Stephen Howe

The Personal Pronouns in the Germanic Languages

Studia Linguistica Germanica

Herausgegeben
von
Stefan Sonderegger
und
Oskar Reichmann

43

Walter de Gruyter · Berlin · New York
1996

Stephen Howe

The Personal Pronouns in the Germanic Languages

A study of personal pronoun morphology and change in the Germanic languages from the first records to the present day

Walter de Gruyter · Berlin · New York
1996

∞ Gedruckt auf säurefreiem Papier,
das die US-ANSI-Norm über Haltbarkeit erfüllt.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Howe, Stephen, 1964–
The personal pronouns in the Germanic languages : a study of personal pronoun morphology and change in the Germanic languages from the first records to the present day / Stephen Howe.
p. cm. – (Studia linguistica Germanica ; 43)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 3-11-014636-3 (alk. paper)
1. Germanic languages – Pronoun. 2. Germanic languages – Morphology. 3. Germanic languages – History. I. Title. II. Series.
PD261.H69 1996
430–dc20 96-27271
CIP

Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

Howe, Stephen:
The personal pronouns in the Germanic languages : a study of personal pronoun morphology and change in the Germanic languages from the first records to the present day / Stephen Howe. – Berlin ; New York : de Gruyter, 1996
(Studia linguistica Germanica ; 43)
Zugl.: London, Univ., Diss., 1995
ISBN 3-11-014636-3
NE: GT

Printed in Germany
Druck: Werner Hildebrand, Berlin
Buchbinderische Verarbeitung: Lüderitz & Bauer-GmbH, Berlin

To Kristina

Preface

This study is the published version of my PhD thesis (University of London 1995), and first of all I would like to thank the supervisor of my PhD at the University of London, Professor Martin Durrell (now at the University of Manchester), and my 'step-Doktorvater' while in Germany, Professor Dr Otmar Werner at the *Institut für Vergleichende Germanische Philologie und Skandinavistik* at the University of Freiburg.

In addition, I would like to thank several other people at the University of Ghent and the University of Lund for their assistance during periods of research in Belgium and Sweden, and further a number of other departments and institutes visited in the course of this research. — All the staff at the Department of Dutch Linguistics and Flemish Dialectology at the University of Ghent, both for their helpfulness and their hospitality during my stay. The *Fryske Akademy* in Leeuwarden/Ljouwert and the *Frysk Ynstitút* at the *Rijksuniversiteit* Groningen. The *Nordfriesische Wörterbuchstelle* at the University of Kiel, in particular Dr Alastair Walker and his students, and Professor Nils Århammar at the *Nordfriisk Instituut* in Bräist/Bredstedt. Furthermore, Professors Christer Platzack, Ulf Teleman and Gösta Holm at the Nordic Department of the University of Lund, the staff at the Institute of Danish Dialect Research at the University of Copenhagen, and Professor Michael Barnes at University College London.

I would also like to thank several other people who very kindly answered questions in correspondence, and in some cases read through earlier drafts of individual language chapters: Eivind Weyhe at the Faroese Language Department of *Fróðskaparsetur Føroya* in Tórshavn; Hans den Besten at the University of Amsterdam; Professor J. Goossens at the Universities of Louvain and Münster, Dr O. Vries at the *Frysk Ynstitút*, Dovid Katz at the University of Oxford, and Frederic G. Cassidy at the University of Wisconsin.

Further thanks to the authors and publishers who gave permission to reproduce figures in this book (in particular Professor G. de Schutter at the University of Antwerp who kindly supplied original maps).

Of course, as is usual, it goes without saying that all errors and oversights, and the many shortcomings remaining are entirely my own.

I would also like to acknowledge here my gratitude for funding from a number of sources: the British Academy for a three-year Major State

Studentship for PhD research, the Belgian Flemish Community Department of Education Scholarship for research at the University of Ghent, the Robson-Scott Travelling Scholarship for research at the University of Lund, and the Edna Purdie Scholarship for research both in Sweden and in Germany.

Finally, I would like to add personal thanks to a small group of people: to my parents, to Rolf and Ing-Britt for the use of their summer cottage while the final stages of this book were written, and to Kristina.

Contents

Paradigms

Figures

Chapter 14: Swedish

Chapter 16: Norwegian

Abbreviations

1st p.	1st person
2nd p.	2nd person
3rd p.	3rd person
sing.	singular
pl.	plural
masc.	masculine
fem.	feminine
nt.	neuter
nom.	nominative
acc.	accusative
dat.	dative
subj.	subject(ive)
obj.	object(ive)
obl.	oblique
gen.	genitive
poss.	possessive
det.	determinative (gen./poss.)
indep.	independent (gen./poss.)
encl.	enclitic
T	inferior/familiar etc.
V	superior/polite etc.
O	Old
M	Middle
Mod	Modern
Pres	Present
Std	Standard
N	North(ern)
S	South(ern)

E	East(ern)
W	West(ern)
E	English
AmE	American English
Fris	Frisian
WFris	West Frisian
EFris	East Frisian
NFris	North Frisian
Nl	Dutch
OHG	Old High German
MHG	Middle High German
ENHG	Early New High German
NHG	New High German
OSax	Old Saxon
MLG	Middle Low German
Y	Yiddish
Sw	Swedish
Da	Danish
Nw	Norwegian
NN	Nynorsk
Fa	Faroese
Ic	Icelandic
IE	Indo-European
Gmc	Germanic
V	vowel
C	consonant

V	verb		*In paradigms*
N	noun	1	1st person
P	preposition	2	2nd person
A	adjective	3	3rd person
det	determiner		
		S	singular
C16 *etc.*	century	D	dual
c.	circa	P	plural
ms. (mss.)	manuscript(s)		
occas.	occasionally	M	masculine
esp.	especially	F	feminine
unstr.	unstressed	N	neuter
v.	very	C	common gender

Introduction

0.1.1 General introduction

This study investigates the forms and development of the personal pronouns in all the Germanic languages from the earliest records to the present day. Although a few detailed studies exist for the personal pronouns of individual Germanic languages or dialects, or of single developments, this book for the first time brings together and examines the complete attested development of the personal pronouns in the Germanic languages as a whole. This study includes chapters on the personal pronouns in Gothic, Older runic, English, Frisian, Dutch, Afrikaans, Langobardic, High German, Low German, Yiddish, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Faroese and Icelandic. The aim of this study is twofold: to give a comprehensive investigation of the personal pronouns in the Germanic languages from the earliest records to the present day, and, from this Pan-Germanic corpus, to give a detailed analysis of the morphology of the personal pronouns and to put forward a comprehensive theory of change in the personal pronouns.

