

**BRIEF REMARKS ON THE
EXPANSION OF THE PERSONAL
PRONOUN SYSTEM IN VERNACULAR
BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE VIEWED
FROM A FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE**



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Abstract: In this article we analyze how the personal pronouns in the Portuguese language system have evolved from a basic and prescriptive use recommended by the major grammar handbooks to a richer, more complex and fluent performance by its more than 250 million users, adapting itself to their differences and needs. We will focus mainly on the Brazilian Portuguese functional usage approach concerning how the non-traditional implementation of a differentiated personal pronoun system in Brazil abides by sociolinguistic laws and establishes a new form towards fulfilling new and meaningful demands arising in the Brazilian society.

Keywords: Personal pronoun system; expansion; Brazilian Portuguese

1. Introduction

There are a few major points of which our readers should be aware before proceeding with their reading of this article. The first one is that, despite comprising a relatively small number of forms, the personal pronoun system (PPS) in Portuguese, as compared to other word classes and subclasses, constitutes a subject matter of a highly intricate nature and, although approached in an array of studies from various perspectives, few if any have ever managed to discuss it thoroughly. We do not intend to carry out an in-depth survey here either, but a rather general outline on the theme, in which different and supplementary perspectives are presented, always attempting to make the material accessible to readers with a basic knowledge of linguistics as well as to those with low or no command of Portuguese. While we will try to underline what we judge to be of importance in previous works, we will deal with topics that we consider insufficiently explored until now. This means that we are not committed to exposing every issue in detail, which would be something impossible to carry out. Secondly, as an overview, we were not concerned with a selection within real corpora in order to show instances of the phenomena described. That would certainly be no more than groping for examples to show what is more than evidenced in specialized literature. As we intend to depart from a traditional view of the subject largely diffused in prescriptive grammar handbooks (PGH) and contrast it to a more realistic and prevalent use of the PPS in interaction by means of a functional approach, we would have to handle a massive amount of data, which would have been an unproductive strategy at this point, among other reasons, due to the expected and fair limitations of space and time in this type of

publication. As an outcome of this methodology, we are then coerced to provide our readers with some previous conceptions of the varieties within the Portuguese language in effect in Brazil, which will be done in the ensuing paragraphs.

All living languages change throughout their existence as systems. And languages change because people change. It is no different with Brazilian Portuguese (BP). The label BP, however, could lead us to the false belief that the Portuguese in effect in Brazil is homogeneous, i.e., that every Brazilian speaks exactly the same way, from North to South, from West to East, which is something that could not be farther from our linguistic reality. Unquestionably there are varieties within BP as well and, as one should be aware already, one variety is no better than another. On the other hand, there are varieties that are “arbitrarily” selected – out of a set – in order to perform as standard ones. This does not absolutely mean that they stand as the best options from a purely linguistic point of view. Because standard varieties generally gain full-fledged descriptions of their constituting parts (phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and so on), they usually become part of the official curricula in schools and, thence, are commonly thought of as the “correct” ones, while others – the so-called non-standard varieties – are looked upon as *more or less* adequate as compared to them. Obviously this is a simplification of a much more complex phenomenon. In this article we will refer to three basic varieties within BP, as described below.

2. Varieties of Portuguese in use in Brazil

The first one is what we call “Prescribed Normative Variety” (shortened to **PNV**), which is the idealization of a language as it has been portrayed at a certain time of the relatively recent past of BP and “frozen” into rules recorded in PGH whose methodology is inspired in a very traditional approach to grammar. The first Brazilian grammar handbook on Portuguese language – the *Compêndio da Grammatica Portuguesa* –, written by Antônio da Costa Duarte, came out in 1829 and has had as many as six editions. The grammatization of Portuguese language, however, started with the *Grammatica da Lingoagem Portuguesa*, by Fernão de Oliveira, published in 1536, in Portugal. Since then, the PNV has been conservatively described and rarely used in full, even in written texts. Whether written or oral, it is expected that texts needing a certain degree of formality and alleged “correctness” will resort to PNV, but only to the measure of what the genre demands and of how much the user has a command of such a variety. Since nothing could be more artificial in conversation than the laws coined through a language practiced almost exclusively in canonic literature over the last centuries, PNV will seldom appear in all of its vigor in colloquial or informal conversation. As a variety acquired through schooling, PNV does not represent the average practice in everyday interaction, but its importance is undeniable as a pattern

to which users can turn and as a factor of constraint and equiponderance that helps to bring balance to the linguistic variation and change equation.

