

Comparative Analysis of Pronouns in English and Urdu: A Cross-Linguistic Study

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Abstract

Pronouns are essential for efficient and coherent discourse. They prevent redundancy and keep sentences concise and understandable. The objective of this study is to compare and analyze the use of pronouns in English and Urdu focusing on their forms, grammatical functions and cultural contexts. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. The sample population consisted of 107 native Urdu speakers who live in Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City, Ward No. 11, Banke, Nepal. The researcher used self-selection convenience sampling to select the sample. Urdu language data was collected using a structured questionnaire. However, English language data was gathered from secondary sources. The questionnaire consisted of ten close-ended and forty open-ended questions. The questions were written in English and translated into Nepali. The data was analyzed using descriptive methods of quantitative data analysis. The results revealed that the Urdu language has a more wide range of pronouns in second-person and honorific contexts. English pronouns are more uniform across cases but Urdu has gender-neutral pronouns. Urdu also possesses distinctions based on proximity and respect. The study highlights the structural and functional variances in the pronominal systems of the two languages.

1. Introduction

Pronouns play a fundamental role in creating clarity and effectiveness in communication. They avoid the repetition of words and define the relationship that exists between the subjects. They further simplify sentences by replacing nouns and defining the relations that exist between the parts of a sentence. Effective communication depends on simplicity. Language would be awkward and repetitive without pronouns. For example, 'Hari went to his house because he forgot his keys,' is more tuneful than to say, 'Hari went to Hari's house because Hari forgot Hari's keys.'

Pronouns are not only important grammatically but also in ensuring social inclusion. The use of correct pronouns refers to respect when referring to individuals, mainly non-binary or gender non-conforming persons and acknowledges them (Lake Forest College, 2020). Incorrect pronoun usage may result in invalidation and disrespect. Consequently, this can impact communication and relationships negatively.

English has a straightforward pronominal system which helps language users maintain clarity and efficiency in communication (Biber et al., 1999). English pronominal system is quite uniform. It relies heavily on word order and auxiliary verbs (Kroeger, 2004). This reliance helps maintain clarity and precision in communication. It also ensures that the intended meaning is more effective. For example, in the sentence 'She can sing', the auxiliary verb 'can' shows ability and the word order has clarified that 'she' is the subject and 'sing' is the action. (Finegan, 2012).

English pronouns are categorized into several types: personal, possessive, reflexive, demonstrative interrogative and reciprocal forms (Quirk et al., 1985). Personal pronouns are perhaps the most commonly used type of pronoun. They include words such as 'I,' 'you,' 'he,' 'she,' 'it,' 'we,' and 'they.' These pronouns vary based on grammatical case (subject, object) and number (singular, plural) (Finegan, 2012). For example, 'I' is used as a subject pronoun and 'me' is used as an object pronoun. Similarly, 'we' is the subject form for the first person plural and 'us' is the object form. These distinctions help clarify who is performing an action and who is receiving it (Hudson, 2000).

Possessive pronouns, such as 'my,' 'your,' 'his,' and 'her,' denote ownership (Yule, 1998). These pronouns help to indicate who owns or is associated with something. For example, in the sentence 'This is my book', 'book' is associated with me. Possessive pronouns can also stand alone, as in 'The book is mine.' This ability to indicate possession without repeating the noun helps to simplify sentences and avoid redundancy (Leech, 2004).

Reflexive pronouns, such as 'myself' and 'yourself,' reflect actions onto the subject (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). They are used when the subject and the object of a sentence are the same, as in 'She taught herself to play the piano.' Reflexive pronouns are also used for emphasis, as in 'I did it myself.' This dual function makes reflexive pronouns a versatile tool in English grammar (Swan, 2005).

Demonstrative pronouns 'this,' 'that,' 'these,' and 'those,' specify entities about the speaker's context (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). For instance, 'this' and 'these' refer to something near the speaker but 'that' and 'those' refer to something farther away. Demonstrative pronouns allow speakers and writers to identify specific items or people. This enhances the precision and relevance of their communication (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Interrogative pronouns are used to form questions and seek specific information about people, objects, or situations (Translateen, 2023). Examples include ‘who,’ ‘whom,’ ‘whose,’ ‘what,’ and ‘which.’ These pronouns help identify or inquire about details, such as in questions like ‘Who is coming to the party?’ or ‘What time does the meeting start?’ By directly addressing the subject or object of the inquiry, interrogative pronouns facilitate precise and targeted questioning in both written and spoken language.

Reciprocal pronouns, such as ‘each other’ and ‘one another’ are used to show that two or more people or things perform an action mutually. For instance, in the sentence ‘The friends support each other,’ the pronoun (each other) indicates that the support is exchanged between the friends.

