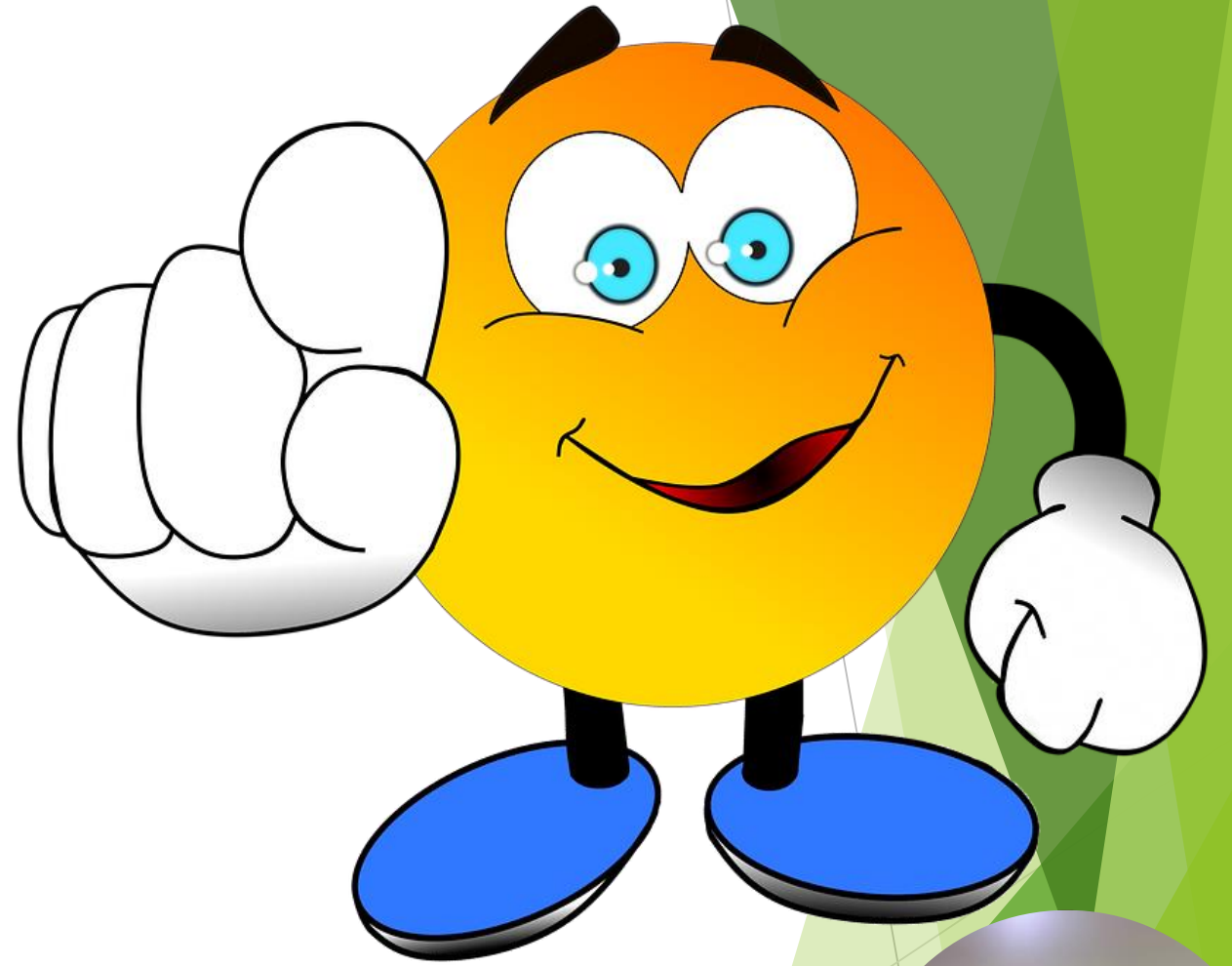


Lesson 15

You and Subject

Pronouns

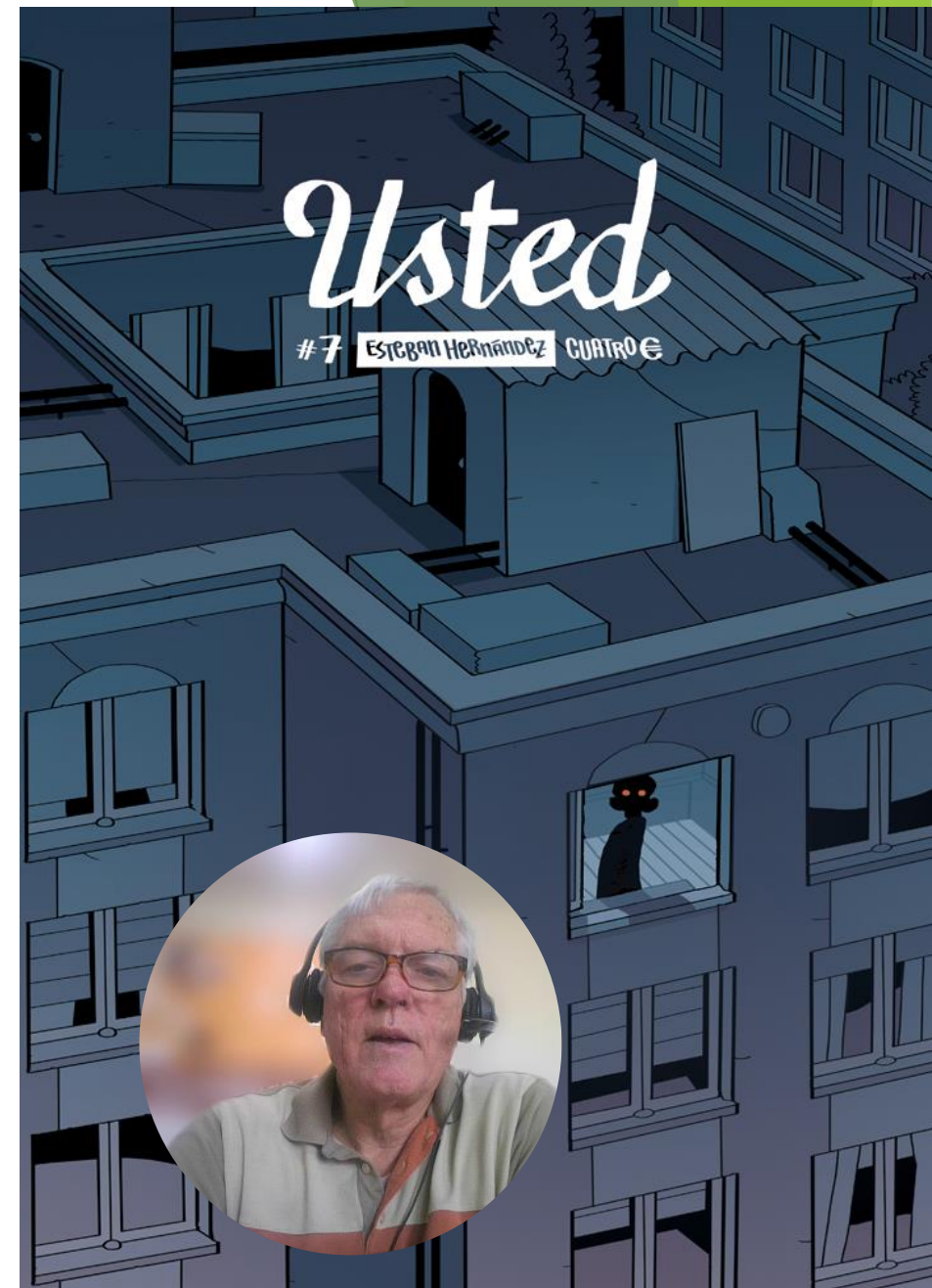
Part 1



I NEVER USED TO THINK ABOUT “YOU”!



Before I went to live in Argentina, I never thought about **You** very much. Being a Gringo, growing up in the United States speaking English, **You** was **You**, and that was all there was to it. No matter who I talked to and wanted to say the word **You** that was what I said. Then I became a missionary in Argentina. As I learned a little bit of Spanish, I realized there was more than one way to say **You** in Spanish.



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I had a vivid lesson about **you** in a conversation I had with someone I met in Argentina. As a missionary, I received instructions to talk to people using **Usted**. The purpose was to show formality and respect as I spoke to everyone. However, this caused a misunderstanding. I was 20 years old at the time. I was talking to a young woman that was about my same age.

I said **Usted** whenever I needed to say **you** to her. She said **Usted** whenever she needed to say **you** to me. After a few minutes, I noticed that she switched to **tú** when she needed to speak the term **you** to me. I kept saying, **Usted**. After a few more minutes of talking, all of a sudden, I noticed that she seemed to be getting upset. I asked her what was wrong. She asked me why I would not **tutear**. That meant using the word **tú** instead of **Usted** with her. All I could think of to reply was that I had received instructions to speak in that manner. She explained that when I used **Ud.** with her, it made her feel like I was being very formal, that I was cold or aloof, that I was keeping an emotional distance from her, and that I did not want to be her friend. To me, **you** was **you**, and I had never thought of it being any other way. However, it is essential to her and many other Spanish speakers.