Detailed studies of the personal pronouns of single periods of individual Germanic languages or dialects are, most notably, Brøndum-Nielsen (1965) for Old/Middle Danish, Scholtz (1963b–e) for Afrikaans, De Schutter (1989) for pronominal clitics in Dutch dialects, Walch & Häckel (1988) for Early New High German, and Zelissen (1969) for *Rheinisch-Maasländisch* to 1300. Noteworthy studies of individual pronoun developments important to this volume are Guðmundsson (1972) on the pronominal dual in Icelandic, and Werner (1991) on the English 3rd person pronouns. Reconstruction is a separate task — only attested forms are included here — and two comparatively recent studies are Seebold (1984) who reconstructs the *preliterary* Germanic personal pronouns based on data of all the early Germanic languages, and Schmidt (1978) for the personal pronouns in Indo-European. On Germanic demonstrative forms see also Klingenschmitt (1987). For more global comparative studies of pronoun systems see for example the articles by Ingram and Head in Greenberg (1978), Forchheimer (1953), Wiesemann (1986), and also Mühlhäusler & Harré (1990).

In contrast to much of the earlier research on the personal pronouns in the Germanic languages which has often concentrated on a single

language or a single development only, or viewed the personal pronouns in isolation, this study attempts to give a comprehensive investigation of the developments in the personal pronouns by including all the Germanic languages and their whole attested development, and by examining them within the language system in which they are spoken. Comparative Germanic investigation of the personal pronouns has rarely been done in detail before — even in such obvious cases as Dutch and Afrikaans where pronominal forms attested in Afrikaans are important to the explanation of more than one Dutch development (and of course vice versa) — see the comments by Scholtz (1963d: 89f.) and the Dutch and Afrikaans chapters here. I do not wish to imply by this study that the (immediate) genetic relationship (in this case Germanic) is necessarily the most important or the sole one — note for example some similarity in the affix-like character of the Present French and Present English subjective pronouns, or the influence of French in forms of address — however, the personal pronouns even in English or Afrikaans — two languages with significant non-Germanic contact — remain very much Germanic. As with the inclusion of all the Germanic languages, taking the whole documented period of the languages similarly gives a better basis for examining the types of change in the personal pronouns. Developments often viewed and discussed in isolation in earlier studies are here considered together, which frequently enables underlying principles to be identified more clearly.

Thus investigation of the personal pronouns and developments in *all* the Germanic languages has it is believed in many cases enabled better explanation of pronoun forms and developments in *individual* languages. However, as anyone who has looked at pronoun forms in language will know, the number of variants is almost inexhaustible, and in a comparative study such as this a balance must be drawn between detailed investigation of each individual language, and the overall aim of a comprehensive theory. However, on the other hand I am acutely aware of the dangers of inaccuracy and oversight in such a Germanic-wide study. — My approach and aim can I hope be summed up by the comments by Quirk et al. (1985: 91) for their comprehensive English grammar: 'Both the complexities and indeterminacies of grammar place the prospect of writing a complete and definitive grammatical description [of English] beyond reasonable expectation. Given inevitable limitations, what we aim to achieve here is a description which combines breadth of coverage and depth of detail, and in which observation of particularities goes hand in hand with the search for general and systematic explanations'.

Chapters 1 and 2 concentrate respectively on personal pronoun morphology and on personal pronoun change. The morphological analysis in chapter 1 examines the degree of regularity-irregularity and the complex morphological type of the pronouns. And in chapter 2 a theory of personal

pronoun change is put forward which allows many of the changes in the pronouns for the first time to be explained in the same theoretical framework.

A number of the conclusions of this study may have wider validity to the study of morphological change and pronoun systems. One question is to what extent the factors discussed and put forward in this study can also be applied to other forms, and whether or not they are also applicable to comparable paradigms outside the Germanic languages — the 'irregularity' of the personal pronouns and indeed of other forms in many languages suggesting some common factors, though it must be emphasized that there is considerable variation in pronoun systems in languages of the world. — While it may well be a general property of natural languages that they possess devices for referring to entities mentioned elsewhere in or involved in the discourse (cf. Radford 1988: 78) — i.e. that pro-forms or pronominalization of some kind *is* universal — and language *change* is of course a fundamental universal — individual pronoun forms, their usage and their meaning vary considerably, so universal morphological characteristics or universal factors in pronominal change require a great deal of further research.

The theoretical discussion of personal pronoun morphology and change takes up the first third of this book, however, the approach in the individual language chapters has purposely been undogmatic, in order that this study may also serve as a Pan-Germanic corpus. The aim in the individual language chapters has been both to point out where the pronominal theory discussed in the first chapters of this study explains personal pronoun forms and developments, and also to give alternative explanations full discussion, including full references to facilitate access to the material.

This study *focuses on* rather than isolates the personal pronouns in language — the personal pronouns cannot be studied in isolation — and does not *exclude* phonological, syntactic, pragmatic and other factors, indeed it would be impossible to do so. The personal pronouns must be examined within the language system in which they are spoken rather than in isolation. Important also is a focus in geographical, social, and chronological space — i.e. in 3-D. The personal pronouns can only be adequately explained by taking account of *all* of these. For example the fact that some Present English language-users acquire a pronominal distinction *I–we*, *we–us* and *me–us*, but only *you*, while others have *you–y'all*, *youse* etc. can only be explained diachronically, regionally, and with reference to socially-motivated language change, as well as to the language system in which these forms are used — see e.g. chapter 6. Ideally, an all-embracing study of the pronouns would include reflexive and (independent/determinative) genitive/possessive forms — what Quirk et al. (1985: 345f.) for English term the *central* pronouns — plus demonstra-

tive pronouns. However, for reasons of coverage, these are not central to this study, but are indeed included wherever relevant. Phonological variants are given in the paradigms, but are normally not discussed in the text, though of course phonological variation may become morphologically significant, as in the development of new personal pronoun forms in sandhi for example.

