the listener (the second person). So, *I* and *we* are first-person pronouns, while *you* (thou, thee, ye) are second-person pronouns. Beyond these two people, there is a vast world of people and things that can be discussed. For all of them, we use third-person pronouns: *he, she, it, one, they* (Eckersley & Eckersley, 1960).

The personal pronouns must correspond to their antecedents in terms of case, person, number, and gender. This technique is known as agreement. Personal pronouns are used to replace entire noun phrases. For example :

- 1) read a book. *It* was good.
- 2) *I* read some books. *They* were good.
- 3) *I* like tea. Do *you* like tea too? (Azar, 2002).

There are errors concerning the use of the subject, object, and possessive cases.

The correct usage must be as follows:

a) Subject Pronouns: Used as subjects of sentences, as *he* in (4).

4) John has a car. *He* drives to work.

b) Object Pronouns: Used as objects of verbs or prepositions, as in (5) and (6).

5) John works in *my* office. *I* know *him* well.

6) *I* talk to *him* every day.

c) Possessive Pronouns: Indicate ownership and stand alone, as in (7).

7) *That* book is *hers*.

d) Possessive Adjectives: Followed by a noun, as in (8).

8) *Her* book is *here*. (ibid, 2002).

A generic noun is used to represent a general category rather than a particular person or thing, such as "a student." This typically results in the use of a singular masculine pronoun. However, many speakers prefer to use both masculine and feminine pronouns when replacing the noun phrase. To avoid this issue, a plural pronoun is often used in place of the singular form.

9) A student should always do *his* assignments.

10) A student should always do *his* or *her* assignments.

11) Students should always do *their* assignments (Azar & Hagen, 2009).

Another type of noun is the collective noun, such as "family," which is used to represent a group of people, things, or a unit. In this case, a singular neutral pronoun is used if the collective noun refers to an impersonal single unit. However, the plural pronoun is used if the collective noun refers to the members or individuals in the group to which it belongs.

12) *My* family is large. *It* is composed of nine members.

13) *My* family is loving and supportive. *They* are always ready to help me (ibid, 2009).

	SUBJECT PRONOUN	OBJECT PRONOUN	POSSESSIVE PRONOUN	POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE
SINGULAR	<i>I</i> <i>You</i> <i>she, he, it</i>	<i>me</i> <i>you</i> <i>her, him, it</i>	<i>mine</i> <i>your</i> <i>hers, his, its</i>	<i>my name</i> <i>your name</i> <i>her, his, its name</i>
PLURAL	<i>we</i> <i>you</i> <i>they</i>	<i>us</i> <i>you</i> <i>them</i>	<i>ours</i> <i>yours</i> <i>theirs</i>	<i>our names</i> <i>your names</i> <i>their names</i>

(1) Table : Personal Pronouns (Azar, 2002)

### 1.2.2 Demonstrative Pronouns

According to Sargeant (2007), demonstrative pronouns are used for pointing out things. The words *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those* are demonstrative pronouns. We use demonstratives to 'point' to something in the situation. *This* and *these* refer to something near the speaker, while *that* and *those* refer to something further away. *This* and *that* are singular, whereas *these* and *those* are plural. In speech, they do not require antecedents.

14) *Those* are too large (Gucker, 1966).

In writing, the demonstrative pronouns may take antecedents, but there is no fixed rule. The pronoun may point forward or the reference may be quite general:

15) *This* is my answer

16) *Those* were the days.

The writer should merely make certain that the reference of the pronoun will be clear to the reader (ibid, 1966).

### 1.2.3 Reflexive pronouns

Reflexive pronouns refer back to the subject of the sentence (Eastwood, 1994). They are categorized into two groups: singular and plural. The singular reflexive pronouns include *myself*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, and *yourself*, while the plural reflexive pronouns include *yourselves*, *themselves*, and *ourselves*. Reflexive pronouns function as the object of a verb or preposition when the subject and the object of a sentence refer to the same person or thing.

