

Pragmatic and Structural Reflections on the Expression of the Second Person Notion in Romance, with Special Reference to Spanish and Portuguese

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1. The many accounts of the changes which have taken place in the expression of second person deixis in the Romance languages have provided explanatory hypotheses of both a pragmatic and a structural nature. In this article I discuss the basis of some of these hypotheses and then assess their role in explaining developments in Castilian and Portuguese, which move from a period of relative uniformity in the late Middle Ages towards increasing differentiation.

2. Pragmatic Hypotheses

I begin by looking at pragmatic hypotheses, which I will divide into two basic types: **historico-pragmatic** (i.e. those which are based on socio-historical context) and **psycho-pragmatic** (i.e. those which are based on what appear to be psychologically-motivated tendencies in language change).

2.1 Historico-pragmatic Hypotheses

Historico-pragmatic hypotheses have often been wildly speculative, but have also proved curiously attractive, perhaps because the socio-historical matrix in which a language is set is instinctively perceived as somehow more real than the internal dynamics of the language itself. Furthermore, in the particular case of the expression of second person deixis it certainly is possible to correlate some changes in usage with well-documented historical circumstance, such as the retention of *thee* forms amongst English-speaking Quakers, and Mussolini's attempted imposition of *voi* in

Fascist Italy—though it must be noted that such efforts at corpus planning in this area are restricted in range and typically short-lived.¹

2.1.1 One of the earliest historico-pragmatic hypotheses in the area of second person deixis concerns the extension of the Latin plural pronoun VŌS to singular reference. Grimm, Diez and Meyer-Lübke had espoused the structural hypothesis that the use of VŌS with singular reference was due to analogy with the deferential use of NŌS as a first person. However, Muller favoured Châtelain's suggestion that the use of VŌS as a pronoun of respect stemmed from the form of address used to the Emperor from the 4th century onwards, when the division of the Empire by Diocletian led to the concept of imperial power residing in two people simultaneously, and hence that in addressing one Emperor the speaker was in fact addressing both.² This extraordinary theory, which is often reiterated, relies on great credence being given to the vigorous diffusion of so rarefied a usage. Muller suggests that the diffusion of the VŌS form of address is at first limited to a social *élite*, and indeed it may be possible to see some reverse evidence for this in the continuing exclusive use of derivatives of TŪ rather than VŌS as a singular in some of the essentially popular Romance dialects.³ The historical association of politeness formulae with the usage of royal or imperial courts is also widely accepted.⁴ Yet my reading of Muller's investigation of the use of VŌS and TŪ in the letters of Pope Gregory I, where he concludes that the variation 'reflects a sort of attitude or tone that could be assumed or abandoned at pleasure' is by no means consistent with that of a special deferential usage. I think that Muller is also thrown by the comparison he makes with French, where he observes little such attitudinal variation, though the situation he describes in Gregory is not at all without parallel elsewhere, as Anipa has recently shown in relation to Spanish Golden-Age texts.⁵ Modified forms of this hypothesis continue to be enunciated: Zilliacus attributes the clear demarcation of address terms

1 On Quaker usage, see R. Brown and A. Gilman, 'The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity', in *Language and Social Context*, ed. Pier Paolo Giglioli, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972 [1st ed. 1960]), 252–82 (pp. 267–68); on Mussolini and Italian *voi* see Elizabeth Bates and Laura Benigni, 'Rules of Address in Italy: A Sociolinguistic Survey', *Language in Society*, IV (1975), 271–88.

2 Henri F. Muller, 'The Use of the Plural of Reverence in the Letters of Pope Gregory I (590–604)', *Romanic Review*, V (1914), 68–89; see this article for precise references to the views alluded to here.

3 Gerhard Rohlfs, *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti: Morfologia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1968), 181, records such a situation in a number of Italo-Romance dialects.

4 Konrad Ehlich, 'On the Historicity of Politeness', in *Politeness in Language: Studies in its History, Theory and Practice*, ed. Richard J. Watts, Sachiko Ide and Konrad Ehlich (Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), 71–107 (p. 71).

5 Kormi Anipa, *A Critical Examination of Linguistic Variation in Golden Age Spanish* (New York: Lang, 2001).

in the 4th century to the constant increase in bureaucratic tendencies in public life, though concerning the use of the plural VÖS as a polite singular, he concludes that 'even in Rome the "you" developed from the sociative epistolary plural; the official politeness use is secondary'.⁶ However, the hypothesis is roundly condemned by Brown and Levinson, who observe that the extension of plural *you* to a singular indicating deference or distance is 'very general in unrelated languages [...] Particular cultural explanations for T/V systems will not do in the face of this widespread distribution, the effect of which has perhaps not been appreciated'.⁷

2.1.2 Moving forward to the late Middle Ages, there are very similar historicist hypotheses, similarly involving courtly usage, concerning the adoption of a large number of third-person courtesy formulae with second-person meaning (I am going to use the term **third-as-second person** for this notion: examples are Castilian *Vuestra Merced*, *Vuestra Señoría*, Portuguese *Vossa Mercê*, *Vossa Alteza*, *Vossa Senhoria*). Lindley Cintra sees the Portuguese development as a consequence of the adoption of titles formerly exclusive to the Portuguese king and queen and certain foreign noblemen by the new nobility which was created by the 1383–85 revolution, and subsequently further diffused in the period immediately following Alfarrobeira in 1449, and he persuasively links these phases to the textual record.⁸

