# You and I = Neither You nor I: The Personal System of Tupinamba

## Aryon D. Rodrigues

In Tupinambá, a Tupí-Guaraní language spoken in the 16th and 17th centuries along the Brazilian coast, the personal pronouns, the person markers on the verb, and the referential prefixes manifest a situation that, as far as I know, has not been reported for any other language. It would be worthwhile to check other lowland South American languages, particularly - but not only - the Tupí ones, for discovering analogous cases.

The missionaries who attempted 400 years ago<sup>1</sup> to describe Tupinambá were puzzled by the fact that what they interpreted as the verbal form for the first person plural inclusive, marked by ya- (exs. 1-2), was used also for the third person (ex. 3):<sup>2</sup>

- (1) ya-só
  1.IN-go
  'We (incl.) went'
- (2) pirá ya-y-pisik fish 1.IN-REL-catch 'We (incl.) caught fish'
- (3) móya kuyã ya-y-su?ú snake woman 1.IN?-REL-bite 'A snake bit the woman'

On the other hand, the verbal form interpreted by the missionaries as third person, marked by o- (exs. 4-5), was also employed in constructions whose meaning included the speaker (ex. 6):

- (4) o-só 3-go 'He went'
- (5) kunumī pirá o-y-pisik boy fish 3-REL-catch 'The boy caught fish'
- (6) asé pirá o-y-pisik we.all fish 3?-REL-catch 'We all caught fish'

An examination of the data available in the two grammars and in the texts written by the missionaries leads us to the conclusion, presented summarily in a previous paper (Rodrigues 1978), that the system of personal reference of Tupinambá is characterized by a set of features that includes the contrast between the speaker and the hearer as one parameter, and the focality of the third person as another parameter.

Before proceeding to a closer examination of the facts of Tupinambá, we would like to sketch the general pragmatic and discourse setting for the linguistic distinction of person.

The pragmatic setting for the discourse consists of events that may involve one or more elements including or not, the speaker, the hearer or addressee, and a third class of elements - persons like the speaker and the hearer or other living beings or things. This third class of elements is traditionally termed the 3rd person, in the same way as the speaker is named the 1st person and the hearer, the 2nd person.

For the pragmatic setting he is going to refer to, the speaker takes as a subject of his discourse either the only element acting or being acted upon, or one or more of several elements acting or being acted upon. This is what we call focus: the speaker brings into focus one or more elements of the pragmatic setting (see also Fillmore 1977). By so doing he promotes such elements into persons of his discourse.

The process of focusing a person in discourse therefore implies the selection of that person from a given pragmatic setting; the setting may actually include one or more other elements, which are thereby left out of focus. The discourse does not represent every detail of the pragmatic setting, but sifts this setting according to the intention of the speaker.

Seven basic combinations of the personal elements focused upon in discourse may be distinguished. If we symbolize the speaker by the number 1, the hearer by the number 2, and the third person by the number 3, we can mark these combinations as follows:

1	Only the speaker is in focus.
13	Only the speaker and 3rd person are in focus.
2	Only the hearer is in focus.
23	Only the hearer and 3rd person are in focus.
12	Only the speaker and the hearer are in focus.
123	The speaker, the hearer, and 3rd person are in focus.
3	Only 3rd person is in focus.

It should be kept in mind that any element not included in a combination may be part of the pragmatic setting, but is left out of focus in the discourse. Two third persons may also be distinguished in this way. That is, since third person is a concept that may apply to one or more than one entity, only one entity (or possibly one group of entities) may be brought into focus; one or more others are left out of focus.

The contrast between speaker and hearer, basic to any discourse, may be highlighted or neutralized by means of focusing. The contrast is highlighted when either the speaker or the hearer is brought into focus, to the exclusion of the other; this is the case in combinations 1, 13, 2, and 23 above. The contrast is neutralized when both the speaker and the hearer are conjointly focused, as in combinations 12 and 123, or when both are left out of focus, as in combination 3.