The development of clitic pronouns to inflection as in the Scandinavian mediopassive suffix *-s(t)* falls outside this study and will not be dealt with in detail here. However, on verb endings from pronouns in some German *Alemannisch* and *Bairisch* dialects (including examples of reduplication as in Dutch below) see Nübling (1992: 257–260, 263). And on the increasing restriction of nominative forms to preverbal position in English and to varying extent also in other Germanic languages see further chapter 2 (2.7).

Duplication of pronouns as in the Dutch dialectal examples *ik heb ik dat niet gedaan, ik heb dat ik niet gedaan, dat heb ikik niet gedaan, ik heb ikik dat niet gedaan, ik heb dat ikik niet gedaan* etc. is not dealt with in this study — cf. Goossens' comments in (forthcoming c: 3f.). These occur in southern Dutch dialects, according to Goossens up to the Uerdinger Line in the East. For further discussion see for example the recent articles by Goossens (1991)[1] and De Schutter (1990: 20 with references). Note also that duplication of pronouns can also occur in other Germanic languages — English *Me, I'm not going*, or Swedish *Det är inte illa, det, Jag ska göra det jag också* — though whether or not or to what extent these are parallel to the (re)duplication above is unclear.

Genitive/possessive forms are given in paradigms but are not discussed in detail. References are given in 0.1.5 below, including on extended forms such as English *hers, its, theirs, ours, yours, hisn, hern, theirn, yourn* etc. However, particularly in the Modern Germanic languages the genitive/possessives differ from the nominative and objective pronouns in a number of respects. In English for example the independent gen./poss. forms are always accented, and their frequency of occurrence is lower than determinative possessives for example — see the London-Lund corpus statistics in 1.5 below and Kjellmer (1986: 152f.) for Brown and Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen corpora statistics. Determinative gen./poss. forms of course differ syntactically but are clearly morphologically closely connected. Forms such as *mine, my, yours, your, his* etc. are generally labelled in this study 'genitive/possessive' or 'gen./poss.', (a) because of variation in terminology and definition in Germanic languages, and (b) because their function, as even a simple example such as *It's his loss, not mine* can illustrate, is not restricted to 'possession'.

1 Cited in Goossens (forthcoming c: 4).

Similarly, forms of address are not dealt with separately here, but, again, are always discussed where relevant — for example in the virtual loss of *thou–thee–thine*, *thy* in English and innovatory plural forms *y'all*, *yous(e)* etc. For a detailed bibliography of studies of forms of address (including non-Germanic languages) see Braun et al. (1986), and for a comparative/universals study of respect in pronominal reference see the article by Head (1978). The terms T and V (Brown & Gilman 1960) are used as abbreviations for socially-differentiated forms of address. However, T and V (from Latin *tu* and *vos*) are not wholly accurate, as 3rd person forms — such as German earlier 3rd p. sing. *Er*, or Present German 3rd p. plural *Sie* — also occur as forms of address. Similarly the 1st person *pluralis majestatis* is not accurately labelled 'V'. Note also that it is not only in *address* that T/V-like criteria are relevant — in the 1st person the *pluralis majestatis* already mentioned, or the use of *us* as singular in requests in colloquial English (*Do us a favour*, *Lend us a tenner* etc.), or Japanese forms for 'I' for example. In the 3rd person in Luxemburgish for example, according to my information gathered from native speakers (aged about 25 to 30), the originally neuter pronoun *hatt* can be used only for feminine (for 3rd p. sing. neuter only *et*, and not *hatt* is possible). As feminine singular pronouns, *hatt* and *si* differ semantically: *si* is used as a pronoun for a woman not known by the speaker and/or an older woman, for example *hatt* could be used pejoratively of a female professor who would usually be referred to as *si*. (On the use of neuter and masculine pronouns for feminine personal reference in other Germanic dialects see e.g. Århammar 1975: 56f., Wahrig-Burfeind 1989: 68f., 132, & 293.)

The situation is often more complex than a T–V dichotomy (rather T'–V'–V'' etc.) as social differentiation in forms of address may include more than two variants, and include nonpronoun forms such as title and name. However, given these reservations, T and V are useful *labels* and are used in this study to denote socially-governed pronominal forms. Note also that 'T' and 'V' are representative relative terms — not absolutes — their absolute value may change diachronically and vary from language to language and in language varieties.

Similarly, labels such as 'subjective', 'objective', 'masculine', 'feminine', 'neuter' etc. identify in this study cognate or corresponding *forms*, as their distribution and use can vary considerably both diachronically and between languages — for example in Afrikaans the use of the 3rd person pronouns is far from a straightforward masculine-feminine-neuter or animate-inanimate contrast, compare similarly Wahrig-Burfeind (1989: 298) on gender in the southern North Sea area, or Quirk et al. (1985: 21f.) on the use of the feminine pronoun for inanimates and also impersonally in Australian English. Indeed even 'personal pronoun usage' is not easy to define Pan-Germanically.

Generally speaking, unless very current in English, dialect terms are given in their original language for a number of reasons: firstly, English terms do not exist for all Germanic dialects (e.g. in Frisian); secondly to avoid clumsy translation, and thirdly, internationally, native terms for various Germanic language dialects are preferable to their English translations. Similarly, where used, the usual diacritics (e.g. length signs etc.) for each language are generally retained.

A number of figures and pronoun maps have been included, as well as pronoun paradigms. References are given to further maps of Germanic pronoun forms in the text and Index, and in 0.1.5 below. The layout of the paradigms represents a compromise — no single layout is ideal for all the Germanic languages and the general format used in this study is for ease of reading and presentation. To facilitate comparison between languages and periods the same format, with minor exceptions, has been used throughout. As in the presentation generally in this study, the aim is to use as standard a format and terminology as possible, without however obscuring differences in individual languages.