The diffusion of such third-as-second person forms within the Romance languages has sometimes been represented as actually having its point of origin in Castilian, or, more accurately (and this is the point at issue), in Castilian courtly custom. Lindley Cintra points out that the first use of *vossa mercê* in Portuguese is in the mouths of Castilians (in 1331 in Fernão Lopes).⁹ Guiter went so far as to equate this diffusional isogloss with the boundaries of the Empire of Charles V.¹⁰ A contact explanation (with Spanish) for German *Er* and *Sie* is readily accepted by Wells.¹¹ Rohlfs attributes third-as-second uses in Tuscan and Sicilian to 'influsso spagnolo'.¹² However, Castilian does not pronominalize *vuestra merced* as

6 H. Zilliacus, 'Anredeformen', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, VII (Münster: Aschendorff, 1964), reported in Ehlich, 'On the Historicity of Politeness', 92–93.

7 Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1987), 198.

8 Luís F. Lindley Cintra, *Sobre 'Formas de Tratamento' na Língua Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1972), 20.

9 *Ibid.*, 18–21; José Plá Cárcelos, 'La evolución del tratamiento "vuestra merced"', *Revista de Filología Española*, X (1923), 245–80 (p. 246), dates Castilian *vuestra merced* (then with the loftier meaning of *vuestra alteza*) only from the early fifteenth century.

10 Henri Guiter, 'L'Extension successive des formes de politesse', *Boletim de Filologia*, XVIII (1959), 195–202.

11 C. J. Wells, *German: A Linguistic History to 1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 274–75.

12 Rohlfs, *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana*, 182–83.

the feminine pronoun *ella* or use a simple third-person pronoun in the plural (i.e., there is no formal Castilian parallel to Italian *loro*).¹³ We should also note that grammaticalized honorific titles are not necessarily involved: the use of *él* in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Castilian and indeed in some present-day dialects and of a third-person pronoun in many northern Italo-Romance dialects is evidence of this.¹⁴

Yet at the same time the use of third-as-second person forms seems not to be so widespread a device for signalling politeness in the languages of the world as the use of plural for singular, although once again Brown and Levinson are able to offer some parallel exemplification from Tamil.¹⁵

2.1.3 A much-favoured historico-pragmatic hypothesis concerning Spanish-American *voseo* rests on the supposed feeling of *hidalguía* amongst the *conquistadores* and settlers in early Spanish colonial society, which led to a preference for the more deferential form. Thus Rosenblat declares that 'el hecho de la conquista hizo que todos se sintiesen señores, con derecho a títulos, y adoptasen como modelo superior los usos, y entre ellos los usos lingüísticos, de las capas superiores' and Páez Urdaneta: 'esta "hidalguización" [...] es una de las mejores explicaciones sobre la vitalidad que el uso de VOS parece haber tenido.'¹⁶

Such an *hidalguización* might plausibly explain the avoidance of *tú* amongst the first settlers, but the use of *vos* in Spanish America is probably more plausibly coupled with the continuation of a situation which subsequently changed in Peninsular usage and in the usage of the Spanish-American viceregal centres, where during the course of the sixteenth century and certainly by the early seventeenth century *vos* was increasingly regarded as being insulting in tone.¹⁷ *Vos* also continues in Papiamentu and Palenquero *bo* (*tu* is used exclusively vocatively in Papiamentu) and as *vos* in some of the contact vernaculars of the Philippines, which similarly suggests immunity to later Peninsular developments rather than any process of *hidalguización*.¹⁸ Another factor

13 See Bruno Migliorini, 'Primordi del Lei', in *Saggi Linguistici* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1957), 187–96.

14 For the Castilian data, see F. W. Hodcroft, '¿A mí un él?: Observations on *vos* and *él* as Forms of Address in Peninsular Spanish', *Journal of Hispanic Research*, II, No. 1 (1993), 1–16, and Charles E. Kany, *American-Spanish Syntax*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Chicago U. P., 1951), 95–96. For the Italian data, see Rohlfs, *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana*, 183.

15 Brown and Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use*, 200–02.

16 Ángel Rosenblat, *Los conquistadores y su lengua* (Caracas: Univ. Central, 1977), 230, and Iraset Páez Urdaneta, *Historia y geografía hispanoamericana del voseo* (Caracas: La Casa de Bello, 1981), 63.