Each of the seven basic combinations of personal elements in discourse presented above are, as we have seen, a reduction imposed on the pragmatic setting. Once the speaker has made the reduction, it must then be expressed by means of the grammatical devices of his language. These devices are language-specific and impose a second sifting, now on the elements selected by the speaker: they either give the selected elements explicit manifestation in the sentences or leave them simply implicit in the syntactic context.

As far as the discourse persons are concerned, languages show a moderately large variety of sets of coding devices, such as the personal pronouns and personal markers. Besides personal pronouns, Tupinambá also has personal markers prefixed on the verb and relational markers prefixed on both verbs and nouns. The relational markers will be touched upon in this paper only in so far as one of them may participate in shifting the focus from 3rd person agent to 3rd person patient, or vice-versa, in transitive verbs (see Seki, this volume, for discussion of relational markers in another Tupí-Guaraní language).

There are six personal pronouns in Tupinambá; these cover the following combinations of personal elements:

isé	1	oré	13	
ené	2	pe?ē	23	
yané	12	asé	123	
(AG 10v	/-11, 12; F 6-7)	_		

This set constitutes a well defined morphological paradigm, characterized among other things by being the only words in the language to have a morphological dative:

iséβe	'to me'	oréβe	'to me and him'	
enéβe	'to you'	pe?ēme	'to you and him'	
yanéβe	'to you and me'	aséβe	'to you, me and him'	

This set does not include pronouns for either a focal 3rd person or a non-focal one. A 3rd person is expressed either by a nominal phrase or by a demonstrative; alternatively it can be simply referred to by a relational prefix. (Other sets of personal pronouns show the same distinctions or are subsets of the set above.)

In independent clauses, both intransitive and transitive verbs have person markers for the subject. These person markers agree with the personal pronouns given above and distinguish, therefore, the same combinations of personal elements:

1	oro-	13	
2	pe-	23	
12	0-	123	
	2	2 pe-	2 pe- 23

Here enters the question that vexed the old missionary grammarians: ya- and o- are used also for agreement with NP subjects, as in exs. 3 and 5. On an intransitive verb ya- is consistently understood as 12, as in ex. 1; but on a transitive verb it may be understood as either 12 or 3, as in exs. 2 and 3, respectively. As to o-, on intransitive verbs it is consistently interpreted as 3, as in ex. 4; but on transitive verbs it may be interpreted as either 3 or 123, as in exs. 5 and 6, respectively.

Luis Figueira (1621), one of the two missionary grammarians of Tupinambá, appears to be satisfied in saying that the use of ya- on transitive verbs for the 3rd person is an idiomatic one, without any further explanation.<sup>3</sup> He presents the following examples for the two ways of expressing a third person subject in transitive main clauses:

- (7) Pedro móya o-Ø-yuká
  Peter snake 3-REL-kill
  'Peter killed a snake'. (F 99)
- (8) Pedro móya ya-Ø-yuká
  Peter snake 3-REL-kill
  'Peter killed a snake'. (F 99)
- (9) o-erasó temő sapi?á iβák-ipe tupána syé r-úβa mã 3-carry OPT soon sky-LOC God 1 REL-father oh 'Oh would soon God take my father to heaven!' (F99)
- (10) ya-rasó temő sapi?á iβák-ipe tupána syé r-úβa mã 3-carry OPT soon sky-LOC God 1 REL-father oh 'Oh would soon God take my father to heaven!' (F99)

Figueira remarks that 10 is better than 9. This remark makes sense if we consider that a sentence with the meaning of 9 and 10 is most likely to occur in a discourse whose focus is 'my father' rather than in one focusing on 'God'.