In contrast, Urdu has a more complex pronominal system (Rauf, 2007). Urdu pronouns include personal forms like main (I), tum (you), woh (he/she/it) and hum (we) (Hussain, 2010). These pronouns show variations based on levels of formality and politeness (Rauf, 2007). Possessive pronouns in Urdu, such as mera (my) and tera (your), change according to the noun they modify and the level of politeness (Hussain, 2010). Reflexive pronouns like khud (self) have different functions compared to their English counterparts (Rauf, 2007; Mitchell, 2019; Sharma, 2020), and demonstrative pronouns such as yeh (this) and woh (that) specify objects relative to the speaker’s position and context (Javed, 2021).

The study, thus tried to answer the following research question:

- a) How do the cultural attitude and self-identity manifest in the usage of first-person personal and reflexive pronouns in English and Urdu?
- b) How do the honorific second-person personal and the reciprocal pronouns differ in conveying a message from that of the English?
- c) What are the structural variations between the indefinite pronouns in English and Urdu and how do these differences affect their usage and meaning?
- d) How do the demonstrative and relative pronouns in both the languages shape the sentence structure and clause connection?
- e) What difference does person and number make in reflexive pronouns of English and Urdu, and what are its implications on self-referential expressions?
- f) What are the differences of Urdu and English interrogative and possessive pronouns in singular and plural forms?

2. Literature Review

Previous studies have examined various aspects of English and Urdu grammar but specific comparative studies focusing on pronominal systems are limited. Research on English pronouns often explores their roles in sentence structure and function (Lee, 2021; Finegan, 2012; Biber et al., 1999). Similarly, most of the studies on Urdu pronouns have explored their morphological and syntactic characteristics (Rauf, 2007; Hussain, 2010). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) provide a detailed overview grammatical categories and usage of English pronouns. Finegan (2012) also centered his study on the functional aspects of English pronouns i.e. their role in sentence construction, emphasizing. Hussain (2010) and Rauf (2007) focused their study on variations based on politeness and social

hierarchy of Urdu pronouns. Moreover, Kachru (1994) highlights the role of pronouns in language.

Despite these contributions, there is a significant gap in studies that directly compare English and Urdu pronominal systems. Most existing research addresses the pronominal systems of each language separately without providing a comparative framework that highlights their distinct (Farooq, 2018). Additionally, the social and cultural dimensions of pronominal usage particularly how politeness and social hierarchy are encoded in Urdu compared to English remain underexplored. This study seeks to bridge these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of pronominal systems in both languages by examining structural, functional and cultural aspects.

3. Research Methodology

This quantitative study employed a cross-sectional survey design. The sample population consisted of 107 native Urdu speakers who reside in Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City, Ward No. 11 Banke, Nepal. Among the 107 respondents, 78 were males and 29 were females. In terms of education, 91 respondents completed their +2, 14 completed bachelor's degrees, and two completed master's degrees. Among the respondents, 45 were aged 18 to 24, 30 participants were aged 25 to 34, 15 respondents were aged 35 to 44, 11 were aged 45 to 54 and 6 participants were 55 years or older. Among the 107 participants, 2 were fluent, and 24 were proficient in English. But, 81 respondents had basic knowledge of English. In Urdu, all the participants were fluent. The research employed self-selection convenience sampling to select the respondents based on specific demographic criteria of gender and education. Data was collected employing a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of fifty questions which were initially formulated in English and then translated into Urdu to facilitate understanding among participants. The researcher took help from one secondary-level teacher to translate the questionnaire. The teacher was fluent in English and Urdu and had subject matter knowledge of both English and Urdu language. After translation, a pilot test was conducted to check the reliability of the questionnaire. The final questionnaire was prepared based on the feedback given by the participants who participated in the pilot test. The questionnaire was distributed and collected physically. The researcher personally visited each respondent at their home to administer and collect the completed questionnaires. The collected data was transliterated in English. The researcher took help from one of the registered translators to transliterate the data in English. The data was analyzed using descriptive methods and quantitative data analysis. The study utilized secondary data from Huddleston and Pullum (2002) to analyze English pronouns.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

The results derived from the questionnaire are presented in the following sections.

Personal Pronouns in the English and Urdu Language

Table 1 presents a comparative overview of first-person pronouns in English and Urdu. It highlights the singular and plural forms across different cases.

Table 1

First Person Pronouns in English and Urdu

Case	English		Urdu	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	I	We	<i>Mein</i>	<i>Hum, Humlog</i>
Accusative	Me	Us	<i>Mujhe Mujko</i>	<i>Hamein, Hamko</i>
Dative	Me	Us	<i>Mujhe Mujko</i>	<i>Hamein, Hamko</i>
Possessive	Mine	Ours	<i>Mera</i> <i>Meri</i> <i>Meain</i>	<i>Hamara, Hamari, Hamarain</i>
Vocative	-	-	-	-

Table 1 displays the first-person pronouns in Urdu across five different grammatical cases. It also shows how these pronouns vary according to number and case. In the nominative case, the terms 'Hum' and 'Humlog' are used to represent the first-person plural. Both 'Hum' and 'Humlog' are linguistically and contextually similar. An example can be used to illustrate their usage.