17 Páez Urdaneta, *Historia y geografía hispanoamericana del voseo*, 65–66.

18 For Papiamentu, see, for example, Rodolfo Lenz, *El papiamentu: la lengua criolla de Curazao. La gramática más sencilla* (Santiago de Chile: Balcells, 1928); for Palenquero, D. Bickerton and A. Escalante, 'Palenquero: A Spanish-based Creole of Northern Colombia',

to be borne in mind is that Spanish-American *voseo* is not equatable with a wholesale abandoning of *tú*, since *tú* forms continue to be used for the clitic pronouns and possessive (verb-forms are a different and less obvious matter); it is rather a question of the neutralization of the former *tú/vos* opposition—and hence the same structural process, though with a different outcome, as was eventually to take place in the Peninsula and in *tuteante* areas of Spanish America. The varying use of *tú* and *vos* in Spanish America, which must also be an inconvenience for the *hidalguización* hypothesis, is sometimes explained by appeal to the reimposition of *tú* in zones more closely in contact with the Peninsula;¹⁹ but with this contact hypothesis we must also be wary, since the force of the supposed contact appears not to have been enough to impose *vosotros* as a plural (even though it must have been familiar as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century).²⁰

2.1.4 Much interest has naturally been shown in the various codifications of rules concerning court etiquette in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and from here it is a short step towards the conclusion that it was an obsession with rank and protocol which produced the extremely rich system of distinctions of intimacy which are observable in both Castilian and Portuguese at this time.²¹ It is indeed tempting to think that the undoubtedly rich second-person systems of Golden-Age Spain and Portugal arose due to an overweening concern with social position, and there is a good deal of evidence available concerning the offence that could be given (or more likely taken) by the inappropriate use of an address form. It is

Lingua, XXIV (1970), 254–67 and for Philippines contact vernaculars Keith Whinnom, *Spanish Contact Vernaculars in the Philippine Islands* (London: Hong Kong U. P./Oxford U. P., 1956), 90–91. This argument is of course not without its problems, the most substantial of which is the fact that Portuguese is certainly the primary lexifier of Papiamentu and possibly, though more indirectly, of some of the Philippine contact vernaculars. However, the adoption of *bo(s)* as a singular in these languages (degrees of politeness are not differentiated, though plural is distinguished from singular) suggests some levelling with Castilian. It will also be noted that these languages are not examples of 'mixed' systems (see below 2.3) since the pronoun and verb are invariable and possession is expressed by the pronoun.

19 See Páez Urdaneta, *Historia y geografía hispanoamericana del voseo*, 66–67.

20 See Ángeles Líbano Zumalacárregui, 'Morfología diacrónica del español: las fórmulas de tratamiento', *Revista de Filología Española*, LXXI (1991), 107–21 (p. 113). The question of why *vosotros* was not adopted in Spanish America appears not to have been often asked: Leo Spitzer, 'Vosotros', *Revista de Filología Española*, XXXI (1947), 170–75 (p. 174), gives a (to my mind) implausible explanation based on the fact that the fusion of *vos* and *tú* simplified the singular/plural opposition.

21 See Lindley Cintra, *Sobre 'Formas de Tratamento' na Língua Portuguesa*, for the time of Philip II in Spain and Portugal and Hodcroft, '¿A mí un él?', for the time of Philip IV in Spain. Lindley Cintra certainly suggests this conclusion: he describes the *tratamento* in Portuguese as a 'preocupação nacional' (30) and contrasts the 'sociedade fortemente hierarquizada' of Portugal with the 'niveleção maior' of Brazil (15).

also relevant to observe that once an originally third-person form is adopted for second person reference, a language has access to a very open system of second person reference, far beyond the closed system of the personal pronouns. In the Romance languages, this is nowhere more apparent than in modern European Portuguese, where many honorifics and reference terms (professional capacities or proper names) are admissible as a third-as-second person form. Once the language is opened up in this way there will be room for infinite gradations of politeness in a way which is not possible in a system which does not have third-as-second person forms, and so the sense of extreme hierarchization sometimes perceived in the Portuguese system in particular is not necessarily anything to do with the nature of society so much as simply a natural consequence of this structural movement. Furthermore, such a historico-pragmatic hypothesis as Lindley Cintra suggests can be turned on its head: we might equally say that it was precisely because of the large number of forms available that there was an obsessive preoccupation with which form was to be used in a particular circumstance. We must also distinguish between those forms of address which had been grammaticalized and hence were general in their applicability, and those which were titles associated with very specific offices at court, which would have been more restricted.²² Indeed, the rarefied area of court usage can surely be set aside as merely protocol and to that extent artificial and atypical of everyday usage.

2.1.5 In the twentieth century Castilian *tú* has become more widely used. A ready historico-pragmatic hypothesis to explain this is that such a movement results from feelings of greater equality within society together with greater democratization and abandoning of older formal protocol. Modern European Portuguese has undergone expansion of *tu* and *você* as has Italian *tu*.²³ Brazilian Portuguese uses honorifics only as vocatives and *carioca* is tending even to abandon *o senhor* in favour of a more or less universal *você*.²⁴ In Castilian, though not in Portuguese or Italian, there has also been the important structural consequence that the using of *tú* to a greater range of individuals has also increased the incidence of *vosotros/as*, because of the increased possibility of referring to each member of a group (friends, colleagues, pupils, etc.) as *tú*. Guñu Romalo in fact put forward a similar sociologically-based historico-pragmatic hypothesis for the introduction of politeness distinctions in Romance in the first place,

22 Grammaticalization is not necessarily easy to gauge, however, even in the modern languages. In many respects the third-as-second person pronouns of Brazilian Portuguese are indistinguishable from full nouns because of their disjunctive nature, e.g. *Já avisei o Senhor*.

23 See Lindley Cintra, *Sobre 'Formas de Tratamento' na Língua Portuguesa*, 40–42 and Bates and Benigni, 'Rules of Address in Italy', 286.