Joseph de Anchieta (1595), the other missionary grammarian, tries to show the nature of the difference between ya- and o- when both are used for the 3rd person on transitive verbs. Initially, Anchieta states that ya- is used when the subject is of lesser esteem than the object; he gives the following examples:<sup>4</sup>

- (11) syé r-úβa t-oβayára ya-Ø-7ú
   1 REL-father REL-adversary 3-REL-eat
   'The enemies ate my father'. (AG 36v)
- (12) móya Pedro ya-y-sultí snake Peter 3-REL-bite 'The snake bit Peter'. (AG 36v)
- (13) Pedro t-a?ira ya-y-nupā
  Peter REL-son 3-REL-beat
  'His (i.e. Pedro's) son beat Pedro'. (AG 36v)

However, in the next paragraph Anchieta goes on to remark that ya-may also be used when the subject is of greater esteem than the object, in accord with the subject matter, and gives two contrastive examples:<sup>5</sup>

- (14) moruβisáβa moná ya-y-namí-?ók-ukár
   judge thief 3-REL-ear-take.off-CAUS
   'The judge ordered the thief's ear to be taken off'. (AG 36v)
- (15) moruβisáβa moná o-y-namí-76k-ukár
   judge thief 3-REL-ear-take.off-CAUS
   'The judge ordered the thief's ear to be taken off'. (AG 36v)

Our interpretation of Anchieta's statements and examples is that the factor governing the choice of ya- or o- on transitive verbs is focus: if the subject, i.e. the agent, is in focus, it is marked on the verb by o-; if conversely the object, i.e., the patient, is in focus, the subject is marked by ya-. Thus, o- means '3rd person subject in focus' and ya- means '3rd person subject out of focus'. This interpretation is compatible with exs. 11-13: in 11 the discourse would most likely be focusing on the father, in 12 on 'Peter', and in 9 on 'Peter' again. As to exs. 14-15, it is equally likely that the speaker is commenting on the severeness of the judge, bringing this judge into focus (15), or on the unhappiness of the thief, putting the thief into focus and leaving the judge out of focus (14).

This interpretation is also compatible with the use of o- and ya- as markers of 3rd person agents in texts such as the poetic compositions by Father Anchieta:<sup>6</sup>

- (16) maratawã-me t-ekw-ára o-Ø-eroβyá syé Ø-ye?éŋa Maratawã-LOC REL-be-AG 3-REL-believe 1 REL-speech 'Those living in Maratawã believe my words'. (AT 123)
- (17) piná-eytk-ára... o-y-moya?ók o-emiára fishhook-throw-AG 3-REL-divide REL-catch 'The fishers divide their catch'. (AT 130)
- (18) i-st y-aso?í-katw-áβo o-yo-pyá ro?t suí i-poreawsú-mirî REL-mother REL-cover-good-GER 3-REL-defend cold from REL-poor-little 'His mother defended from the cold the poor little one by covering him well'. (AL 150)

In ex. 19, 'sinners' is the focus of the discourse, whereas 'our fire', the subject of the clause, is incidental. In 20 'his mother' is the focus and subject of the first three clauses; she is the object of the fourth clause, whose subject, pitánī, is out of focus. Examples 21-22 are said of Jesus, who is the focus of the discourse from which they are taken.

(19) opá emona t-ekw-ára yané r-atá ya-yá ro all thus REL-be-AG 12 REL-fire 3-take then 'Then our fire takes all that live this way' (said by a devil about the sinners). (AT 219)

- (20) i-st n i-memir-ast-y na s-uwt-y n i-mara?ár-i REL-mother not REL-son-pain-NEG not REL-blood-NEG not REL-sick-NEG n ya-y-mo-marã-potár-i pitáŋ-ī morawsuβára not 3-REL-CAUS-harm-wish-NEG child-DIM merciful 'His mother did not feel any childbirth pain, did not bleed, was not sick; the merciful baby did not wish to cause her any harm'. (AL 150)
- (21) ya-y-pó-pwár-atā i-moaŋaipápa, s-uwł momukápa;
  3-REL-hand-tie-hard REL-maltreating REL-blood pouring
  ya-y-nupā-nupā
  3-REL-beat-beat
  'They tied up his hands tightly, maltreating him, pouring his blood; they beat him repeatedly'. (AL 212)
- (22) ya-y-pó-asá-sá i-p¼ r-eséβé
   3-REL-hand-transfix-transfix REL-foot REL-together
   'They transfixed (one after the other) his hands and his feet'. (AL 213)