English

We are players

We have visited zoo.

Urdu

Hum kheladi hain.

Humlog chidiyaghar ghoom chuke hain.

Similarly, 'Mujhe' and 'Mujhko' are used as the first-person singular forms in both the accusative and dative cases. Although there is a phonological difference between the two, they are grammatically and semantically identical. For instance, both can be used interchangeably in sentences to convey the same meaning.

English
Urdu

Ram invited me.

Ram ne mujhe dawat diya.

Similarly, the first person plural in accusative and dative is 'Humein' and 'Hamko'. They have phonological differences but grammatically and semantically same. For example

English
Urdu

They saw us.

Unlogo ne hamko dekha.

Similarly, in the possessive case, 'Mero' and 'Meri' represent the first-person singular. These terms are used to denote possession and vary based on gender: 'Mera' is used for masculine nouns, while 'Meri' is used for feminine nouns. Additionally, these forms differ in the plural possessive case. For example, 'Mere' is used for masculine plural nouns, and 'Meri' is used for feminine plural nouns.

English
Urdu

This house is mine.

Yeh ghar mera hain.

This book is mine.

Yeh kitab meri hain.

Likewise, 'Hamara', 'Hamari' and 'Hamarien' are the first person pronouns of possessive case. They mean differently. For example,

English
Urdu

This school is ours.

Yeh school Hamara hain.

That book is ours.

Woh kitab hamari hain.

A friend of our lives in Canada.

Hamarain ek dost Canada me rahatein hain.

Finally, as indicated in Table 1, there is no established tradition of using the first-person pronoun in the vocative case in Urdu. While there are both similarities and differences between the first-person pronouns in English and Urdu, they do share some common features. Notably, in both languages, the pronominals used in the accusative case are the same as those used in the dative case. Additionally, both English and Urdu lack a distinct pronominal form for the vocative case.

Urdu second person pronouns include 'Tum', 'Tumhe', 'Tumko', 'Aap', 'Aapko', 'Tumhara', 'Tumhara', 'Aapka', 'Aapki', 'Tumlog', 'Tumlogonko', 'Aaplogonko', 'Aaplogke', these Urdu pronouns can be compared with those of English second person pronouns as below.

Table 2
Second Person Pronouns in English

Case	English		Urdu	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	You	You	<i>Tum, tumhe, tumko, aap</i>	<i>Tumlog</i>
Accusative	You	You	<i>Tumko, aapko</i>	<i>Tumlogonko, aaplogoko</i>
Dative	You	You	<i>Tumko, aapko</i>	<i>Tumlogonko, aaplogonko</i>
Possessive	Yours	Yours	<i>Tumhara, tumhari, aapka, aapki</i>	<i>Tumlogonke, aaplogonke</i>
Vocative	You	You	<i>Tum, aap</i>	<i>Tumlog, aaplog</i>

The table 2 above illustrates the second-person pronouns in Urdu across five different cases and two distinct numbers. In the nominative case, the singular second-person pronouns are 'tum', 'tumhe', 'tumko', and 'aap'. When representing the plural number, these singular pronouns take the suffixes 'logonko', resulting in forms such as 'tumlogonko' and 'aaplogonko'. In the accusative and dative cases, the singular pronouns 'tumko' and 'aapko' are used, and when pluralized, they also incorporate the suffixes 'logonko', becoming 'tumlogonko' and 'aaplogonko'. Thus, the forms for the accusative and dative cases are identical. In the possessive case, the singular forms 'tumhara', 'tumhari', 'aapka', and 'aapki' are used. When pluralized, these pronouns also adopt the infix 'logonko', transforming into 'tumlogonko' and 'aaplogonko'. Similarly, in the vocative case, 'tum' and 'aap' represent the second-person singular pronouns. For plural usage, these pronouns take the infix 'log', becoming 'tumlog' and 'aaplog', consistent with the other cases.

English and Urdu second-person pronouns exhibit both similarities and differences. While both languages have distinct pronouns for singular and plural forms, they each possess unique sets of pronouns that do not always correspond directly. A notable similarity is that in both languages, the pronouns used in the accusative case and dative case are the same. Additionally, in both languages, the nominative case and vocative case pronouns often appear similar. However, a significant difference lies in the number of pronouns used. In Urdu, there are multiple pronouns for different contexts that correspond to a single pronoun in English. This is illustrated through various examples where Urdu employs different pronouns for singular and plural forms, as well as for different grammatical cases, while English uses fewer, more consistent forms.