24 See Dale April Koike, *Language and Social Relationships in Brazilian Portuguese* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1992), 35.

suggesting that the lack of distinction in Roman society is correlatable with the treatment of slaves as members of the family whereas the greater hierarchization of the feudal society of the Middle Ages is reflected in pronouns of respect.²⁵ However, the kind of movement observable in modern times is particularly interesting, since it represents a reversal of the consistent movement in Romance so far observed towards increased politeness. It is also different in kind, since it represents not the creation of a new politeness category or the abolition of an existing one, which have been the results of all the changes so far discussed, but simply a moving of the boundary between the existing categories of familiar and polite. I would suggest that in principle it is this kind of boundary-shifting change that is the most likely to have been produced by historico-pragmatic factors. It is also likely by the same token that the early preference for *vos* in Spanish-American society represented the same kind of boundary-shifting movement—in this case in the opposite direction, though unfortunately the hard textual evidence for this phase of the Spanish-American change is scanty. Other recent examples of shifts in second-person usage in Castilian which are atypical of the language generally and are easily correlatable with particular local circumstances are the generalized use of *tú* in some varieties of US Spanish, which is attributable to the use of Spanish in an exclusively domestic environment,²⁶ and the apparently random use of *tú* and *usted* in the Spanish of Equatorial Guinea, which is probably due to the restricted nature of contact with Peninsular speakers.²⁷

2.2 Psycho-pragmatic Hypotheses

2.2.1 Politeness may be expressed in a number of ways in language, some of which are **explicit** in the sense that a word or phrase encodes politeness (e.g. a formula such as *por favor/se faz favor*) and some of which are what we may call **iconic**,²⁸ i.e., where politeness is indicated by using a form which is, in a sense, not the expected one. The iconic representation of politeness often involves a movement away from direct expression, as, for example, the use of an imperfect tense to express a polite enquiry in the

25 See V. Guțu Romalo, 'Remarques sur le système du pronom personnel dans les langues romanes', in *Recueil d'Études Romanes publiés à l'occasion du IXe Congrès International de Linguistique Romane à Lisbonne du 31 mars au 3 avril 1959*, ed. I. Coteanu, Iorgu Iordan, A. Rosetti and M. Sala (Bucharest: Éditions de l'Académie de la République Populaire Roumaine, 1959), 79–86 (p. 80), following Nyrop and Bally.

26 See Rosaura Sánchez, 'Our Linguistic and Social Context', in *Spanish in the United States. Sociolinguistic aspects*, ed. Jon Amastae and Lucía Elías-Olivares (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1982), 9–46 (pp. 30–31).

27 See John M. Lipski, *The Spanish of Equatorial Guinea: The Dialect of Malabo and its Implications for Spanish Dialectology* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985), 20.

28 I use 'iconic' in the sense developed principally by John Haiman, *Natural Syntax: Iconicity and Erosion* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1985), i.e., that language is in some sense a diagram of reality.

present, e.g. *quería saber el horario de los trenes*, and in general the greater the distance, the greater the degree of politeness.²⁹ In fact, explicitness and iconicity can be seen to be quite closely related in that explicit markers of politeness usually consist of adverbials, parentheticals or paraphrases which add length to an utterance and so distance it from maximum economy and directness. The notion of iconicity gives us a natural explanation of the two fundamental movements within person deixis that we have observed in the Romance languages: the use of a plural form to indicate a singular and the use of a third person form to indicate a second person. Both these are a distancing from directness of expression and hence a means of encoding politeness. The ubiquitousness of the plural as a singular has already been noted; Kany records the plural use of a third-as-second person in Chiloé (*qué dijeron usted(es)?* = standard *qué dijo usted?*), and compare also in Sicilian *como anu durmitu?* = standard Italian *come ha dormito?*³⁰ The implication of what is being proposed here is that such processes are so natural that we do not need to look for precise socio-historical correlates to explain them; rather, they are psychologically dependent, hence universal, tendencies in language.

2.2.2 Another very general psycho-pragmatic hypothesis of this kind is the now famous proposal by Brown and Gilman concerning power and solidarity.³¹ In a nutshell, they propose that the use of any informal/formal distinction implies relations of power and solidarity rather than simply politeness (though politeness is an aspect of power): the use of the same form of address between speakers implies a solidarity relationship, whereas the use of a different form implies a power relationship. In principle, a hypothesis based on the expression of attitudes through similarity or contrast of forms of address is fruitful in explaining some movements within second person deixis which are not covered easily by the iconic approach. In a number of areas of the Castilian-speaking world, we find *usted* used apparently to indicate intimacy rather than formality. Kany records a number of affectionate uses of *usted* in Spanish America; Keller notes the change from mutual *tú* to *usted* which denotes the passage of a *cuate* (buddy) relationship to the apparently more intimate one of *compadre* (parent-godfather).³² Lindley Cintra records instances of *você* denoting

29 This is what Brown and Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use*, 204, call 'point-of-view distancing'.

30 Kany, *American-Spanish Syntax*, 97; Rohlfs, *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana*, 183. See also Brown and Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use*, 200.