A brief comment on the ya-/o- distinction for the 3rd person is found in the Tupinambá dictionary of the Jesuits; in the entry for 'Eclypsar-se a lua' (eclipsing of the moon), four ways of saying it are given:

- (23) yası ma?é ya-Ø-?ú moon animal 3-REL-eat
- (24) ma?é yasł ya-Ø-?ú animal moon 3-REL-eat
- (25) yası ma?é o-Ø-?ú moon animal 3-REL-eat
- (26) ma?é yasł o-Ø-?ú animal moon 3-REL-eat

### The comment offered is as follows:

These are among the most obscure ways of speaking in this language, for they mean that the moon is eaten by something, but they are so ambiguous that they mean also that it is the moon which eats something... As for the eclipse of the moon they say that it is eaten by a beast of the sky. Some, like the Tupinambá, say it is a jaguar. The Tupí say it is a snake.

Two main questions are at issue here: (a) the possibility of both SOV and OSV word order, which entails for every construction the interpretation of either nominal phrase as the subject; and (b) the use of ya- and o- independently from word order as a subject marker for 3rd person. As the Tupinambá

meaning of 'eclipse of the moon' (as well as the Tupí one) rules out any interpretation of 'moon' as the agent of the verb -2ú 'to eat', we must admit that all four constructions mean basically 'the animal ate the moon'. The difference between 23 and 24, as well as between 25 and 26, may be due to topicalization or another stylistic device. The difference between the sentences with ya- (23 and 24) and those with o- (25 and 26) must correlate with the examples previously discussed; the subject marked by ya- is not focal whereas the subject marked by o- is focal. My assumption is that 23 and 24, the two sentences presented first by our source, should occur in a discourse in which the moon is the focus. This would most probably be the case when a moon eclipse is taking place. Accordingly, the subject/agent is out of focus and would be marked by ya-. Sentences 25 and 26 would occur, for instance, when one would tell about the existence of that animal present in the sky that can sometimes eat the moon. In instances like this, the animal, besides being the subject/agent of the sentence, would also be the focus of the discourse and would therefore be marked by o-.

The distinction between ya- and o- argued for in this paper is also compatible with other information added by Anchieta in his grammar, namely that ya- is also used for marking "impersonality" without an expressed subject, 8 as in 27:

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(27) ya-Ø-yuká
3-REL-kill
'Somebody kills' (Portuguese: 'Matam') (AG 36v)
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An indetermined subject as in 27 is of course non-focal. Analogous examples occur in the Catechism (Araujo 1952; examples identified by C and page number):

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(28) emonă t-ekw-ár-wéra ya-y-pe?á
thus REL-be-AG-EX 3-REL-separate
'Who has been thus (married against his/her will) will be separated'. (C 128)
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(29) o-mená teyě s-ér-ók-ipira s-ér-ók-ipir-e?ima r-esé
3-marry in.vain REL-name-take-PAT REL-name-take-PAT-NEG REL-to
i-mená riré ya-y-pe?á yě
REL-marry after 3-REL-separate simply
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'A baptized one marries in vain an unbaptized one: after their marriage they will simply be separated'. (C 130v)

The prefix o-, which was assumed by the old grammarians to be basically a 3rd person marker, means clearly 123 when it occurs in agreement with the pronoun asé. An example like 30 illustrates how Anchieta understood asé:

(30) asé yuká

123 kill

Anchieta's translation: 'Somebody kills one, i.e. me, us, etc.' (Portuguese original: 'A homem matão, i. a mĩ, a nos, &c.') (AG 12)

The following is an example from Figueira in which both values of o- are present, as 3 and as 123:

(31) tupă o-mano, meme-tipó asé o-mano-mo
God 3-die so.much-more 123 123-die-GER
'(If even) God died, so much more we shall die'. (F 163)

Exs. 32-37 are additional instances of o-'123' taken from the Catechism:

- (32) o-yeroki pe asé Jesus ?é-reme?