17) *I* saw *myself* in the mirror (Azar, 2002).

### 1.2.4 Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns are divided into two categories. The first is known as possessive determiners: *my*, *our*, *their*, *her*, *his*, *its*, and *your*, they are used to modify nouns. They cannot be used singly. The second category includes possessive pronouns such as *mine*, *ours*, *yours*, *theirs*, *his*, *its*, and *hers*, which are used alone. There is a connection between the possessive pronouns and the possessor, not the thing possessed. They must agree with the possessor in number and gender. For example

18) The boy lost *his* book

The form of the possessive pronoun and possessive adjective does not alter depending on whether the thing possessed is singular or plural.

19) The boy lost *his* book.

Possessive pronouns are used to refer to physical parts, personal items, and various expressions. For example

20) Mary *has* broken *her* leg. (parts of the body)

21) *They* have changed *their* minds again! (personal belongings)

22) Don't lose *your* balance! (in other expressions)

The possessive pronouns used in prepositional phrases related to the object or in passive constructions related to the subject are replaced with the definite article. For example

23) *She* took *me* by the hand.

24) *I* must have been hit on the head with a hammer.

Possessive adjectives, often referred to as independent possessives, are characterized by their autonomy from a noun during their usage.

Furthermore, independent pronouns may be employed following a preposition, resulting in the formation of a double genitive.

25) I have been talking to a friend of yours (one of your friends) (Igaab & Tarrad, 2019).

### 1.2.5 Interrogative pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are wh-words that occur inside wh-phrases positioned at the beginning of interrogative clauses. Interrogative pronouns are *who*, *whom*, *which*, *what*, *whose*, and *that*. These are characteristically used to ask questions. The forms *who*, *whom*, and *whose* refer to humans. *Who* is the nominative form used in the subject position, while *whom* is the accusative form associated with a direct object position or with a prepositional complement position. *Whom* is formal and more likely to occur in written language. The interrogative pronoun *which* can be used to ask questions about humans or non-humans. By contrast, the pronoun *what* can only be used to ask questions about non-humans (Aarts, 2011).

### 1.2.6 Relative pronouns

The definite relative pronouns are *who*, *which*, and *that*. *Whom* is the objective case form of *who*. These pronouns occur in constructions called relative clauses. A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a verb. A relative clause depends on a word or words in the main clause. The relative clause is used as an adjective to modify the noun (Gucker, 1966).

The choice of *who* or *whom* depends on its construction in the relative clause:

26) The man *whom* you accused is not guilty.

27) The policeman to *whom* I spoke was very helpful.

In these lines, the relative pronouns serve as objects for the verb “accused” and the preposition “to”, hence the objective form is used. *Whose*, the possessive form of *who*, is widely used as an adjective.

28) The woman *whose* house I rented is my cousin.

*Whose* modifies the house.

The relative pronouns *which* and *that* are invariable and have no case changes:

- 29) The wind *that* comes in the spring... (subject)
- 30) The house *that* Jack built... (direct object)
- 31) The book to *which* he referred... (object of a preposition)

*The words who, which, and that have diverse meanings. That can be used for either people or things, however who (whom, whose) is only used for people, and which never for persons. The older use of which, as in "Our Father, which art in heaven," is archaic.*

In certain constructions the relative pronoun may be omitted: As for instance

- 32) Is that the dog (*that*) I saw in the yard?
- 33) The girl (*whom*) Harvey is engaged to was at the party (ibid, 1966).

### 1.2.7 Reciprocal pronouns

Reciprocal pronouns indicate a shared relationship or action. The English language has just two reciprocal pronouns: each other and one another.

- 34) They offered each other gifts for their birthdays.
- 35) They support one another in every situation (Stoian, 2023).

### 1.2.8 Indefinite Pronouns

The largest of the pronoun classes is that of indefinite pronouns:

- 36) *Many* are called, but few are chosen.
- 37) *Somebody* should help him.