31 See Brown and Gilman, 'The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity'.

32 See Kany, *American-Spanish Syntax*, 93–95; Gary D. Keller, 'Spanish *tú* and *usted*: Patterns of Interchange', in *1974 Colloquium on Spanish and Portuguese Linguistics*, ed. William G. Milan, John J. Staczek and Juan C. Zamora (Washington: Georgetown U. P., 1975), 84–96.

greater affection than *tu*, possibly because of the latter's recent expansion. Such usages are difficult to explain iconically, since they seem to represent the reverse movement from the one outlined in 2.2.1, but they can be explained in terms of power and solidarity relations as the desire to seek a different form of address in a particular kind of relationship.³³ The power and solidarity parameters also seem to offer a natural explanation of the use of *tú* and *usted* in modern Castilian advertisements, where *tú* expresses an attitude of matiness and *usted* that of respect for an esteemed customer. Idiomatic uses of the second-person pronouns also respond to this approach: *vos* continued to be used to the king in Spain even when it was generally regarded as pejorative, and *vosotros* is regularly used oratorically to a mass audience. There is also observable within the Spanish-speaking world a great deal of local and generational variation which is similarly explicable in terms of the Brown and Gilman hypothesis, especially their contention that asymmetric power patterns are increasingly giving way to symmetric solidarity patterns.³⁴ Schwenter has also used power and solidarity as parameters for differentiating Castilian dialects.³⁵

2.2.3 One interesting general question that we might ask under this heading is whether there is any limit on the numbers of distinctions of formality that can be made within second-person systems. Setting aside what I have argued is the special case of the infinite number of distinctions possible within a nominal third-as-second person category, it is striking, for instance, that both Portuguese and Castilian show evidence of a reduction in the number of second-person forms available. Brazilian Portuguese has ousted *tu* from its system, and *vós* has all but disappeared from all varieties of spoken Portuguese. Spanish America has failed to adopt *vosotros*, and Peninsular Castilian and many varieties of Latin-American Spanish have suppressed *vos*. In Castilian generally, the use of *él* as a third-as-second person has not survived. *Él* and *ella* seem never to have had a corresponding plural *ellos* and *ellas*; likewise in Italian *loro* is used less readily than *Lei*.³⁶ There is, then, a decided movement towards a binary formal/informal distinction and a greater disposition to abandon even this distinction in the plural.

33 Lindley Cintra, *Sobre 'Formas de Tratamento' na Língua Portuguesa*, 40–41.

34 See, for example, Wallace E. Lambert, and G. Richard Tucker, 'Tu', 'vous', 'usted'. *A Social-Psychological Study of Address Patterns* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1976), 155–58.

35 Scott A. Schwenter, 'Diferencia dialectal por medio de pronombres: una comparación del uso de *tú* y *usted* en España y México', *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, XLI (1993), 127–49, distinguishes wholesale between Peninsular and Mexican Spanish usage, finding that the idea of 'power' is preserved in Spain, where T/V choice is determined by age, sex and social class, while Mexican speakers' choice is governed by 'solidarity'.

36 Rohlfs, *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana*, 182.

3. Structural Considerations

3.1 Person deixis is multiply manifested in the Romance languages. First, in the personal pronouns themselves, where we should note distinctions of case, gender and tonicity which sometimes yield several different forms corresponding to the same person (e.g. for the Castilian third person singular *él, ella, lo, la, le*); secondly, in the possessive adjective and pronoun, and thirdly, in the verb inflection. These have tended to be studied in isolation from one another, chief attention being paid to the subject personal pronouns. In particular, there is a preoccupation with the personal pronouns as a structural paradigm and a continuing use of traditional terminology that may impose preconceived ideas about the referential basis of that structure.³⁷

3.2 The importance of paradigmatic structural relations for the history of person deixis is not easy to judge. There is some evidence to suggest that certain changes in the pronoun system have taken place as a result of paradigmatic analogy (one thinks of the development of the form *mib* in Mozarabic which suggests a Latin ?MIBI analogical with TIBI, or the apparently parallel development of the Peninsular Castilian forms *nosotros* and *vosotros*); but there is also evidence to suggest that such analogy is often unimportant (the wholesale failure of Latin America to adopt *vosotros* whilst nevertheless adopting *nosotros*; the different distinctions made within masculine and feminine forms of the third person pronoun in Castilian *leísta* and *laísta* systems).

As regards the referential basis of the personal pronoun system, it has often been pointed out that the categories of singular and plural are inappropriate.³⁸ The so-called first person plural is not, and cannot be (since the reference of *yo* is necessarily unique and unpluralisable) in the same relation to the first person singular as either the second person plural to the second person singular or the third person plural to the third person singular. There are also a number of covert referential distinctions not provided for by the traditional scheme, some of which periodically become overt. For a time, in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Castilian, and probably before, there is a distinction between *nos/nosotros*, *vos/vosotros* based on **inclusiveness** and **contrast**, which is no longer possible.³⁹ The **reflexive** is distinguished in the third person but not in other persons (a distinction which, interestingly, tends to be obliterated by the use in modern Portuguese of *si* as a prepositional object second person formal

37 See Peter Mühlhäusler and Rom Harré, *Pronouns and People: The Linguistic Construction of Social and Personal Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