0.1.2 The personal pronouns in connected speech

A study of the personal pronouns *must* take account of their variation in accent and consider them in connected speech. The isolated written or citation form of a personal pronoun is in connected speech the exception rather than the rule. For example for English Gimson/Ramsaran (1989: 266) state that *his*, *her*, *we*, *them* have over 90% occurrences as unaccented forms. In a study of connected speech cited in Crystal (1987: 147) single words were cut out of a tape recording of clear, intelligible, continuous speech: when these were played to listeners, there was great difficulty in making a correct identification. Crystal states that 'Normal speech proves to be so rapidly and informally articulated that in fact over half the words cannot be recognized in isolation', and makes the important point that 'models of speech perception based on the study of isolated sounds and words will be of little value in explaining the processes that operate in relation to connected speech'.

This last point is particularly relevant to a study of the personal pronouns, both diachronically and synchronically. Personal pronouns and many other function words differ considerably from lexical words in connected speech — compare again Gimson/Ramsaran (1989: 265f.): 'Content words . . . generally have in connected speech the qualitative pattern of their isolate form and therefore retain some measure of qualitative prominence even when no pitch prominence is associated with them and when they are relatively unstressed.' Many function (or 'grammatical' or 'form') words, on the other hand, have 'two or more qualitative and quantitative patterns according to whether they are unaccented (as is usual) or

accented . . .'. Gimson/Ramsaran further add (1989: 268f.) that also 'certain form words, not normally possessing an alternative weak form for unaccented occurrences, may show such reductions in very rapid speech' citing for example (among others) English *I* as in *I* [ə] *don't know*. As Gimson/Ramsaran (1989: 261) point out, function words such as the personal pronouns, articles and auxiliary verbs are likely to be unaccented,[2] although they may be accented if the meaning requires it.

This important difference between personal pronouns (and similar function words) and lexical or content words is immediately apparent in a comparison (using English examples) of the personal pronouns with (partially) homophonic lexical words:

eye[3]		mine[3]
yew	ewe	yaws
wee[4]		hours[5]
	hymn	

The difference is similarly apparent when personal pronouns are used as nouns in examples such as 'Is it a *he* or a *she*?', 'You're *it*' (in children's games), 'The diet to create a better *you*' etc.[6]

In this study 'accent' is used as in Gimson/Ramsaran (1989) where 'variations of pitch, length, stress, and quality, contribute to the manifestation of the accented parts of connected speech' (1989: 262).

Gimson/Ramsaran (1989: 290) state (of English function words) 'Such is the reduction and obscuration of the unaccented forms that words which are phonetically and phonemically separate when said in isolation may be neutralized under weak accent'. They add that 'Such neutralization causes no confusion because of the high rate of redundancy of meaningful cues in English; it is only rarely that the context will allow a variety of interpretation for any one cue supplied by an unaccented word form'. However, this study will show (and will be dealt with in detail in the following chapters) that merger when unaccented and the presence or absence of

2 Demonstrative pronouns, on the other hand, are likely to be accented.

3 Noun or verb.

4 Noun, verb, or adjective.

5 As noted above, the independent genitive/possessives *mine*, *yours*, *ours* etc. (outside the main area of this study) are always accented (see Quirk et al. 1985: 362).

6 There may further be evidence for a psychological and neurological distinction between function and content words (cited in Fromkin & Rodman 1993: 39, 440 & 445), though see also the comments on the *duality* of the personal pronouns in chapters 1 and 2 below.

'meaningful cues' have been important factors in change in the personal pronouns in the Germanic languages.

Unlike some earlier studies which have often tended to concentrate on the written citation forms,[7] this study gives considerable attention to the variation in accent in the personal pronouns, considering them in connected speech rather than in isolation — indeed variation in accent is an important factor in much of the change in the personal pronouns.

In the pronoun paradigms, as well as throughout this study, unaccented as well as accented forms have been given wherever possible (of course depending on the forms attested in earlier periods). For the modern period IPA transcriptions are generally given for each of the Germanic languages (nearly always including accent variants).[8] Generally speaking, in the modern standard languages the full (or accented) forms are written — i.e. the less frequent forms. In this respect the written languages generally do not represent the most usual forms of the personal pronouns in speech.[9]

In this study generally accent variants in the personal pronouns will be referred to as accented and unaccented where this is unambiguous, and by a convention *+accent(ed)* and *−accent(ed)* which represents greater–less accent(ed) (and not necessarily straightforwardly with/without or plus/minus accent). The use of the variables + and − accent(ed) — i.e. relative rather than absolute terms — as for example the T/V convention also used here, is very useful in a diachronic and cross-linguistic study where absolute dichotomous terms such as accented and unaccented or strong and weak are sometimes less helpful, and this convention indeed enables simpler and neater explanations of a number of changes. The use of accented–unaccented or + and − accent, as also with T/V, should not be taken to mean that there are necessarily only two accent variants. Further, reference is also made to the (en-, pro-) clitic status of pronouns, for example where developments derive specifically from clitic use, such as 1st p. plural and dual forms with initial *m-* in some of the Germanic languages. Reference is also made to specific emphatic forms (such as *ikke*) where necessary.

---

7 Though some studies — such as De Schutter (1989) for Dutch or Nübling (1992) for German — concentrate specifically on clitic forms.

8 These transcriptions, taken of necessity from separate sources for each Germanic language, may to some extent vary in detail of transcription. Furthermore, in particular in some of the Scandinavian languages it was necessary to transpose from another (non-IPA) phonetic alphabet, resulting in some cases in a degree of approximation.

9 Dutch in particular is a notable exception to this. (Standard) English for example has only the contracted written form *'s*: 'Let's go' (and the archaic *'T*: 'Twas).