Since the only distinguishing feature of these pronouns is their concern with number singular or plural, they are divided into three categories: those that indicate a single person or thing, those that indicate more than one, and those that represent a portion or part of something. Certain words belong to more than one group.

The portion indicators are singular, and are used with things that cannot be counted:

- 38) *All* of the time (gold, water, sand) is...

The plural indicators are used with things that can be counted:

- 39) *All* of the men (chairs, pencils, houses) are...

The significance of the distinctions suggested by this grouping become clear when the pronouns are employed with verbs or personal pronouns. The verb or personal pronoun should have the same number as the indefinite pronoun.

- 40) *Each* of the guests had to show *his* ticket.
- 41) *All* of the guests had to show *their* tickets (Gucker, 1966).

SINGULAR INDICATORS	PLURAL INDICATORS	PORTION INDICATORS
anybody, anyone, anything, everybody, everyone, everything, somebody, someone, something, another, each, either, neither, nobody, nothing, none, one.	all, any, both, enough, few, more, none, plenty, several, some.	all, any, enough, less, little, more, much, none, plenty, some.

**(2) Table :Indefinite Pronouns (Gucker, 1966).**

### 1.3 Functions of Pronouns in English

Pronouns are important aspects of the English language because they contribute significantly to sentence structure, noun replacement, and discourse cohesion, making them crucial in both written and spoken communication. Pronouns play important grammatical roles, such as subjects, objects, and possessives, aiding sentence structure and increasing clarity. For example, in the line "I threw the ball," the pronoun "I" serves as the subject, minimizing duplication and boosting clarity (Rozakis,2003).

Another important role of pronouns is noun replacement, which improves communication and eliminates redundant phrasing. Instead of repeating a noun, as in "Although Seattle is damp, Seattle is my favorite city," the phrase becomes more fluid and comprehensible as "Although Seattle is damp, it is my favorite city" (ibid, 2003).

Additionally, pronouns play a significant role in establishing cohesion within discourse, linking sentences and ideas to create a unified and coherent text. Cohesion, as described by Halliday and Hasan (1976), refers to the connections between linguistic elements that work together to produce meaning across a text. Pronouns serve as referential links, guiding the reader or listener in navigating the relationships between words, sentences, and paragraphs (Wolf, Gibson, & Desmet, 2004).

Ultimately, the use of pronouns is indispensable in academic and everyday communication, as they facilitate clarity, reduce redundancy, and enhance the logical flow of ideas.

## Chapter two

### 2.1 Pronouns in Arabic

“Pronouns are words such as *'I'*, *'it'* or *'you'* which replace names or nouns in a sentence. Arabic has more pronouns than English since it has different versions for masculine and feminine, singular and plural, and even special dual pronouns for two people or things” (Wightwick & Gaafar, 2005).

“Pronouns constitute an essential part of speech that can substitute for a noun or a nominal phrase. Pronouns are categorized according to their functions in the sentences: subject pronouns, possessive pronouns, object pronouns, prepositional pronouns, relative pronouns, and interrogative pronouns. In addition to being categorized according to their functions, Arabic pronouns are also classified according to their form into two types: separate pronouns and attached pronouns” (Haidar, 2013).

### 2.2 Types of Pronouns in Arabic

#### 2.2.1 Classification of Arabic Pronouns Based on Their Form

Arabic pronouns can be divided into two groups:

##### 2.2.1.1 Overt Pronouns which include two types:

2.2.1.1.1 Detached pronouns / Independent Pronouns (الضمائر المنفصلة)

2.2.1.1.2 Attached pronouns / Bound Pronouns (الضمائر المتصلة)

##### 2.2.1.2 Covert (or concealed) pronouns .

pronouns that are not overtly marked (hidden or innate pronouns in the verb), i.e., implied pronouns (الضمائر المستترة) .