38 See, for example, John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1968), 277–78.

39 See Samuel Gili Gaya, 'Nos-otros, vos-otros', *Revista de Filología Española*, XXX (1946), 108–17.

pronoun: *Isto é para si* 'this is for you').⁴⁰ **Personal reference** within the third person is encoded in Castilian *leísta* systems where there is a distinction between *le vi* 'I saw him/you' and *lo vi* 'I saw it'. **Case** is abandoned in favour of **gender** in *laísta* systems where we have both *la dio la carta* 'he gave her the letter' and *la vio en la calle* 'he saw her in the street'. It is also possible for **tonicity** distinctions to be introduced; thus, in Ligurian, there is a distinction in the subject third-as-second person between *vusciá* (tonic) and *sciá* (atonic): *Vusciá come sciá se ciama?*⁴¹

But the personal pronoun system, if such it is, is inherently unstable in two important ways. First, and most importantly, perhaps, there is no consistent transparent morphological reflex of any one of the potentially encodable semantic distinctions. There is no characteristic first- or second-person morpheme present, respectively, in all first- and second-person forms; plurality is not marked consistently among the persons; the reflexive is sometimes distinguished and sometimes not, and so on. Secondly, there are many more referential distinctions theoretically available than can be encoded by the system, and so there is a high degree of multivalency in its constituent morphological forms. Any change of priority in the distinctions made may necessitate a significant change to the architecture of the system, and, conversely, any change in the form of the system may either hide or make available a different set of referential distinctions. This is an important point, and I will give preliminary illustrations of both these processes.

Let us suppose that an increased priority given to the distinction of formality within the second person leads to the use of a plural pronoun with singular, polite, reference; this means that (as, for example, in the case of Modern French *vous*) there is a potential ambiguity, and certainly a multivalency, in the reference of the former second person plural form and, until such time as a parallel distinction is introduced in the plural, a lack of symmetry between singular and plural (as is still the case in French and in Spanish America). The result of such reorganization is in fact rarely a symmetrical pronominal system, and in this respect the systems of Brazilian Portuguese and Peninsular Castilian are actually unusual.

An example of the converse process is the grammaticalization, in sixteenth–seventeenth-century Castilian, of *nos/vos* + the originally adjectival *-otros/as* ending, as a result of which **gender** distinctions became possible in the first and second person plural subject and prepositional object pronoun.

40 Allowed, I suggest, because the reference of *si* is pragmatically obvious, third-person reflexive reference being impossible. See in this connection Christopher J. Pountain, 'Pragmatic Factors in the Evolution of the Romance Reflexive (With Special Reference to Spanish)', *Hispanic Research Journal*, I (2000), 5–25.

41 Rohlfs, *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana*, 182.

3.3 The personal pronouns, as I have said, do not exist in a paradigmatic void but are part of a series of mechanisms representing person deixis. One of the consequences of the increase in frequency of *tú* and *vosotros/as* in Peninsular Castilian (see 2.1.4 above) has been that the frequency of the verb-forms and possessives corresponding to *vosotros/as* has also increased: this has posed something of a problem for some speakers with the use of the morphologically and phonetically rather odd second person plural imperative (e.g. *tomad*), which is very often replaced by the infinitive.

There is a great deal of evidence of concord tension between the various points at which person deixis is indicated. Nebrija, Jiménez Patón and Correas all observed the lack of grammatical agreement that the use of the third person feminine gender form *vuestra merced*, construed as a second person masculine or feminine form, occasioned; Correas also highlights the use of *su merced* by some speakers as a second person (because of the increasing association of *su* with second-person reference),⁴² and it is correspondingly interesting to see the use of *Vuestra Majestad* today with singular reference (as *Vossa* is similarly involved in semi-grammaticalized Portuguese honorifics).

At the same time, change has sometimes taken place according to syntagmatic analogy.⁴³ The development of a personal pronoun *mozotros* and possessive *muestro* in Judeo-Spanish shows analogy with the characteristic *-m-* of the first person plural verb inflection *-mos*) and some varieties of Catalan show similar developments.⁴⁴ Parts of Andalusia use *mos* or *mus* as an atonic first person plural pronoun, and Portuguese has pronominal *mos* for *nos* dialectally.⁴⁵

But there is also a great deal of evidence of concord tension between the various points at which person deixis is indicated. The Romance-speaking world (setting aside French, which has failed to develop grammaticalized third-as-second person forms at all) has abundant examples of mixed systems which would naturally result from such tensions.⁴⁶ Italian uses an

42 See also Kany, *American-Spanish Syntax*, 92–93, for such usages in modern Spanish America.

43 Manuel Alvar and Bernard Pottier, *Morfología histórica del español* (Madrid: Gredos, 1983), 123.

44 On Judeo-Spanish, see Rafael Lapesa, *Historia de la lengua española*, 9th ed., (Madrid: Gredos, 1981), 530. This, however, could be an aspect of a more generalized change in Judeo-Spanish of initial /n/ to /m/, since the phenomenon is also present in *muevo* < *nuevo* (see Lapesa, *ibid.*). On Catalan see A. M. Badia Margarit, *Gramática histórica catalana* (Barcelona: Noguer, 1951), 264.