0.1.3 Reference in the personal pronouns

The reference of the personal pronouns is illustrated schematically in figure 0.1.3.[10]

In the 3rd person pronouns in the Germanic languages the referent is specified generally according to whether it is one or more-than-one. In the singular (earlier and in some modern Germanic languages also in the plural) it is further specified: in Standard English for example according to whether it is male or female personal, or nonpersonal, and in German generally-speaking according to grammatical gender. This contrasts with the 1st and 2nd person pronouns which in the Germanic languages do not specify the speaker's/writer's or addressee's sex, although there is often, in T and V pronouns, specification of the speaker's/writer's social relationship to the addressee(s). Figure 0.1.3 illustrates that whereas the singular pronouns, for example *ich*, *du* and *er/sie/es*, refer specifically to the speaker/writer, the addressee, or a '3rd party' respectively, this is by no means always the case in the 1st and 2nd person plural forms. The 1st and 2nd person plural personal pronouns are better explained by the term 'group reference': i.e. they specify merely the presence or absence of either speaker(s)/writer(s) and/or addressee(s) in the group, regardless of whether other persons are also referred to, and, as the examples below show (from Quirk et al. 1985: 340), *we* and *you* (or e.g. *wir* and *ihr*) can refer to several combinations of persons:

we

1st p. + 1st p.	*We*, the undersigned, pledge *ourselves* to ...
1st p. + 2nd p.	*We* complemented *ourselves* too soon, John
1st p. + 3rd p.	The children and I can look after *ourselves*
1st p. + 2nd p. + 3rd p.	You, Ann, and I are working *ourselves* to death

you

2nd p. + 2nd p.	*You* ought to be ashamed of *yourselves*, children
2nd p. + 3rd p.	You and John will have to cook for *yourselves*

they

3rd p. + 3rd p.	*They* helped *themselves* to coffee and cakes

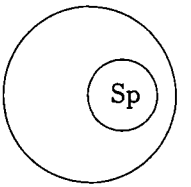
10 This introductory section is *not* a full discussion of reference in the personal pronouns (a fuller discussion of pronominal reference will hopefully appear in a later publication). Material here is taken from Quirk et al. (1985), Mühlhäusler & Harré (1990), Lyons (1977), or is my own.

The simplified figure (0.1.3) is based for purposes of illustration approximately on the Present English and Present German pronouns and does not take account of for example English *you*, German *Sie*, earlier 1st and 2nd person dual, or 3rd p. plural gender distinction in earlier and some modern Germanic languages. In the figure 'Sp' = speaker(s) (or writer(s)), 'Add' = addressee.

Figure 0.1.3 Reference of the personal pronouns

1st person
singular *I*

plural *we*

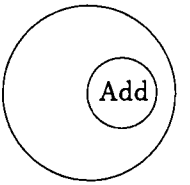


circle = group
size of group > 1

we = a group to which speaker(s) belong(s)

2nd person (T)
singular *du*

plural *ihr*



circle = group
size of group > 1

ihr = a group to which addressee(s) belong(s), but speaker(s) do(es) not

---

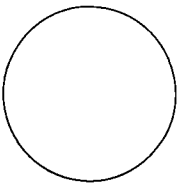
3rd person
singular *he*

not Sp, not Add,
personal male

not Sp, not Add,
personal female

not Sp, not Add,
nonpersonal

plural *they*



circle = group
size of group > 1

they = a group to which neither speaker(s) nor addressee(s) belong(s)

What these examples clearly illustrate is that there is an order of preference or hierarchy in the selection of referring pronoun, whereby the 1st person outweighs the 2nd person, which in turn outweighs the 3rd person.

This relative unspecificness of the plural personal pronouns is utilized pragmatically. According to Mühlhäusler & Harré (1990: 40), although '"Officially", the uses of the pronouns are neatly located within a framework of the formal categories of person and number . . . evidence from actual studies of use shows that the distinctions between various acts in the performing of which speaker, hearer and third person are morally relevant beings cannot be mapped onto the existing syntactical distinctions in the English pronoun system'. However, rather than the 'official' meaning not being valid as Mühlhäusler & Harré claim, it is on the contrary the core meaning of the pronouns — i.e. ultimately deriving from the formal categories — that gives this pragmatic variation.

Pragmatic *constraint* as opposed to variation of pronominal usage can be illustrated by Swedish, where until comparatively recently title and name were used in place of, or in avoidance of pronominal address (see Mårtensson 1988: 143f. for a brief summary and references). And in 3rd person reference note the constraints in using 3rd person pronouns, especially *she*, to refer to a person in their presence, if their social prestige or degree of respect is very high, even in their absence.

0.1.4 Use of the subject pronoun in the early Germanic languages

Gothic and older runic

Schulze (1924: 92) in a study of the use of the subject pronoun in Gothic states, 'Ob Ulfilas dem Verbum eine Form des Personalpronomens als selbständigen Subjektsausdruck beigibt oder nicht, wird in der überwältigenden Mehrzahl aller Fälle ganz mechanisch durch den Vorgang des Originals bestimmt', and adds that 'Auf den lebendigen Sprachgebrauch seines Volkes läßt sich aus diesem Verhalten im einzelnen so wenig ein Schluß ziehen, wie etwa aus der kaum anders als sklavisch zu nennenden Nachahmung der griechischen Wortstellung'.

Mittermüller, in a later study, states (1983: 1f.) that already in early records it is not the case that the Germanic languages are purely incorporating — he states that a number of runic inscriptions show reflexes of this development. Of Gothic, Mittermüller states that the use of an independent subject pronoun 'bereits in beträchtlichen Ansätzen vorhanden ist, ja sich in bestimmten strukturellen Positionen sogar schon grammatikalisiert haben muss. Freilich bleibt . . . das alte rein suffigierende System dennoch das vorherrschende: Die Koexistenz und Konkurrenz beider Fügungstypen ist zwar deutlich angebahnt, von einem entschiedenen Rückgang des älteren Sprachgebrauchs kann aber . . . wohl nicht gesprochen werden'. Mittermüller (1983: 23–29) states that in the use/omission of the subject

pronoun, Gothic records (including the *Skeireins*) do not differ to any great degree.