English

You work hard.

You play cricket.

You play cricket.

Urdu

Tum mehnat karte ho.

Tumlog cricket khelte ho.

Aaplog cricket khelte hain.

Another important difference between English and Urdu is that English uses a single pronoun, 'you,' to represent both singular and plural forms. In contrast, Urdu employs distinct pronouns for singular and plural forms. To indicate plural in Urdu, suffixes such as 'logonko' are added to the singular pronouns. This distinction is evident in various examples where singular pronouns are modified to form their plural counterparts using these suffixes. For instance, while English maintains the pronoun 'you' regardless of number, Urdu differentiates between singular and plural pronouns through these specific modifications.

English

Ram will invite you tomorrow (one).

Ram will invite you tomorrow (many)

Urdu

Ram tumko kal bulaiega

Ram tum logonko kal bulaiga.

Another outstanding difference between the two languages is that the presence of honorific pronoun in Urdu which is not. In English, it can be illustrated with the following examples.

English

You sing very well.

You sing very well.

Urdu

Aap bhaut achha gaten ho.

Aaplog bhaut acchha gatein hain.

Urdu third person pronouns include 'who', 'ye', 'winko', 'yinko', 'winko', 'yinko', 'winka', 'yinka', 'wonlog', 'yelog', 'winlogonko', 'yinlogonko', 'winlogonka' and 'yinlogonka'. These Urdu pronouns can be compared with these of English their person pronouns as below,

Table 3

Third Person Pronouns in English

Case	English		Nepali	
	Singular Number	Plural Number	Singular Number	Plural Number
Nominative	He, she, it	They	<i>Woh, ye</i>	<i>Wohlog, yelog</i>
Accusative	Him, her, it	Them	<i>Yinko, yinko</i>	<i>Uinlogonko,</i>

				<i>yinlogonko</i>
Dative	Him, her, it	Them	<i>Uinko, yinko</i>	<i>Uinlogonko, yinlogonko</i>
Possessive	His, her, its	Theirs	<i>Uinka, yinka</i>	<i>Uinlogonka, yinlogonka</i>
Vocative	-	-	-	-

As table 3 presents, the Urdu language has multiple pronouns that are equivalent for single pronouns in English. 'Woh', and 'ye' are third person singular pronouns in Urdu in nominative case. In that, 'ye' is the pronoun that denotes nearness and 'who', is the pronoun that denotes a bit distance. There is no any difference among masculine feminine and neutered genders in the use of above mentioned pronouns in the following examples:

<u>English</u>	<u>Urdu</u>
She (over there) is reading a newspaper.	<i>Woh akbar padh rahee hain.</i>
She (nearby) has a poor eyesight.	<i>Yinkoe ankhain kamjoor hain.</i>
He (nearby) is a cricket player.	<i>Ye cricket kheladi hain.</i>
He (over there) is a science teacher.	<i>Woh bighan ke master hain.</i>
It (nearby) is a school.	<i>Ye madarsha hai.</i>

Similarly, 'log' is added to make those mentioned singular pronouns while making them plural and in the neuter gender, sometimes 'hain' is used to make plural. 'Wohlog' and 'yelog' are the third person plural pronouns showing pronominal relation in nominative case and a little bit distance in the same case. It will be cleared by the given example.

<u>English</u>	<u>Urdu</u>
They are farmers (over there).	<i>Wohlog kissan hain.</i>
They are farmers (nearby).	<i>Yelog kissan hain.</i>

The difference of nearness and farness in Urdu pronominal does not end in nominative and accusative case but affects in other cases also. 'Ye' and 'who' are the third person singular pronouns in Urdu, where the former shows nearness and the latter one shows a little bit distance. 'Yinko' and 'uinko' are the singular pronouns in accusative case and dative case. The same third person singular pronouns become 'uinlogonko' and 'yinlogonka' when they infix the plural marker 'logonko' while making them plural. Here, 'yinlogonko' and 'uinlogonko' both denote nearness and farness. Following examples are given to make them clear.

English

Ram teaches him computer.

Sujata gave him purse.

Read it very fast.

Similarly, in possessive case, 'uinka' and 'yinka' both represent singular third person pronoun. 'Uinlogonka' and 'yinlogonka' are the plural third person pronoun. 'Logonka' is added to make them plural. For example,

'Uinka' becomes 'uinlogonka'

'Yinka' becomes 'yinlogonka'

The result shows that English and Urdu have a comparable number of pronouns, with Urdu featuring a few additional terms due to its use of alternative words. Both languages exhibit a degree of similarity in the forms of personal pronouns in the dative and accusative cases. However, a prominent difference arises in the way pronouns are used: in English, the second-person pronoun 'you' maintains the same form across most cases, whereas Urdu does not. English pronouns are consistent and lack alternatives, while Urdu pronouns have multiple forms depending on context. Additionally, a significant distinction is that English pronouns reflect gender differences, particularly in the singular form, while Urdu pronouns do not differentiate by gender. These differences are illustrated by the following examples.