Arabic pronouns	
Covert Pronouns / Implicit	Overt Pronouns/ Explicit
1- Implicitly understood pronouns	1- Attached / Bound /Inseparable Pronouns  2- Detached /Free /Separable Pronouns

(3) Table : Classification of Arabic Pronouns Based on Their Form (Qudissya, 2019)





### 2.2.1.2 Covert (or concealed) pronouns.

pronouns that are not overtly marked (hidden or innate pronouns in the verb), i.e., implied pronouns (الضمائر المستترة). They are implied, i.e., they are neither written in the sentence nor uttered verbally. Their meanings and referents can be recovered and understood from the morphological form of the verb and throughout the context (Qudissya, 2019).

The implied pronouns are divided into (obligatorily hidden pronouns) (الضمائر المستترة وجوباً) and (optionally hidden pronouns) (الضمائر المستترة جوازاً). The difference between optional and obligatory implicit pronouns is that the former can be replaced by an explicit noun, while the latter cannot. There are certain positions in which the obligatory implicit pronoun is used:

- a) if it is a subject of a command verb which is used for singular masculine second person;
- b) the subject of the past verbs which are used for exception like (خلا), (عدا), (حاشا)
- c) the subject of a present verb starting with (الهمزة)
- d) the subject of a present verb which starts with a singular second person (تاء المخاطب) ;
- e) the verbal noun of the present or command verb
- f) occurring when there is a participle which substitutes a command verb
- g) the exclamatory past verb with a subject which must be obligatory

The optionally implicit pronoun can be used in the following positions:

- a) When it can be replaced by an explicit noun.
- b) when it can be clear with the verbal noun of the past verb, an adjective, and an adverb (Makkawi, 2021).

## 2.2.2 Pronoun Categories Based on Function in Sentences

### 2.2.2.1 Personal Pronouns in Arabic

Personal pronouns are also called subject pronouns. Personal pronouns refer to persons or entities and stand on their own as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases. The personal pronouns show differences in gender (masculine and feminine), number (singular, dual, plural), and person (first, second, and third). However, the number of categories of personal pronouns in Arabic is larger than in English (12 as opposed to 8) because it includes both masculine and feminine forms of the second and third person, and it also includes the dual pronouns (Ryding, 2005). These are further divided into two main types: (attached pronouns) (الضمائر المتصلة) and (detached pronouns) (الضمائر المنفصلة):

#### 2.2.2.1.1 Independent personal pronouns (الضمائر المنفصلة)

These pronouns are divided into two main categories: Nominative Detached Pronouns (ضمائر الرفع المنفصلة) and Accusative Detached pronouns (ضمائر النصب المنفصلة).

##### 2.2.2.1.1.1 Nominative Detached Pronouns (ضمائر الرفع المنفصلة)

Person	Masculine Pronoun	Feminine Pronoun	Translation
1st Singular	أنا	أنا	I
2nd Singular	أنتَ	أنتِ	You
3rd Singular	هو	هي	He/She
1st Dual/Plural	نحن	نحن	We
2nd Dual	أنتما	أنتما	You (two)
2nd Plural	أنتم	أنتنَّ	You (all)
3rd Dual	هما	هما	They (two)
3rd Plural	هم	هنَّ	They (all)

(4) Table : Nominative Detached Pronouns in Arabic (ضمائر الرفع المنفصلة) (Makkawi, 2021)

### 2.2.2.1.1.2 Accusative Detached Pronouns (ضمائر النصب المنفصلة)

Person	Masculine Pronoun	Feminine Pronoun	Translation
1st Singular	إِيَّاي	إِيَّاي	Me
2nd Singular	إِيَّاكَ	إِيَّاكِ	You
3rd Singular	إِيَّاه	إِيَّاهَا	Him/Her
1st Dual/Plural	إِيَّانَا	إِيَّانَا	Us
2nd Dual	إِيَّاكُمَا	إِيَّاكُمَا	You (two)
2nd Plural	إِيَّاكُمْ	إِيَّاكُنَّ	You (all)
3rd Dual	إِيَّاهُمَا	إِيَّاهُمَا	Them (two)
3rd Plural	إِيَّاهُمْ	إِيَّاهُنَّ	Them (all)