Old High German

Eggenberger (1961) concludes that the use or omission of a separate subject pronoun in Old High German texts is not so much dependent on a historical development but on text type. According to Eggenberger (1961: 166) it is not possible to make a generalization about the occurrence of the subject pronoun in Old High German, rather it is necessary to differentiate between interlinear glosses, Old High German 'original' sources, and texts with a mixed character. It is not the oldest Old High German texts which lack a separate subject pronoun, rather the most Latinized ones. This is clearest in the interlinear glosses where the subject pronoun is used only where it occurs in the Latin original — the few examples where a separate subject pronoun is used contrary to the Latin original are, according to Eggenberger (1961: 167), not a sign of an increasing use of the subject pronoun, but rather of resistance to 'undeutsch' forms without separate subject pronouns.

In what Eggenberger terms Old High German 'original' sources — texts which in comparison to the interlinear glosses are to some extent original — the subject pronoun is used already in the earliest written records, omission being the exception (Eggenberger 1961: 24).

In Eggenberger's texts with mixed character features both of interlinear texts and of the Old High German 'original' sources are found, for example in *Tatian* there are larger sections where the subject pronoun is used as in New High German, but also other sections which resemble the interlinear glosses. Eggenberger's results show that the use or omission of the subject pronoun in these mixed texts is influenced by several factors, the most important of which are clause type and grammatical person. In secondary clauses (indicative and subjunctive) the use of the subject pronoun is the norm (the interlinear glosses show no difference between main and secondary clause); in main clauses, however, although forms with a subject pronoun are predominant, verb forms without a subject pronoun do also occur (Eggenberger 1961: 168f.). A second major difference in the use or omission of the subject pronoun in mixed texts is between the 1st and 2nd person (sing. and plural) on the one hand, and the 3rd person (sing. and plural) on the other. In the 1st and 2nd person the subject pronoun is used in such a majority of cases that its use can be considered the norm;[11] in the

11 An exception to this is in 1st p. plural verb forms ending in *-mes*: while the short forms (e.g. *uuir haben*, *haben uuir*) occur with subject pronoun, the long forms ending in *-mes* can occur without a subject pronoun, in inversion almost always so (Eggenberger 1961: 169).

3rd person, however, the subject pronoun is absent in the majority of instances (i.e. in main clauses, but is usually present in secondary clauses) (Eggenberger 1961: 169).

Old Saxon
In Old Saxon the use of the subject pronoun is usual, both in main and secondary clauses (Behrmann 1879: 17–20). This may tie in with Eggenberger's argument above, in that the major text ('Heliand' — the subject of Behrmann's study) is not translated from Latin, and is more independent syntactically.

Old English
Although nonexpression of the subject pronoun was more common in Old English than it is today, the personal pronoun was normally expressed in Old English when it was the subject of a verb, even when the verb form was unambiguous and a Latin original without a pronoun was being closely glossed (Mitchell 1985: 104).

0.1.5 Further references

Genitive/possessive

Germanic
Seebold (1984: 48)

English
Kjellmer (1986), LAE (maps M76–M79), LALME (maps 832–836), Mossé (1952: 59f.), Quirk et al. (1985: 361f.), Spies (1897: 22 & 126), Trudgill (1990: 83f.), Wakelin (1972: 115), Wakelin (1984: 82), Wright (1905: §411)

Frisian
Sjölin et al. (1988: 47)

Dutch
ANS (1984: 176f. & 392ff.), Overdiep (1946: 38, 40 & 52f.), Van Halteren (1906: §6 & §18–19), Van Helten (1887: 434), Van Loey (1960: §26, §27 & §30)

Afrikaans
Ponelis (1979: 63)

High German
Franck (1971: 217), Leupold (1909: 67 & 71), Mausser (1933: 750), Paul (1958: §128), Schirmunski (1962: 471f.), Walch (1990: 25), Walch & Häckel (1988: 34, 55, 62f., 89, 120, 133), Weinhold (1967b: 511f. & 524)

Low German
Behrmann (1879: 32ff.), Holthausen (1921: 114), Lasch (1914a: 214 & 216f.), Sarauw (1924: 109f. & 114)

Scandinavian
Haugen (1976: 293ff.)

Swedish
Noreen (1904: 389f.), Vendell (1881: §196), Wessén (1968: 144)

Danish
Brøndum-Nielsen (1965: §562 & pp. 25, 57f., 68, 127f.)

Norwegian
Hægstad (1908: 216–218), Seip/Saltveit (1971: 220), Skjekkeland (1977: 98–100)

Faroese
Haugen (1982: 108), Jacobsen & Matras (1961: 145, 166 & 306), Lockwood (1950: 90), Lockwood (1955: 71 & 91f.)
Icelandic
Arthur (1964: 243f.)

Germanic pronoun maps (selected) (* = reproduced in this volume)
English
1st p. sing. LALME (1034–1038)
2nd p. sing. LAE (M67)
3rd p. sing. masc. LAE (M70)
3rd p. sing. fem. LALME (10–14, 19–23), LAE (M68–69)
3rd p. sing. neuter LALME (24–27), LAE (M71)
3rd p. plural LALME (28–32, 37–44, 51–56)
Frisian
3rd p. sing. masc. De Schutter (1989: 29)
Dutch
1st p. sing. De Schutter (1989: 51)
2nd p. sing. Weijnen (1966), De Schutter (1989: 56)
3rd p. sing. masc. Koelmans (1968: 21), *De Schutter (1989: 29, 62)
3rd p. sing. fem. C13 Berteloot (1984, map 121)
1st p. plural De Schutter (1989: 36, *90)
3rd p. plural De Rooij (1990: 126, 134)
Pronouns with *liede* etc. C13 Mooijaart (1990: 55)
German
2nd p. sing. DSA (maps 5, 25, supplementary maps 31, 44, 68, 76)
3rd p. sing. masc. DSA (map 48), Luxemburgischer Sprachatlas (map 44), *Shrier (1965, map 5)
3rd p. sing. fem. *Shrier (1965, map 7)
3rd p. sing. neuter MHG Sparmann (1961, map 1), Shrier (1965, map 10)
Initial *h-* in 3rd person pronouns *Frings & Lerchner (1966, map 22)
1st p. plural Eichhoff (1978, map 120)
2nd p. plural (DSA map 21, supplementary map 43), Gütter (1971, maps 34–35)
Yiddish
1st p. sing. *Wolf (1969: 144)
3rd p. sing. fem. *Wolf (1969: 146)
Scandinavian
1st p. sing. Bandle (1973, map 10)
Swedish
3rd p. sing. neuter Reinhammar (1975, maps *7–8)
2nd p. plural *Ahlgren (1978)
3rd p. plural Nyholm (1984, map 2)
Danish
1st p. sing. Brøndum-Nielsen (1951, map 20)
Norwegian
1st p. sing. Christiansen (1948: 212)
1st p. plural *Christiansen (1956: 177)
2nd p. plural *Ahlgren (1978)