45 See Manuel Alvar, A. Llorente and G. Salvador, *Atlas lingüístico y etnográfico de Andalucía* (Granada: CSIC/Univ. de Granada, 1973), maps 1820 and 1821; on Portuguese, see Edwin B. Williams, *From Latin to Portuguese* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), 149.

46 There is some evidence of such usage in sixteenth-century ceremonious style (Migliorini, 'Primordi del Lei', 194, n. 2).

originally feminine direct object clitic pronoun to correspond to the polite second person *Lei*, but otherwise agreements with *Lei* (e.g. adjectives) follow the gender of the referent; thus *Lei è contento* is perfectly acceptable. Romanian has polite second-person forms *dumneata* (exclusively singular) and *dumneavoastră* (singular or plural) which appear to be third-as-second in the manner of their formation but are used respectively with second person singular and plural verbs rather than with a third person singular verb. In Calabrese the third-as-second form *Vussignuría* takes a second person singular verb form: *Vussignuría duve vai?*⁴⁷ In Latin-American *voseo* systems we can observe the use of *vos* with original second person singular forms of the verb (e.g. *vos tienes*) in some areas, and universally with clitics and possessives which originally corresponded to *tú* (*vos te vas, ¿tienes tu libro?*). Latterly, hybridity may be created by hypercorrection: this is especially true of some modern Latin-American usages, cf. Spanish *¡Me responderán con vuestras vidas!* and Brazilian Portuguese *Tu andou de mão dada com ele.*⁴⁸ Kany records variation in the verb-form according to educational level, the use of *tú* verb-forms (e.g. *vos tomas*) moderating the 'lowly' *voseo*.⁴⁹ Such hybrid systems are attested early in Castilian: Berceo uses *tú* verb forms with the *vos* pronoun and *vuestro* possessive: *non vos puet vuestra parla valer un mal dinero [...] / Diste consejo malo, matest al mi romero* and Lucas Fernández has *¿quién sos tu?*⁵⁰ In late sixteenth-century documents from what is now Mexico there is extensive paradigmatic variation in second-person forms in both singular and plural, e.g., *Por amor de vuestros hijos, si Dios fuere servido que vengays a esta tierra, pregunta en San Juan de Luca quién es alcalde mayor.*⁵¹ This provides ample evidence that such paradigmatic relations were, so to speak, in the melting pot or that conditions were propitious for reorganization, with the possibility of a result which, as in the case of *voseo*, was paradigmatically irregular. Indeed, the varying development of the Castilian *vos* verbal inflections is likely itself to have been a powerful factor in creating instability within the system as a whole.⁵²

Another important syntagmatic factor to be borne in mind is that in a pro-drop language which has third-as-second person pronouns the third-person verb form used without an overt subject is potentially ambiguous

47 Rohlfs, *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana*, 181.

48 Kany, *American-Spanish Syntax*, 55–56; Jorge Amado, quoted in Paul Teyssier, *Manuel de langue portugaise: Portugal/Brésil* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1984), 189.

49 *Ibid.*, 61.

50 Rafael Lapesa, 'Las formas verbales de segunda persona y los orígenes del "voseo"', in *Actas del Tercer Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas*, ed. Carlos H. Magís (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1970), 519–31 (p. 522).

51 Concepción Company Company, *Documentos lingüísticos de la Nueva España. Altiplano Central* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1994), 13 and 38.

52 See Lapesa, 'Las formas verbales'; Líbano Zumalacárregui, 'Morfología diacrónica del español', 120.

between second- and third-person reference. The ambiguity extends further, and more significantly, if the language has more than one third-as-second person form, as is the case in Portuguese, and as was the case in sixteenth-century Castilian. There is a good deal of evidence that such a use of a zero subject is an intentional way of creating ambiguity.⁵³ In touchier times a zero subject was capable of causing offence, by default.⁵⁴ Third person object pronouns could also be ambiguous.⁵⁵

4. Against this background I will now examine the specific divergences between Castilian and Portuguese, and their varieties.

4.1 The first point of divergence between Castilian and Portuguese has nothing to do with the marking of politeness. Although the two languages coincide in inheriting *nos* and *vos* from Latin as first- and second-person plural forms respectively, Castilian develops the forms *nosotros* and *vosotros*, which at first coexist with *nos* and *vos*. The complex question of which came first, why, and with what precise meaning, need not particularly concern us here;⁵⁶ we are looking at a grammaticalization of the combinations *nos* and *vos* + the adjective *otros* of the kind that also occurred in Catalan and several other Romance languages and occurs embryonically in French and Italian. The usage is, curiously enough, apparently completely absent in Galician and Portuguese, however.

The development of *vosotros*, though formally parallel to that of *nosotros*, has an immense structural significance, since *vosotros*, unlike *vos*, is not multivalent—it can only refer to a plural concept. Furthermore, while there is variation in sixteenth-century Castilian in the form of the adjective according to number when *nos(otros)* is used to refer to a single person (e.g. the royal *we*), there is never such variation with *vosotros*.⁵⁷ Thus, while *nos(otros) somos bueno(s)* was acceptable, **vosotros sois bueno* was not. So while *nos* and *nosotros* could to a certain extent be in free variation, *vos* and *vosotros* were distinguished by the fundamental referential category of number. This in its turn meant that when Castilian *vos* participated in the various changes which took place in the sixteenth

53 Manuela Cook, 'Uma teoria de interpretação das formas de tratamento na língua portuguesa', *Hispania* (USA), LXXX (1997), 451–65 (p. 456), argues that the absence of a subject is an intentional neutralization of the Portuguese *você/o senhor* opposition.