English

This school is his, not her.

She is reading poem.

He is an Urdu teacher.

Urdu

Ye madarsha uinka hain, yinka nahin.

Ye naat padh rahen hain.

ye Urdu ke ustad hain.

The above mentioned examples show that the same form 'ye' is used to refer to both girl and boy and even to the things. When we analyze pronominal in terms of structure there is difference between Urdu and the English. English does not have ergative marker for expressing verbal actions but Urdu has ergative marker for expressing verbal actions. Urdu speakers use aap for elder ones and tum for the younger ones and there is no difference in masculine and feminine gender. Following examples can clear this concept.

English

Uncle, you should talk to my parents.

bat karne chaheye.

As if, you need not worry about the exam.

me fikar karne ke jaroorat nahi hain.

Urdu

Chacha, aapko mere waludain se

Tumko imtihan ke barein

Urdu has honorific pronominal. It is very common. The Urdu language has 'aap' and 'aaplog' as honorific second person singular and plural pronouns respectively. Such honorific expressions are not found in English. 'Intonation' and nasalization are not marked for the honorific expression. For example,

English

Urdu

Father, you must take this medicine regularly. Abba, aapko ye dawa rojana lena poadega.

Shahid, you must work hard. Shahid, tumko mehnat karna padega.

Another significant distinction between the languages lies on concord with preparatory there. Preparatory 'there' in English is used according to the number of things persons and animals, if they are countable. But the Urdu does not concord with such use of the nouns. The following examples make it clear.

English

Urdu

This is a very good story.

Ye ek achhi kahani hain.

These are books.

Ye sab kitabein hain.

Among the examples presented above, English 'this' concords with 'story' and 'these' with 'books'. On the contrary, this kind of concord is not there in Urdu as 'ye' hain and 'ye' sab hain.

It is similar between the two languages that there are pronouns to express pronominal or nearest relation.

English

Urdu

This is the masque.

Ye masjid hai.

These are mangoes.

Ye sab aam hai.

It is an apple.

Ye ek sab hai.

The main distinction between the two languages is that Urdu has pronouns to express honor for persons who are far or near. But English language has no pronouns to express honor for persons. For example,

English

Urdu

You speak Urdu.

Aap Urdu bolte hain.

You speak Urdu.

Tum Urdu bolte ho.

He (overthere) is a game teacher.

Woh ek khelkood ke ustad hai.

He (nearby) is a doctor.

Ye ek doctor hai.

This grandmother is hers.

Ye uinke dadiamami hain.

In English, the pronouns 'she' and 'he' are used uniformly to refer to individuals, regardless of their proximity or the level of respect associated with them. In contrast, Urdu employs specific forms to convey these nuances. For instance, 'who' is used for individuals who are somewhat distant, while 'ye' is used for those who are near. Additionally, in terms of respect, 'tum' is used for individuals who do not require honorifics, whereas 'aap' is reserved for those who deserve respect. This distinction in Urdu reflects a more nuanced approach to addressing people based on their relative closeness and social status.

Demonstrative Pronouns in the English and Urdu Language

The demonstrative pronoun is named as the four determiners which include this, these, that and those in English. The demonstrative pronoun is one that is used to specify the object which it refers. Urdu demonstrative pronouns include 'ye', 'ye sab' and 'woh', 'woh sab'. These Urdu pronouns can be compared with those English which are as follows.

Table 4

Demonstrative Pronouns in English

Distance	English		Urdu	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Near	This	These	Ye	Ye sab
Far	That	Those	Woh	Woh sab

The distinction between Urdu and English demonstratives lies primarily in their use and effects on grammatical structure. In Urdu, alternative forms are used for demonstratives in the plural, such as 'ye' (these) for things near and 'wo' (those) for things far, whereas English demonstratives like 'this' and 'that' do not change form based on number; instead, they are fixed in their singular and plural forms ('this/these' and 'that/those'). Another significant difference is the impact of demonstratives on sentence structure. In English, demonstratives often influence the subject-verb agreement and the overall sentence construction, whereas in Urdu, their effect on the subject and verb is less pronounced. These distinctions are illustrated by the following examples, which highlight how demonstratives function differently in the two languages.

English

This is a book.

These are books.

That book is ours.

Those are mangoes.

Urdu

Ye ek kitab hai.

Ye kitabein hain.

Woh hamari kitab hain.

Woh sab aam hain.