  123-bow INT 123 Jesus say-when

  'Do we bow when we say (the name of) Jesus?' (C 23)
- (33) o-yerok! 123-bow 'We bow'. (as an answer to ex. 32) (C 23)
- (34) aβá pe amẽ asé o-s-enōy o-ykóteβẽ-mo
   who INT always 123 123-REL-call 123-be afflicted-GER
   'Who do we always invoke when we are afflicted?' (C 23)
- (35) Jesus o-s-enőy.

  Jesus 123-REL-call

  'We invoke Jesus'. (as an answer to ex. 34) (C 23)
- (36) o-s-eply βé pe asé tiβl ?l-karaíβa pupé? 123-REL-sprinkle too INT 123 grave water-saint with 'Do we also sprinkle the graves with blessed water?' (C 24v)
- (37) o-s-eply βέ
  123-REL-sprinkle too
  'We sprinkle them too'. (C 24v)

A relational prefix s-, i-, y-, yo- or  $\emptyset^9$  in transitive verbs refers to a 3rd person object, irrespective of whether the object is in focus or out of focus. Its focal value in transitive constructions is automatically the inverse of whatever focal value the respective subject person marker has. If we employ  $^{+f}$  and  $^{-f}$  as a device for marking the sentence constituents that are in focus or out of focus, we can label exs. 14-15 as follows:

- (14a) moruβisáβa moná ya-y-namí-?ók-ukár judge-f thief+f 3-f-REL+f-ear-take.off-CAUS
- (15a) moruβisáβa moná o-y-namí-?ók-ukár judge<sup>+f</sup> thief 3<sup>+f</sup>-REL<sup>-f</sup>-ear-take.off-CAUS

BOTH: 'The judge ordered the thief's ear to be taken off'. (AG 36v)

In conclusion, in Tupinambá the verbal person marker o- means that 3rd person is in focus and that there is no contrast between the speaker and the hearer; that is to say, it means {(you, I, and he)<sup>+f</sup>} as well as {he<sup>+f</sup>}. Analogously, ya- means that 3rd person is out of focus and that there is no contrast between the speaker and the hearer; it means {(you and I)<sup>+f</sup> and he<sup>-f</sup>}. In both cases, then, a single form indicates both 'you and I (and he)' and 'neither you nor I (but he)'. This system of personal marking can be clearly presented in a matrix constructed with the parameters of (a) contrast between speaker and hearer and (b) focality of the 3rd person. This is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

		C	<i>p</i> 2	
		+		
		1	2	-
3f	•	isé	ené	yané
31	+	oré	pe?ē	asé

Figure 1. Matrix of personal pronouns

		C	ontrast 1	12
		-	<b>-</b>	
		1	2	•
3f	-	a-	ere-	ya-
31	+	oro-	pe-	0-

Figure 2. Matrix of personal prefixes

The neutralization of the contrast between speaker (1) and hearer (2), as it obtains with the personal prefixes on transitive verbs, may also be visualized by means of a tree-diagram. In Figure 3 the confluence of branches indicates one single output for two different semantic situations.

