

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

by Seda Sürel

INTRODUCTION

Personal pronouns identify grammatical person and mark reference to the speaker, the addressee, or others. They function as independent forms and may combine with possessive or verbal morphology across the language.

1. Forms

Turkish personal pronouns consist of six primary forms:

ben
sen
o
biz
siz
onlar

No gender distinction exists; all pronouns apply to any referent.

2. Person and Number

Turkish distinguishes person and number through pronouns and corresponding verbal morphology:

1st person singular → ben
2nd person singular → sen
3rd person singular → o
1st person plural → biz
2nd person plural → siz
3rd person plural → onlar

These forms remain stable and are not declined by case internally; case suffixes attach to the pronoun surface form.

3. Case Attachment

Personal pronouns take standard case suffixes according to vowel harmony and consonant rules:

Accusative:

ben → beni
sen → seni
o → onu
biz → bizi
siz → sizi
onlar → onları

Dative:

bana
sana
ona
bize
size
onlara

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Locative:

bende
sende
onda
bizde
sizde
onlarda

Ablative:

benden
senden
ondan
bizden
sizden
onlardan

These forms follow regular phonological principles without exceptions.

4. Reference and Function

Personal pronouns function as independent noun phrases. They may serve:

- Subject of a clause
- Object of a verb
- Recipient or target of an action
- Anchor for comparison or emphasis
- Base for possessive constructions when combined with possessive suffixes

Pronouns do not express gender. Person is encoded solely through pronoun choice and verbal agreement.

5. Plural Use

Biz and **siz** refer to first and second person plural.

In addition to its plural meaning, **siz** also functions as a singular honorific form used for polite address.

Onlar may also be used as a polite singular reference when referring respectfully to a third person.

Examples

- Ben evdeyim. — I am at home.
- Sen hazır mısın? — Are you ready?
- O geliyor. — He/She is coming.
- Biz başlıyoruz. — We are starting.
- Siz dışarıdasınız. — You are outside.
- Onlar parkta. — They are in the park.
- Beni aradı. — He/She called me.
- Sana yardım ettim. — I helped you.
- Ona baktım. — I looked at him/her.
- Onlardan haber geldi. — News came from them.

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Notes

- Pronouns do not change for gender.
- All case suffixes attach regularly according to vowel harmony.
- **O** and **onlar** maintain the stem vowel without change.
- Plural pronoun onlar can function as both literal plural and polite singular reference
- **Bana** and **sana** are irregular dative forms:
 - ben → bana
 - sen → sana