Demonstrative pronouns in English, as illustrated by examples such as 'this,' 'these,' 'that,' and 'those,' agree with both verbs and complements, affecting the overall sentence structure. In contrast, Urdu demonstrative pronouns such as 'ye,' 'who,' 'ye sab,' and 'woh sab' primarily agree with nouns and have less influence on the verbs in a sentence. This is why Urdu demonstrative pronouns are considered to have a more limited impact on other elements of the sentence compared to their English counterparts. In Urdu, these pronouns are positioned before nouns and function similarly to English demonstratives, serving to specify and distinguish objects or individuals without affecting the verb forms.

Indefinite Pronouns in English and Urdu

Urdu indefinite pronouns are 'sab log', 'sab kuch', 'koi', 'koi vi', 'kuch', 'kuch vi,koivinahin', 'kuch nahin', 'koi nahin', 'kuch nahin', 'ek', 'kuch log', 'bahaut log' and 'woh log'. These Urdu indefinite pronouns can be compared with English indefinite pronouns as below

Table 5
English Indefinite Pronouns with Regular Pattern

English					Urdu			
	Every	Some	Any	No	Every	Some	Any	No
One	Everyone	Someone	Anyone	No one	Sablog	Koi	Anyone	Koi (nahin)
Thing	Everything	Something	Anything	No thing	Sabkcu	Kuch	Anything	Kuch vi
Body	Everybody	Somebody	Anybody	No body	Sablog	Koi	Anybody	Koi vi

Note: English indefinite pronouns without pattern: others, few, many, some, all, one, ones, they Indefinite pronouns in Urdu without pattern: Saakisablog, Kuchlog, Bahutlog, Kuchlog or koi, Sablog, Ek, Bahutlog, Wohlog or koi

A comparison of Table 5 reveals that Urdu indefinite pronouns exhibit a unique feature not found in English: the use of 'log' in many of the pronouns. This suffix is added to various indefinite pronouns in Urdu, whereas English lacks such a regular pattern in its indefinite pronouns. For example, in Urdu, 'koi' serves as a fundamental interrogative pronoun used to represent various indefinite pronouns in English. Both English and Urdu share similarities in their use of indefinite pronouns, following a regular pattern without having multiple alternative pronouns for each case. For instance, while English uses 'some' and 'any' in different contexts, Urdu employs a more consistent approach with its pronouns.

English

Everyone is happy.
Everybody is happy.
Everything is good.
Someone is coming.
Somebody is coming.
Something is happening.
Ram did not see anyone.
Ram did not bring anything.
There is nothing on the table.
There is no one.

Urdu

Sab log khush hain.
Sab log khush hain.
Sab kuch achha hain.
Koi aaraha hain.
Koi aaraha hain
Kuch horaha hai.
Ram ne kiseeko nahin dekha.
Ram kuch nahin laya.
Mej par kuch nahin hai.
Koi nahin hai.

Reflexive Pronouns in English and Urdu

Table 6 compares reflexive pronouns in English with their Urdu counterparts, showing how self-referential actions are expressed in both languages. This overview highlights the parallels and distinctions between the two linguistic systems.

Table 6

English Reflexive Pronoun

Person	English		Urdu			
	Singular	Plural	Singular		Plural	
1 st	Myself	Ourselves	Khudh apnaap	or	Khudhi apneaap	or
2 nd	Yourself	Yourselves	Khudh apneaap	or	Khudh apneaap	or
3 rd	Himself	Themselves	Khudh apneaap	or	Khudh apneaap	or
	Herself					
	Itself					

As shown in the above table 6, English reflexive pronouns are distinct for each person and number, with separate forms for the first, second, and third persons. For instance, 'myself,' 'yourself,' and 'himself/herself' are used for singular forms, and 'ourselves,' 'yourselves,' and 'themselves' for plural forms. In contrast, Urdu reflexive pronouns, such as 'khud' or 'apne aap,' are used interchangeably across all persons and numbers. This means that 'khud' or 'apne aap' can be employed for first, second, and third persons regardless of whether they are singular or plural. The following examples illustrate both the similarities and differences between English and Urdu reflexive pronouns, highlighting how English uses distinct forms based on person and number, while Urdu maintains a more uniform approach.

English

I cooked it myself.

You clean your room yourself.

You clean your room yourself.

You have to clean your room yourselves.

Nazish wrote a poem herself.

Asif drives a car himself.

The cooker burst itself.

Urdu

Main ne khudh isko pakaya tha.

Tum apna karma apa saaf karo.

Tum apna kamra khudh saaf karo.

Tumlogonko apna kamara khudh se saaf karna padega.

Nazish ne khudh ek naat likha.

Asif, apneaap gadee chalata hai.

Cooker apne aap fat gaya.