(5) Table :Accusative Detached Pronouns (ضمائر النصب المنفصلة) (Makkawi, 2021)

### 2.2.2.1.2 Suffix personal pronouns (الضمائر المتصلة)

Person	Pronoun (Masculine/Feminine)	Function
1st Singular	ي	My
2nd Singular (M)	كَ	Your (male)
2nd Singular (F)	كِ	Your (female)
3rd Singular (M)	هُ	His
3rd Singular (F)	هَا	Her
1st Plural	نَا	Our
2nd Plural (M/F)	كُمْ / كُنَّ	Your (all)
3rd Plural (M/F)	هُمْ / هُنَّ	Their

(6) Table :Suffix personal pronouns (الضمائر المتصلة) (Ryding, 2005)

### 2.2.2.2 Possessive pronouns (الضمائر الملكية)

“Possessive pronouns are attached pronouns and they indicate affiliation and belonging. This group of pronouns is part of the Arabic attached pronouns that can be attached like suffixes to singular, dual, and plural nouns” (Haidar, 2013).

PLURAL	DUAL	SINGULAR
our      نا	your (d. m. f.)      كما	my      ي
your (pl. m. )      كم		your (s. m.)      كَ
your (pl. f.)      كن	their (d. m. f.)      هما	your (s. f.)      كِ
their (pl. m.)      هم		his      ه
their (pl. f)      هن		her      ها

(7) Table : Possessive pronouns (الضمائر الملكية) (Haidar, 2013)

### 2.2.2.3 Relative pronouns (الضمائر النسبية)

“ Relative pronouns relate an element in a subordinate relative clause (in Arabic, al-Sila الصلة) to a noun or noun phrase in the main clause of a sentence. The Arabic relative pronoun (الاسم الموصول) may be definite or indefinite. MSA uses nine forms of definite relative pronoun. Only the dual form of the definite relative pronoun shows difference in case. All, however, are marked for number and gender”(Ryding, 2005).

Relative clauses in Arabic are either definite or indefinite;

#### 2.2.2.3.1 Definite relative pronouns (الضمائر النسبية المحددة)

	Masculine	Feminine
Singular	الَّذِي	الَّتِي
Dual Nominative Genitive/Accusative	الَّذَانِ الَّذَيْنِ	الَّتَانِ الَّتَيْنِ
Plural	الَّذِينَ	اللَّوَاتِي - اللَّاتِي

(8) Table : Definite relative pronouns (الضمائر النسبية المحددة) (Ryding, 2005)

### 2.2.2.3.2 Indefinite relative pronouns (الضمائر النسبية غير المحددة)

These pronouns refer to non-specified entities.  
whoever; he/she who; one who من  
whatever; what; that which ماذا - ما (ibid,2005).

### 2.2.2.4 Demonstrative pronouns (الضمائر الإشارية)

Demonstrative pronouns in Arabic are divided into two major categories: demonstratives of proximity and demonstratives of distance. These are used for close nouns and for far nouns, respectively (Haidar, 2013). The factors determining their distribution are number, gender, case and distance. Near Reference;

	Masculine	Feminine
Singular	هذا	هذه
Dual	هذان، هذين	هاتان، هاتين
Plural	هؤلاء	هؤلاء

(9) Table :Near Reference (Aziz, 1989).

Distant Reference ;

	Masculine	Feminine
Singular	ذاك ، ذاك	تلك
Dual	ذاك، ذنك	تانك، تينك
Plural	أولئك	أولئك

(10) Table :Distant Reference (ibid, 1989).

### 2.2.2.5 Interrogative pronouns

“Question formation and the use of question words in Arabic are not complex. In general, the interrogative word is placed at the beginning of a sentence”(Ryding, 2005).