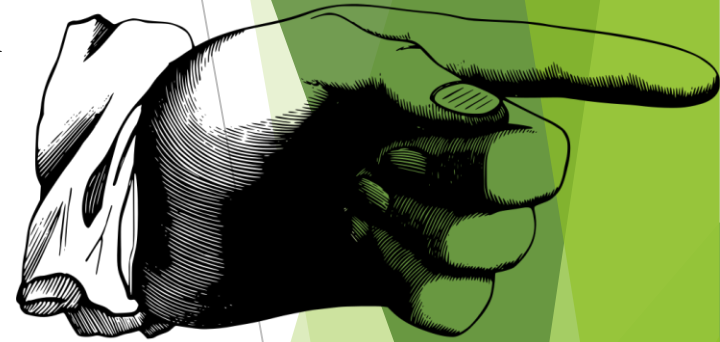
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I now know that there are six different ways to say **You** in Spanish. These six ways will depend upon the situation and, in some cases, the location where you are speaking. Here is a summary of when you would use the six different words for you:

Tú = this form of **You** is used in most Spanish-speaking countries. You use **tú** when you are talking to another person. This person is **you familiar**. In other words, it would be someone that you know quite well. You use **tú** when the person is your friend, a relative, or you are talking to someone younger than you are. You use **tú** when you are on a first-name basis with that person. You use **tú** with your peers at school, work, or other places.

Usted = (You can abbreviate **Usted** by using **Ud.** or **Vd.**) All Spanish-speaking countries use **Usted**. You use **Usted** when you talk to one other person, and you perceive that person in a formal manner. In other words, it would be someone that you would want to show particular respect. You use **Usted** when you talk to someone you have just met and do not know this person very well. You use **Usted** as a sign of respect when the person is older than you are. You use **Usted** with anyone with a title as a sign of respect. (Mr., Mrs., Sir, Dr., Your Honor)



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Voz = this is a form you use in Argentina and sometimes in some of the Central-American countries. You use **voz** when you are talking to only one other person and you use **voz** with people that you perceive as being familiar. You use **voz** in the same situations as in **tú** mentioned above.

Vosotros = this word is used only in Spain. You use **vosotros** when saying **you** to two or more people. **Vosotros** would be the equivalent of **you all** or **all of you** in English. You perceive these persons as being familiar. You use them in the same situations as in **tú** mentioned above, except that you are talking to more than one person. In a group of two or more persons, at least one of the group members must be male.

Vosotras = this word is used only in Spain. You use **vosotras** when saying **you** to two or more people. **Vosotras** is the equivalent of **you all** or **all of you** in English. You perceive these persons as familiar. You use that in the same situations as in **tú**, mentioned above, except that you are talking to more than one person. For **vosotras**, all members must be female in a group of two or more persons.

Ustedes = (You abbreviate this word using **Uds.** or **Vds.**) You use **Uds** in all Spanish-speaking countries. **Ustedes** is the equivalent of **you all** or **all of you** in English. You use **Uds** when addressing a group of two or more persons. In all countries except Spain, **Uds.** can be either familiar or formal. It does not matter; it is just **you (plural)**. In Spain, **Uds.** is formal. In Spain, **Uds** has the same situations as **Ud.** except there are two or more people.



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Here are some situations. Decide which would be the most appropriate choice of the word “you” in Spanish.

- a. You are standing in line at the airport. You start up a conversation with someone else in line.
- b. You are talking to a 7 year old little boy.
- c. You are driving your car and are pulled over by a policeman in Mexico.
- d. You are talking with 3 girls that are in your class. They are from Spain.
- e. You are talking to Mr. Verdugo.
- f. You are talking to a group of your friends in Chile.
- g. You are talking to a classroom of kindergarteners in El Salvador.
- h. You are talking to your boss at work.
- i. You are talking to your girlfriend from Argentina.
- j. You are talking to Cousin Jorge from Costa Rica.
- k. You are talking to Alfredo, a co-worker in your store.



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- ▶l. You are talking with a group of older businessmen from Spain.
- ▶m. You are talking with a group of teenagers from Spain. Some of them are boys.
- ▶n. You are talking to the governor of Sonora, Mexico.
- ▶o. You are talking with one of your parents.
- ▶p. You are talking with your teacher.
- ▶q. You are talking to your boyfriend. He is from the Dominican Republic.
- ▶r. You meet an 84 year old lady from Honduras.
- ▶s. You are addressing the judge at court.
- ▶t. Which 2 words for “you” could you possibly use if you wanted to show respect to the person(s) that you are talking to?
- ▶u. Which 2 words could you use if you wanted to give the message to the person(s) that you want to be friends?
- ▶v. Which 2 words are only used in Spain?
- ▶w. Which word would you use in Argentina to show friendship and warmth?
- ▶x. Which 3 words could be used only with one other person?
- ▶y. Which 3 words could be used only with groups of two or more people?
- ▶z. Which word would be safest to use if you are not sure which word for “you” to use?



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