They are painting their home themselves. *Wohlog apna ghar khudh se rangeah hain.*
 We have to clean the room ourselves. *Humlogonko apna karma ko khudh saaf Karna padta hain.*

When comparing the data, it is evident that English reflexive pronouns are built from the root word 'self,' which is inflected for plural forms. In English, reflexive pronouns include prefixes such as 'him,' 'her,' 'them,' 'your,' and 'it,' which are combined with the root 'self' to create forms like 'himself,' 'herself,' 'themselves,' and 'yourself.' In contrast, Urdu reflexive pronouns use basic terms such as 'khud' and 'apne aap' without any prefixes or suffixes. A striking distinction is that English reflexive pronouns involve both inflection and derivation, with various prefixes and inflected forms to indicate different persons and numbers. Urdu, however, does not use prefixes or suffixes in its reflexive pronouns and maintains a simpler, more uniform structure.

Relative Pronouns in English and Urdu

Table 7 shows the relative pronouns in English alongside their Urdu equivalents, highlighting how both languages connect clauses using these pronouns for subjects, objects, and possessives.

Table 7

Urdu Relative Pronouns

English			Urdu			
	Subject	Object	Possessive	Subject	Object	Possessive
Persons	Who	Who,	Whose	Jo	Jo, jisne	Jiske,
	That	whom, that				Jiska, Jisko
Things	Which	Which	Whose	Jo	Jo	Jisko,
	That	That				Jiska, Jisko

Table 7 illustrates the use of relative pronouns in Urdu. The pronoun 'Jo' is employed for both subjective and objective cases, while 'jisne' or 'jisko' serves as the equivalent of the English pronoun 'whom' in the objective case. For possessive relationships, Urdu uses 'jiske,' 'jiska,' and 'jisko,' which can refer to both persons and things. Comparing English and Urdu relative pronouns reveals both similarities and differences. The Urdu pronoun 'jisne' aligns with the English 'whom,' and similarly, the English relative possessive pronoun 'whose' is used for both persons and things, a feature mirrored in Urdu with 'jiske,' 'jiska,' and 'jisko.' However, an important difference is that while 'jo' in Urdu functions in both subjective and objective cases for both persons and things, English uses separate pronouns for these roles. Specifically, English employs 'which' and 'that' as equivalents to

the Urdu 'jo,' with distinct forms for subjective and objective cases. The following examples clarify these similarities and differences.

English

Urdu

The lady whom you saw in the market is my mother *Tum ne jisko bazaar me dekha tha woh meri ammy hain.*

The girl who wears a red frock is my little sister. *Ladki jisne lal frock paheno hai woh meri choti bahain hain.*

This is the purse that my brother sent me from Kathmandu. *Ye purse mere bhai ne Kathmandu se bheja hain.*

I sent him a dictionary that I had bought in Lucknow. *Mein ne unko ek logat bheja jo mein ne Lucknow me kharida tha.*

This is the girl whose father is a doctor. *Yehi woh ladki hain jiske abbu doctor hain.*

Reciprocal Pronoun in English and Urdu

Urdu reciprocal pronouns are 'ek dusre se' and 'ekaapas me'. These pronouns can be compared with those of English are as follows.

English

Urdu

Each other *Ek dusara se.*

one another *Ek aapas me.*

In Urdu, native speakers use two reciprocal pronouns: 'ek dusare se,' which is equivalent to the English 'each other,' and 'ek aapas me,' which corresponds to 'one another.' Despite having these two options, Urdu speakers predominantly use 'ek dusare se' in most contexts. A remarkable distinction between English and Urdu reciprocal pronouns is how their usage is determined. In English, the choice between 'each other' and 'one another' often depends on the situation and the specific context of the reciprocal relationship. In contrast, Urdu does not make such distinctions based on context but rather on the speaker's preference. This difference highlights how reciprocal pronouns are employed according to contextual needs in English and personal choice in Urdu.

Possessive Pronouns in English and Urdu

Urdu possessive pronouns include 'mera', 'meri', 'merein', 'hamara', 'hamarein', 'tumhara', 'humharein', 'unka', 'unki', 'unlogonka', 'unsabka', 'inka', 'inki', 'insabka'.

Table 8
English Possessive Pronouns

English				Urdu		
Person	Determiner function		Pronominal function		Pronominal function	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1 st	My	Our	Mine	Ours	Mera, mere, meri	Hamara, hamare, hamaien
2 nd	Your	Your	Yours	Yours	Tumhara, tumharien, tumlogonka, tumlogonki	Tumlogonka, tumlonki, tumsabka
3 rd	His, Her, Its	Thiers	Thiers	Thiers	Unka, unki, uska, uski, unlogonka, unlogonki	Unlogonka, unlogonki
Remote	-	-	-	-	Unka, unki	Unsabka, unsabki
Pronimate	-	-	-	-	Inka, inki	Insabka, insabki

The above two tables of possessive pronouns in English and Urdu show some similarities and some differences. There are person and number differences for possessive pronouns in these languages.