The most common question words in Arabic include;

Interrogative Pronouns in English	Interrogative Pronouns in Arabic
where	اين
which; what'	أي
how much; how many'	كم
'how'	كيف
why	لماذا
what	ما ماذا
who/whom	من
when	متى
introduces yes/no question	هل
introduces yes/no question	أ

(11) Table : Interrogative pronouns (Ryding, 2005)

## 2.3 Functions of Pronouns in Arabic

Pronouns constitute an essential part of speech that can substitute for a noun or a nominal phrase (Haidar, 2013). pronouns (الضمائر) are indispensable components of sentence structure, performing a variety of functions that contribute to meaning and coherence. In Arabic, pronouns perform a range of functions that are central to sentence structure. Personal pronouns replace specific subjects or objects in sentences. These include subject pronouns like, ( أنا ) I, ( أنت ) (you, masculine), and ( هو ) he , as well as object pronouns such as (ني) me , (ك) (your, feminine), and (ه) (him) (Haidar, 2013). Possessive pronouns express ownership and are directly attached to nouns. For example, (والدي) my father and (والدك) your father (s. f.)(ibid). Demonstrative pronouns help specify or point out particular items, with words like (هذا) (this, masculine) and( تلك ) (that, feminine) indicating proximity or distance, respectively (Aziz, 1989).Relative pronouns connect clauses and provide more information about a noun as in (الذي) (who ,masculine) and (التي) (who, feminine), essential for building complex sentences (Ryding, 2005). Lastly, interrogative pronouns (ضمائر الاستفهام) are used to ask questions, such as (من) who , ( ماذا ) what,( أين )where and (كيف) (how) (ibid). These pronouns, each serving a unique function, help to convey precise meanings and relationships in Arabic grammar.

## Chapter Three

### 3.1 Comparison between English and Arabic Pronouns

A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun or another pronoun. Pronouns help you avoid unnecessary repetition in your writing and speech (Rozakis, 2003). Similar to English, Arabic uses pronouns to show subjects, objects, possession, and relationships between words. But there are big differences between the two in how pronouns are formed and used. Pronouns in Arabic are more complex due to gender and number discrimination, as well as the grammatical representation associated with words, whereas pronouns in English are simpler and have fixed forms. This study compares pronouns in English and Arabic, exploring their similarities and differences and defining the many forms of pronouns in each language.

### 3.2 Similarities between English and Arabic Pronouns

English and Arabic pronouns share several similarities despite belonging to different language families

Pronouns as a grammatical topic are present in both languages. Pronouns are classified as one of the parts of speech and are closed system objects. This indicates that their number is fixed, and no new words can be added. They serve as alternatives for non-derived noun phrases, they have a consistent form.

The primary purpose of using pronouns is to avoid repeating the noun phrase and to conceal the explicit noun (Rozakis, 2003). They help the writer or speaker in avoiding stating his name and avoiding unnecessary repetition. This clarifies the use of the pronoun.

Personal Pronouns - Both languages have personal pronouns that indicate the speaker (first person), the addressee (second person), and others (third person) (Eckersley & Eckersley, 1960 ; Haidar, 2013).

Example:

English: *I, you, he, she, it, we, they*

Arabic: (أنا) (أنتَ، أنتِ) (هو) (هي) (نحن) (هم، هن)

Gender Differentiation – Both languages distinguish between masculine and feminine in third-person pronouns.

Example:

English: *He* (masculine), *She* (feminine), *It* (neutral)

Arabic: هو (masculine), هي (feminine)

Plural Pronouns – Both languages have distinct pronouns for singular and plural (Sargeant, 2007; Haidar, 2013).

Example:

English: *You* (singular/plural), *We*, *They*

Arabic: أنتم ( masculine plural), أنتن (feminine plural), نحن (*we*), هم ( *they* masculine), هن (they feminine)

Demonstrative Pronouns \_ Both have demonstrative pronouns to indicate proximity (ibid, 2007; ibid, 2013).

