

# Hablando de gramática

por Señor Conner

Señor Conner is the author of the popular language series BREAKING THE SPANISH BARRIER. Each month he will feature a grammatical topic of interest to our readers. Do you have ideas of topics you would like to see covered? E-mail Señor Conner at: [john@tobreak.com](mailto:john@tobreak.com). You can also visit his website: [www.tobreak.com](http://www.tobreak.com).

## Demonstrative Adjectives (and pronouns!)

The term “demonstrative adjective” sounds so foreboding. There are so many syllables in those words, and I remember that when I was a student, I never really knew what this term meant. So, what is it exactly? A demonstrative adjective is simply a word that helps to identify and distinguish a noun from other nouns of the same type. These words often use spatial imagery to place a noun in relationship to other nouns. Demonstrative adjectives generally precede the noun that they modify. The corresponding words in English are: “this,” “these,” “that,” and “those.”

Masculine	Feminine	(English translation)
<b>este</b>	<b>esta</b>	this (close to speaker)
<b>estos</b>	<b>estas</b>	these (close to speaker)
<b>ese</b>	<b>esa</b>	that
<b>esos</b>	<b>esas</b>	those
<b>aquel</b>	<b>aquella</b>	that (way over there)
<b>aquellos</b>	<b>aquellas</b>	those (way over there)

*Aquel, aquella, aquellos* and *aquellas* all help to identify something that is a greater distance away, the farthest distance away of a number of objects, or something quite removed in time from the speaker’s framework

<b>EXAMPLES:</b>	<i>este oso</i>	this bear	<i>esta jirafa</i>	this giraffe
	<i>estos osos</i>	these bears	<i>estas jirafas</i>	these giraffes
	<i>ese oso</i>	that bear	<i>esa jirafa</i>	that giraffe
	<i>esos osos</i>	those bears	<i>esas jirafas</i>	those giraffes
	<i>aquel árbol</i>	that tree	<i>aquella montaña</i>	that mountain
	<i>aquellos árboles</i>	those trees	<i>aquellas montañas</i>	those mountains

Some learners (I was one of them!) have difficulties remembering if “*este*” means “this” or “that” or if “*estos*” means “these” or “those.” The following rhyme may help you to keep these forms straight in your mind:

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**“This” and “these” have “t’s.” (*este/esta* and *estos/estas*)**

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### DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

Demonstrative adjectives can turn into pronouns simply by adding an accent mark. For example, instead of saying “*esta planta*” (this plant), you could say “*ésta*,” which means “this one.” Similarly, instead of saying “*esos bancos*,” you could say “*ésos*,” meaning “those (ones).” The accent mark here doesn’t affect the pronunciation at all. It’s simply a written signal that this word is now a pronoun and not just a lowly adjective!

**EXAMPLES:** *¿Qué libros de los que hay en la mesa prefieres: éstos o ésos?*  
 Which books on the table do you prefer: these or those?  
*Esta corbata, ésta y aquella son feísimas.*  
 This tie, that one, and that one over there are very ugly.  
*Estos chicos y aquéllos que están en la playa nunca nos dejan en paz.*  
 These boys and those (ones) who are on the beach never leave us alone.

Here are the demonstrative pronouns grouped together:

Masculine/Feminine Pronouns		Neuter Pronouns	
<b>éste/ésta</b>	this (one)	<b>esto</b>	this (idea, concept, action, or unidentified object)
<b>éstos/éstas</b>	these (things, people, etc.)		
<b>ése/ésa</b>	that (one)	<b>eso</b>	that (idea, concept, action, or unidentified object)
<b>ésos/ésas</b>	those (things, people, etc.)		
<b>aquél/aquélla</b>	that (one) à far away	<b>aquello</b>	that (idea, concept, action)
<b>aquéllos/aquéllas</b>	those (things, people, etc.) à far away		

You undoubtedly noticed the three new forms in the column on the right. These neuter pronouns are used when a specific noun has not been identified or when referring to an idea, a concept or an action. These neuter forms never have accents. They already are pronouns!

**Examples:** *¿Qué es esto?* – *Es una pulsera de oro que le compró Marc a J.Lo.*  
 What's this? – It's a gold bracelet that Marc bought for J.Lo.  
*Después de clases, vamos al cine para ver Dreamgirls. ¿Qué piensas de eso?*  
 After classes, let's go to the theater to see **Dreamgirls**. What do you think of that (idea)?  
*Durante los años veinte, los políticos eran muy corruptos. Aquello no fue bueno para el país.*  
 During the twenties, the politicians were very corrupt. That wasn't good for the country.

## PRUEBA DE REPASO

Complete these sentences by translating the words in parentheses.

- \_\_\_\_\_ pantalones cortos están muy de moda. (*These*)
- No sé si voy a llevar esta gorra o \_\_\_\_\_ del armario. (*that one*)
- Daisuke Matsuzaka va a lanzar para los Red Sox este año. ¿Qué piensas de \_\_\_\_\_?
- Tengo tres raquetas de tenis nuevas. ¿Cuál prefieres: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ o \_\_\_\_\_? (*this one, that one, or that one over there*)
- ¿Puedes ver bien \_\_\_\_\_ estrellas en el cielo? (*those*)
- El año pasado oí cantar a Chayanne por primera vez. Nunca olvidaré \_\_\_\_\_ momento. (*that*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ chicos locos nunca se callan. (*Those*)
- Estas ventanas están abiertas y \_\_\_\_\_ de allí, también. (*those*)
- ¿Qué es \_\_\_\_\_? -- Es mi nuevo tatuaje.
- ¿Con quién quieres ir a la fiesta este sábado ... conmigo o con \_\_\_\_\_ de tu barrio? (*those ones/guys*)