Interrogative pronouns in Urdu and English

Urdu interrogative pronouns are 'kaun', 'kaunlog', 'kisne', 'kiya', 'kinka', 'kinlogonka', 'jo', 'jiska'. The pronouns can be compared with English interrogative pronouns as below.

Table 9
Interrogative Pronouns in English

English				Urdu		
	Persons	Things	Possessive	Persons	Things	Possessive
Subject	Who	What	Whose	Kaun		Kinka
				Kaunlog	Kiya	Kinlogonka
				Kisne		
	Which	Which		Jo	Jo	Jiska
Object	Whom, who, where	What, which	Whose	Kaun		Kinka
				Kaunlog	Kiya	Kinlogonka
				Kisne		

Upon analyzing the forms of interrogative pronouns, it becomes clear that English and Urdu exhibit significant differences. In English, the same interrogative pronoun is used for both singular and plural contexts, such as 'who' for both one person and multiple people. In contrast, Urdu employs different interrogative words for plural forms, distinguishing between singular and plural contexts. For instance, while 'kaun' is used for singular questions, 'kaunse' or 'kaun log' is used to refer to plural entities. This contrast highlights how Urdu differentiates interrogative pronouns based on numbers, whereas English maintains a uniform form across both singular and plural contexts. The following examples further illustrate these distinctions.

English	Urdu
Who called you?	<i>Aapko kisne bulaya?</i>
Which is your favorite book?	<i>Tumhara manpasand kitab kaun hai?</i>
What did you (younger one) see?	<i>Tumne kya dikha?</i>
What did you (elder one) see?	<i>Aapne kya dekha?</i>
Whom did your brother beat?	<i>Tumharain bhai ne kisko peeta hai?</i>
What are the books you are reading?	<i>Aap kaunse kitab padh raha haun?</i>
Which is your school?	<i>Tumhara school kaun hai?</i>
What causes tuberculosis?	<i>Kaise tuberculosis hota hai?</i>
She (whose) hair is black is my best friend?	<i>Woh jiska ba kala hain who meri pakki saheli hai?</i>

Whose book is this?	<i>Yeh kiski kitab hai?</i>
Who was the person whom you invited yesterday?	<i>Woh kaun admi hai jisko jame kal bulaya hai?</i>
Which is your mother?	<i>Tumari ammi kaun hain?</i>
Which is your house?	<i>Tumhara ghar kaun hai?</i>
Which country you have just visited?	<i>Woh kaun sa desh hai jo abhi abhi ghum kar aye ho?</i>

In case of possessive pronouns, the mentioned languages differ from each other. The English has just the word for possessive interrogative pronoun, whereas Urdu has many. Urdu has more alternative words than English in general.

5. Conclusion

The study revealed both distinct similarities and significant differences between English and Urdu pronouns. In English, personal pronouns are simplified with a single set of forms used consistently across different grammatical cases. For instance, the second-person pronoun 'you' remains unchanged regardless of its role as nominative, accusative, or dative. In contrast, Urdu employs a more varied system, with distinct pronouns for singular and plural, and further variations to denote respect or formality. For example, 'tum' and 'aap' are used for addressing individuals, with 'aap' being a formal and respectful form, while 'tum' is informal. This distinction is absent in English, where 'you' serves all functions. Additionally, Urdu differentiates between proximity and respect with pronouns like 'ye' for nearness and 'woh' for distance, a nuance less prominent in English. Urdu also features a rich set of possessive pronouns with gender and number distinctions, such as 'mera' (my, masculine) and 'meri' (my, feminine), compared to English's more simplified system of possessive forms. Reflexive pronouns further illustrate these differences: English uses distinct forms like 'myself' and 'themselves,' while Urdu relies on 'khud' or 'apne aap' for all persons and numbers, indicating a less inflected approach. The treatment of demonstratives also varies; in English, demonstratives like 'this' and 'that' do not change with number, while Urdu uses 'ye' (these) and 'woh' (those) with clear distinctions for singular and plural. Indefinite pronouns in both languages follow similar patterns, but Urdu includes additional forms and variations, such as 'koi' for 'someone' and 'kuch' for 'something.' Lastly, relative pronouns in Urdu, such as 'jo' for both subjective and objective cases, contrast with English's more segmented system, using 'who,' 'whom,' and 'whose.' These linguistic differences underscore the complexity and richness of Urdu's pronominal system compared to English, reflecting broader cultural and grammatical structures inherent in each language. To improve cross-linguistic understanding and teaching of personal pronouns, it is recommended that language learners and educators emphasize these distinctions, using practical examples and contextual exercises to bridge the gap between the languages. This approach will not only enhance proficiency but also deepen appreciation for the unique aspects of each language's pronoun system.

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