Example:

English: *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*

Arabic: هذا (*this*), هذه (*this*, ), ذلك ( *that*), أولئك (*those*)

Interrogative Pronouns \_ Both use specific pronouns to form questions (Aarts, 2011 ; Ryding, 2005).

Example:

English: *who*, *what*, *which*

Arabic: من (*who*), ماذا ( *what*), أيّ (*which*)

Use of Indefinite and Reflexive Pronouns, both languages have pronouns for unspecified people (*someone, anyone* / أحد، أي شخص) and reflexive pronouns (*myself, yourself* / نفسي، نفسك).

Furthermore, many pronouns cannot be used at the beginning of the phrase, such as attached pronouns in Arabic and reflexive pronouns in English. Pronouns can serve an emphatic function. When used immediately following the subject, reflexive pronouns can be employed to show emphasis. In Arabic, it can be stated using detached, attached, or implicit pronouns. The concept of reflexivity can be articulated in both languages, and each language has its own pronoun to perform this job. In both languages, the reflexive pronouns occur in the accusative and prepositional situations. They never appear in the nominative case (Azar, 2002 ; Ryding, 2005).

### 3.3 Differences between English and Arabic Pronouns

Pronouns in English and Arabic perform the same basic function—replacing nouns to avoid repetition—but differ significantly in structure, classification, and usage. Below is a detailed comparison of the key differences between the two languages (Rozakis, 2003).



In terms of number and gender, Arabic contains a dual form in addition to singular and plural, which is specifically designed to refer to two people or objects. The pronoun "هو" (*he*) indicates single masculine, whereas "هما" (*they*) represents the dual form for two individuals. Furthermore, the plural term "هن" (*they*) includes both masculine and feminine variants (Haidar, 2013). In contrast, English pronouns distinguish between singular (*I, you, he, she, it*) and plural forms (*we, you, they*) (Eckersley & Eckersley, 1960). This contrast emphasizes a significant difference between the two languages: in Arabic, there are pronouns which are used to refer to singularity, duality and plurality, while in English, there are only singularity and plurality.

The number of pronouns used in the two languages differs. Each language has its own number of pronouns. There are pronouns in English that do not have counterparts in Arabic, and the reverse is true.

This study shows that there is no specific pronoun for non-personal things in Arabic, while in English, the pronouns *they* and *it* are used.

In English, interrogative pronouns are used to ask for items or people (Aarts, 2011). However in Arabic, there are no pronouns that fit this description.

This study also shows that in Arabic, certain signs (حركات) are used with pronouns such as (الضمة), (الفتحة), and (السكون). The verb's sign (حركة) changes with each pronoun. However, in English, there is no such thing (Haidar, 2013).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this comparative study has illuminated the critical role pronouns play in both English and Arabic, showcasing the unique features of each language while emphasizing their common function as essential tools for clarity and coherence in communication. Pronouns, despite their structural differences, serve the same fundamental purpose: to replace nouns and prevent redundancy in sentences. This study has highlighted how English pronouns tend to be simpler in form, whereas Arabic pronouns involve more complex rules, particularly related to gender, number, and case, reflecting the intricacies of the Arabic grammatical system.

One of the key findings of this study is the significant variation in pronoun usage in terms of gender and case agreement. While English primarily distinguishes between third-person singular pronouns based on gender (he/she/it), Arabic pronouns carry greater complexity, reflecting distinctions not only in gender but also in dual forms and case endings. This complexity adds layers to the syntactic construction in Arabic, demanding greater attention to agreement and word order, in contrast to the relatively fixed word order and simpler pronoun usage in English.

This study underscores the importance of understanding these linguistic differences for learners, translators, and linguists, as it fosters greater awareness of how language shapes communication. By analyzing the role of pronouns in both languages, this research not only contributes to the understanding of language structure but also highlights the role of pronouns in reflecting the cultural and historical significance embedded in each language.

Ultimately, this study provides a deeper understanding of how pronouns function across different linguistic systems, contributing to the broader field of comparative linguistics and offering practical insights for improving communication between speakers of English and Arabic.

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