Chapter 1: Morphology of the personal pronouns

1.1 Introduction

The information represented by a personal pronoun could theoretically be expressed either as agglutinating morphs or as portmanteau morphs. These two possibilities are illustrated schematically below, where figure 1.1a represents a perfectly agglutinating paradigm and figure 1.1b shows a paradigm consisting entirely of portmanteau forms.[1]

In the patterning agglutinating paradigm in figure 1.1a each personal pronoun consists of a number of regular discrete agglutinating morphs, added together like building blocks. Each morph is the same throughout the paradigm and unambiguously indicates its particular property,[2] i.e. there are no allomorphs and there is a perfect one-to-one relationship of form to meaning. The meaning of each pronoun is a function of the meaning of its component parts. The ordering of the elements is entirely predictable and each element is clearly segmentable. A change of a property (e.g. from 1st person to 2nd person, or from singular to plural) means a change of one morph only, not a change of the whole form. The personal pronouns in figure 1.1a can thus be generated by rule.[3]

---

1 In the two models categories/properties are based on the New High German personal pronoun paradigm (i.e. 3 persons, 2 numbers, 3 genders differentiated in the 3rd p. sing. etc.); German examples have been used throughout this chapter for consistency, but the theoretical concepts discussed are also illustrated in other Germanic languages.

Pike (1963: 16–18) terms the patterning agglutinating paradigm type a 'simple matrix' and the suppletive portmanteau type an 'ideal matrix'; however, his terminology is less than clear as he states that a 'simple matrix' is simple because of the consistent correlation of meaning to form, and an 'ideal matrix' is ideal because it has a maximally simple matrix arrangement (but maximum morphemic irregularity) of one form to each categorial intersection. In addition, Pike himself admits (1965: 205) that he does not know of any language with an 'ideal matrix'.

2 In this study 'category' and 'property' are used as in Matthews (see 1974: 66 & 136) where 'categories' are e.g. *person*, *number*, *case* etc., and 'properties' are individual terms of categories, e.g. *1st*, *2nd*, *singular*, *dual*, *nominative*, *accusative* etc. For a survey of other terms in use see Carstairs-McCarthy (1992: 196f.).

3 In figure 1.1a: S = sing., P = plural, N = nom., A = acc., D = dat., G = gen., M = masc., F = fem., O = neuter, T = familiar, V = polite. In figure 1.1b each symbol represents a single personal pronoun.

Figure 1.1a Patterning agglutinating pronouns

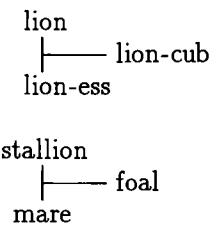
	nom.	*acc.*	*dat.*	*gen.*
1st p. + sing.	1SN	1SA	1SD	1SG
2nd p. + sing. + T	2SNT	2SAT	2SDT	2SGT
3rd p. + sing. + masc.	3SNM	3SAM	3SDM	3SGM
3rd p. + sing. + fem.	3SNF	3SAF	3SDF	3SGF
3rd p. + sing. + nt.	3SNO	3SAO	3SDO	3SGO
1st p. + pl.	1PN	1PA	1PD	1PG
2nd p. + pl. + T	2PNT	2PAT	2PDT	2PGT
2nd p. + V	2NV	2AV	2DV	2GV
3rd p. + pl.	3PN	3PA	3PD	3PG

Figure 1.1b Suppletive portmanteau pronouns

	nom.	*acc.*	*dat.*	*gen.*
1st p. + sing.	G	W	ß	V
2nd p. + sing. + T	Z	E	K	Å
3rd p. + sing. + masc.	S	Ö	R	L
3rd p. + sing. + fem.	B	Q	C	&
3rd p. + sing. + nt.	Ü	M	§	U
1st p. + pl.	H	Y	T	J
2nd p. + pl. + T	X	I	A	Þ
2nd p. + V	Ä	P	Ø	F
3rd p. + pl.	D	Æ	N	O

In contrast, in the suppletive portmanteau paradigm in figure 1.1b each personal pronoun is a single unique portmanteau morph which refers to the bundle of properties, rather than formally indicating each property individually. The personal pronouns in figure 1.1b are arbitrary representative terms in the same way that most lexemes have an arbitrary relationship between form and meaning. These pronouns have no formal connection to one another and a change in a property will result in a complete change of form. The personal pronouns in figure 1.1b cannot then be formed by rule.

The two morphological types represented by figures 1.1a and 1.1b can be illustrated by the following comparison (cf. Pike 1963: 23 and Werner 1987b: 290ff.):



In *lion/lion-ess/lion-cub* the change *male–female* and *adult–young* is shown by the addition of an element *-ess* denoting 'female' and an element *-cub* denoting 'young', both of which recur with the same meaning in other words (e.g. *mayor-ess*, *steward-ess*, *host-ess* and *wolf-cub*, *fox-cub*, *bear-cub*). In *stallion/mare/foal* on the other hand, the *same* change is shown by three completely different words which bear no formal resemblance to one another (nor indeed any resemblance to *horse*): the terms *stallion*, *mare* and *foal* are, like the suppletive portmanteau personal pronouns in figure 1.1b, arbitrary forms which merely denote the contents subsumed under their title rather than indicating components individually, i.e. either [horse + adult + male], [horse + adult + female], [horse + young], or [1st person + plural + dative], [3rd person + singular + masculine + accusative] for example.