54 Hodcroft, '¿A mí un él?', 12–13.

55 William E. Wilson, 'Él and ella as Pronouns of Address', *Hispania* (USA), XXIII (1940), 336–40 (p. 336), points out that Salazar interpreted *Dios le guarde* as referring residually to the 'impersonal', i.e., *él* third-as-second person, form.

56 See the detailed discussion in Érica García, Robert de Jonge, Dorine Nieuwenhuijsen and C. Lechner, '(V)os-(otros): ¿dos y el mismo cambio?', *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, XXXVIII (1990), 63–132, and in Gili Gaya, 'Nos-otros, vos-otros'.

57 Real Academia Española, *Gramática de la lengua española* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1931), 166.

and seventeenth centuries, *vosotros*, perhaps paradigmatically reinforced by the increasingly preferred form *nosotros*, was still distinctively available in some areas for exclusively plural second-person familiar reference and was able decisively to oust *vos* in this function. *Vos*, where it continued at all in Castilian, is uniquely singular. In Portuguese, on the other hand, *vós* continued to have plural reference. The medieval values of *tu* and *vós* were not in themselves altered as in Castilian, though a series of third-as-second forms encroached on their domains.

4.2 The failure of Spanish America to adopt *vosotros* is surprising, as already noted, though in *voseante* areas this may conceivably be explained by an eventual resistance to the coexistence of *vos* and *vosotros* (as to *nos* and *nosotros*). Such coexistence, though clearly present in older Castilian, is actually rare in the Romance languages.⁵⁸ Although Yates records *vós* as a variant of *vosaltres* in modern Catalan, it is an idiomatic usage (see 2.2.2 above) which is all but obsolete, an example of the same process of reduction.⁵⁹ We might therefore suppose that a general preference for *vos* in the sixteenth century would have militated against the adoption of *vosotros*.

4.3 The development of *él* in Castilian is also a differential development. Although it has been reversed, it is conceivable that it had the effect of inhibiting the use of honorifics other than *vuestra merced* because of the number of T/V distinctions already being made in sixteenth–seventeenth-century Castilian. This, however, must remain highly speculative, since there is, so far as I am aware, no basis for comparison with other similar Romance situations; I merely mention it as another specific way in which the evolution of Castilian and Portuguese appears to have been, for a time, different.

4.4 We have already seen how a wide range of third-as-second forms develop in Portuguese, and how this is a structural possibility on which Portuguese builds. In the same way, we might speculatively suggest that the richness of this possibility militates against the survival of the original pronominal forms. In Brazilian Portuguese, this process has in fact reached such a point that the original pronominal forms (*vós* and *tu*) are obsolete.

4.5 The modern restitution of *tú* in the Peninsula has, as suggested above, meant concomitantly the restitution of *vosotros* and all its associated verb forms. Thus *vosotros* has a new lease of life in Peninsular Castilian

58 Gili Gaya, 'Nos-otros, vos-otros', 114, mentions such a difference between derivatives of *VŌS* and *VŌS ALTERĪ* only in the Rhaeto-Romance of Oberhalbstein.

59 See Alan Yates, *Teach Yourself Catalan* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), 43.

which differentiates it not only from Portuguese but also from American Spanish varieties. While *tu* and *você* have similarly undergone extension in European Portuguese, the fact that *vós* had practically disappeared by this time does not allow its concomitant restitution in the same way.

5. In conclusion, there is evidence that historico-pragmatic, psychopragmatic and structural factors have all had a role to play in the evolution of second-person deixis in Romance. Some of the more particular historico-pragmatic hypotheses have been overstated: it is unlikely that the acquisition of singular polite reference by $\bar{V}\bar{O}\bar{S}$ was due to circumstances obtaining in the late Imperial period or that a tendency towards *hidalguización* entirely explains Latin-American *voseo*, though the use of third-as-second person forms may plausibly have to do with the rise of these forms in courtly usage. Changes which involve simple shifts in the boundaries of polite/informal choice are most likely to be due to historico-pragmatic factors. There seems to be a good deal of evidence for the involvement of psycho-pragmatic factors: politeness is usually expressed by an iconic 'distancing', relations of power by the use of different forms between speakers and relations of solidarity by the use of the same form. Structural dependencies between the personal pronouns and other manifestations of person deixis (verbal inflections and the possessives) are clearly also of some importance, although more paradigmatic asymmetry and more syntagmatic concord tension is tolerated in Romance than might be expected, which suggests that person deixis is encoded by an inherently unstable system which is prone to change.

The differential changes observed in the representation of second-person deixis in Castilian and Portuguese can be understood as differential applications of the same processes (exploitation of the third-as second category and T/V boundary-shifting, each of which had important structural consequences), though the development of the *-otros* forms in Castilian, possibly due to the encoding of one of the covert referential categories in the person deixis system, appears to have a particularly significant impact on subsequent differential developments. It is also possible that the use of *él* as a second person in Castilian inhibited the wider use of honorific forms seen in Portuguese.