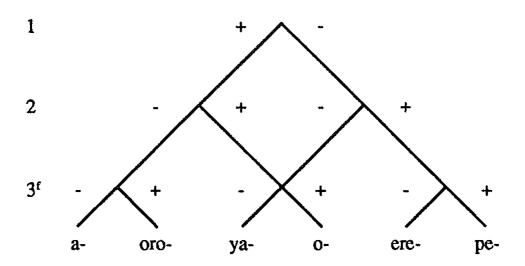


Figure 3. Tree-diagram of personal prefixes

#### NOTES

- The first grammar of Tupinambá was written by Father Joseph de Anchieta, S. J., and was published in Coimbra in 1595 under the title Arte de grammatica da lingua mais usada na Costa do Brasil. Several facsimile reproductions of this book are now available, the most recent of them made by the Federal University of Bahia in 1980 and reprinted in 1981. A second grammar was composed by Father Luis Figueira and published in Lisbon in 1621 under the title Arte da lingua brasilica and in 1687 as Arte de grammatica da lingua brasilica. A facsimile reproduction of Figueira's grammar was published in Leipzig in 1878, under the title Grammatica da lingua do Brasil. Examples cited from Anchieta's grammar will be identified by AG followed by the corresponding page number; those taken from Figueira's grammar by F followed by the page number of the (facsimile of the) 1687 edition.
- "Ainda que o comum das linguas seja concordar o nome singular com o verbo singular; & o de multidão com o verbo no plurar, com tudo nesta lingua todas as vezes que se ajuntão dous nomes terceiras pessoas, hum dos quaes aja de ser nominativo, & outro accusativo, o que he nominativo do singular pode ter o verbo na primeira pessoa inclusiva, do plurar." (Although the usual in the

languages is the agreement of the singular noun with the verb in the singular and of the noun of multitude with the verb in the plural, in this language however every time when two nouns of the third person meet, one of them being nominative and the other accusative, the one that is nominative of the singular may have the verb in the first person inclusive of the plural.) (Figueira 1697.98-99).

Abbreviations are as follows: AG agent, CAUS causative, DIM diminutive, EX former, GER gerund, IN inclusive, INT interrogative, LOC locative, NEG negative, OPT optative, PAT patient, REL relational.

- "Parecera barbaria, concordar terceira pessoa no singular, com a primeira do plurar. Mas não he de estranhar, pois tambem na lingua Grega elegantissima temos exemplo semelhante, porque comummente os nomes neutros no plurar, pedem o verbo no singular: ut Zóa tréki, Animalia currit; são modos de fallar de varias linguas." (It would seem a barbarism to make the third person singular agree with the first plural, but we should not find it so strange, since we have a similar example in the very elegant Greek language, for [in this] neuter nouns in the plural usually ask for a verb in the singular, e.g. Zóa tréki, 'the animals runs'; these are ways of speaking of different languages.) (Figueira 1687.99).
- <sup>4</sup> "Quando as cousas de menor valia, são nominativos usase da primeira plural, ya." (When things of lesser value are subjects the first plural ya- is used.) (Anchieta 1595.36v).
- "Ainda que tambem se pode usar deste, quando o nominativo he de maior estima, secundum subiectam materiam." (However this [i.e., ya-] may also be used when the nominative is of greater esteem, according to the subject matter.) (Anchieta 1595.36v).
- <sup>6</sup> Examples from Anchieta's poetic works in Tupinambá are taken from Anchieta 1977 (identified by AT and page number) and 1984 (identified by AL and page number).
- The Tupinambá dictionary was preserved in a few manuscript copies of the 17th century. There were two editions of it, both under the title Vocabulário na língua brasílica; the first (1938) was edited by Plinio Ayrosa and reproduces a manuscript of 1621; the other (1942-1943) was edited by Carlos Drumond and combines the same manuscript with another undated one. The quotation given here is from this latter edition (Anonymous 1942-1943), in which it occurs on page 108 of the first volume: "Eclypsar-se a lua. Jacîbaeyaû, vel, Baejacigyâû, ou Jacigbae, 1, Baejacîoû. Estes são dos mais escuros termos de falar que ha nesta lingoa, porq. querem dizer que a lua he comida dalgũa cousa, e são tam ambiguos q. iuntamente querem dizer que ella he a que come algũa cousa... O eclypse da Lua dizē elles q. a come algũa fera do Ceo. Outros como os Tupinambâs dizem q. he hum tigre. Os Tupîs dizem que he hũa serpente."

- "Tambem se usa desta primeira plural por terceira impersonaliter, ut yajucâ, matão, sem ter nominativo expresso." (This first plural is also used impersonally for the third, without an expressed nominative.) (Anchieta 1595.36v).
- The forms s-, i-, y-, yo- and  $\emptyset$  are allomorphs of one and the same prefix: s- occurs with stems of class II; i- occurs with stems of class I (these are lexically defined morphological classes); y- is a variant of i- occurring after vowels; yo- replaces i- between the prefixed person marker and a monosyllabic stem; and  $\emptyset$  replaces i- between the prefixed person markers and a very restricted set of verbal stems.

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