1.1.1 Comparison of the hypothetical models with the actual personal pronouns in the Germanic languages

A comparison of the actual personal pronoun forms in the Germanic languages first with the hypothetical agglutinating paradigm in figure 1.1a shows that, in contrast to the model, the Germanic personal pronouns are not made up of individual discrete agglutinating morphs; the real personal pronouns are not segmentable as a series of agglutinating morphs of for

example person + number + case + gender and there is no consistent one-to-one relationship between category/property and form. This can be seen in the New High German pronouns below:

New High German

	nom.	*acc.*	*dat.*	*gen./poss.*
1st p. sing.	ich	mich	mir	mein(-)
2nd p. sing. T	du	dich	dir	dein(-)
3rd p. sing. masc.	er	ihn	ihm	sein(-)
3rd p. sing. fem.	sie	sie	ihr	ihr(-)
3rd p. sing. nt.	es	es	ihm	sein(-)
1st p. pl.	wir	uns	uns	unser(-)
2nd p. pl. T	ihr	euch	euch	euer(-)
2nd p. V	Sie	Sie	Ihnen	Ihr(-)
3rd p. pl.	sie	sie	ihnen	ihr(-)

Even where a form does seem to be analysable into elements, e.g. in *mich*, *mir*, *mein(-)*, *dich*, *dir*, and *dein(-)*, the elements are not clear one-to-one morphs; for example, in *mich*, *mir*, *mein(-)* the /m/ appears to indicate several properties rather than just one, e.g. 1st person *and* singular *and* oblique or non-nominative, which is a one-to-many relationship rather than a one-to-one relationship as in figure 1.1a. Nor are these elements constant and unambiguous throughout the paradigm, unlike the hypothetical agglutinating model above; for example in New High German the /ir/ in the datives *mir*, *dir* and *ihr* also occurs in the nominative in *wir* and *ihr*, which is a many-to-one relationship and not one-to-one as in the model.

The same is also true of the other Germanic languages, as the example paradigms in figure 1.1.1a can show.[4]

It seems clear then that the actual personal pronouns in the Germanic languages are not formed of one-to-one agglutinating morphs. In fact, many of the personal pronouns are not obviously segmentable at all. In this respect they seem to resemble more the portmanteau forms of figure 1.1b than the agglutinating forms of figure 1.1a.

4 These example paradigms are abbreviated — for fuller detail see the individual language chapters.

Figure 1.1.1a Example paradigms

Rune Swedish/early Old Swedish

	nom.	*acc.*	*dat.*	*gen.*
1st p. sing.	iak	mik	mǣ(r)	min
2nd p. sing.	þu	þik	þǣ(r)	þin
3rd p. sing. masc.	han	han	hānom	hans
3rd p. sing. fem.	hōn	hāna	hænne	hænna(r)
3rd p. sing. nt.	þæt	þæt	þȳ	þæs
1st p. dual	vit	*	okẹr	okar
2nd p. dual	it	*	*	*
1st p. pl.	vī(r)	os	os	vār(ra)
2nd p. pl.	ī(r)	iþẹr	iþẹr	iþar
3rd p. pl. masc.	þē(r)	þē	þēm	þēr(r)a
3rd p. pl. fem.	þā(r)	þā(r)	þēm	þēr(r)a
3rd p. pl. nt.	þē, þøn	þē, þøn	þēm	þēr(r)a

Middle Dutch

	nom.	*acc.*	*dat.*	*gen.*
1st p. sing.	ic	mi	mi	mijns
2nd p. sing.	du	di	di	dijns
3rd p. sing. masc.	hi	hem	hem	sijns
3rd p. sing. fem.	si	haer	haer	haer(s)
3rd p. sing. nt.	(h)et	(h)et	hem	-(e)s
1st p. pl.	wi	ons	ons	ons(er)
2nd p. pl./sing. V	ghi	u	u	uwer
3rd p. pl.	si	hem, hen	hem, hen	haer

Nynorsk

	subj.	*obj.*	*gen./poss.*
1st p. sing.	eg	meg	min
2nd p. sing.	du	deg	din
3rd p. sing. masc.	han	han	hans
3rd p. sing. fem.	ho	ho	hennar
3rd p. sing. nt.	det	det	dess
1st p. pl.	vi	oss	vår
2nd p. pl.	de	dykk	dykkar
3rd p. pl.	dei	dei	deira

The personal pronouns in the Germanic languages do not appear to form a regular inflectional system derivable by rule. In the personal pronouns there are a few sequences of elements, but there appears to be no coherent inflectional system. This can be illustrated in the examples from New High German below: for example the 1st and 2nd person do not inflect in parallel throughout, e.g. in the singular

	nom.	*acc.*	*dat.*	*gen./poss.*
1st p. sing.	ich (*not* *mu)	mich	mir	mein(-)
2nd p. sing. T	du	dich	dir	dein(-)

Or in the plural:

	nom.	*acc./dat.*	*gen./poss.*
1st p. plural	wir	uns	unser(-)
2nd p. pl. T	ihr	euch	euer(-)

Or V forms:

	nom.	*acc.*	*dat.*	*gen./poss.*
2nd person V	Sie	Sie	Ihnen	Ihr(-)

Nor do they inflect consistently like the 3rd person:

	nom.	*acc.*	*dat.*	*gen./poss.*
3rd p. sing. masc.	er	ihn	ihm	sein(-)
3rd p. sing. fem.	sie	sie	ihr	ihr(-)
3rd p. sing. nt.	es	es	ihm	sein(-)
3rd p. plural	sie	sie	ihnen	ihr(-)

Though note the formally (but not consistently grammatically) parallel gen./poss. sing.

1st p.	mein(-)
2nd p.	dein(-)
3rd p. masc./neuter	sein(-)

and

1st p. sing. acc.	mich
2nd p. sing. acc.	dich
3rd p./2nd p. V acc./dat. sing./plural reflexive	sich