But one can promptly and correctly realize that PNV is not enough or appropriate for the continual necessities arising in routine communication. Furthermore, after the innumerable changes witnessed over the centuries of existence of a plenipotentiary language, users must have a *de facto* and truly functional instrument through which to interact more efficiently. At this point we come across the “Prestige Urban Varieties” (shortened to **PUV**), cultivated among educated people in the main urban areas of the country. This is the language employed especially in the media, but, in spite of its stability and consistency, it is also susceptible to a certain degree of diatopic, diastratic, and diaphasic variation. The uses of PUV can be distributed along a continuum that ranges from less monitored (PUV-) to more monitored (PUV+), depending on several circumstances, such as the genre and the users’ schooling level, gender, and age. With television, radio, press, and Internet reaching virtually everywhere nowadays, these varieties are also replicated in remote areas, but the actual utilization of PUV is contingent on the speaker’s interest, competence/performance, and literacy levels as well as opportunities to put them into practice.

And thirdly we have the “Stigmatized Linguistic Varieties” (henceforth **SLV**), which are associated with the diatopic, diastratic, and diaphasic variations not commonly tolerated by the general average speaker on a large scale. This has to do with a transfer to language of a dichotomized social judgment model of what is right or wrong. Unfortunately this is not done through a linguistic perspective, but from a Manichean point of view that is purely subjective and that does not consider the natural evolution of language. For instance, while a PUV interlocutor would unsuspectingly say *Entre eu e ela não há desentendimentos*¹ (There are no disagreements between me and her), he would not be very willing to approve of (and would even be willing to avoid using) sentences such as *Isso é para mim fazer*² (That is for me to do). In both cases there are obvious transgressions of prescribed normative rules, but the difference is that the inadequacy in the former has been so commonly and repeatedly conveyed by the mass media that it became largely accepted in most circumstances of interaction, while the alleged “error” in the latter is abhorred by many, because it has never obtained social certification or visibility as a legitimized construction. Such a narrow-minded perspective reveals not only a poor understanding of linguistic phenomena, to say the least, but also contributes a great deal to cultivate social prejudice and discrimination, which strikes speech communities in very destructive

¹ The prescribed construction is *Entre mim e ela não há desentendimentos*, since the rules in PGH pose that only stressed oblique forms, not subject forms, can follow prepositions.

² Here the “prescribed” construction is *Isso é para eu fazer*, given that *fazer* is a verb, and, as such, must be preceded by a subject pronoun.

ways. Hence such “deviations” from PUV (and PNV) are regarded as unpardonable violations of language usage, thus giving rise to stigma, generally based on social stratification, educational level and ethnicity.

3. The personal pronoun system use

PGH describe six different prototypical forms of subject pronouns: *eu* (I), *tu* (you), *ele* (he), which are forms in the singular; and *nós* (we), *vós* (you), and *eles* (they), which are plural forms. Note that both *ele* (3rd person singular) and *eles* (3rd person plural) have corresponding forms in the feminine – *ela* (she) and *elas* (they feminine), respectively. Strictly speaking, only *eu* and *tu* (and their plural forms) are considered as *de facto* persons of discourse, since *ele* (and its feminine and plural forms) plays much more the part of a subject matter in conversation and can never engage in interaction without becoming an *eu* (I) or a *tu* (you). When it comes to the 3rd person plural, the masculine *eles*, being the unmarked form, encompasses the feminine (*elas*), which is the marked form. For instance, in *Eles são nossos alunos* (They are our students), *Eles* stands either for “the males” or “the males and females”. As can be noted, markedness refers to forms that are more complex from a cognitive point of view, whilst unmarked forms, such as the masculine, are more generally employed as a possibility of neutral and comprehensive usage. Therefore, this is a linguistic issue that cannot be simplistically reduced to political correctness, for example, inasmuch as linguistic features are forged throughout centuries of societal interaction and cannot be easily imposed by force of law or suggestion.³

In *História e Estrutura da Língua Portuguesa*, Camara Jr. (1985) remarks that it is common sense to think that the PPS in Portuguese maintained the case categories from Latin, what is, in his opinion, an uncritical thought and one that fails to distinguish the systems in utterly different ways. In fact the Portuguese system is far from what the Latin system used to be, in which the cases were contingent on the function that the noun or pronoun performed in the sentence. The case is quite diverse in Portuguese, where the forms are distributed accordingly to whether a) they are isolated or function as a subject; b) they are used as clitics, i.e., unstressed pronouns that are attached to a verb as another syllable; or c) they are employed as nuclei of constructions,

³ As an example here we cite President Dilma Rousseff's claim to be addressed as *presidenta*, in an unprecedented feminine form of the term in the vernacular, which is far from being an alternative capable to stand up against the ancient present participle *presidente* originated straight from Latin (*praesidens, -entis*), a word whose gender has always been common for both masculine and feminine. The intention is obviously assertive and inclusive from a politically correct point of view and attempts to emphasize the feminine inflection *-a* as a way of support to all other women in the country, also congregating, through it, minorities who will be able to gaze at their reflection in the mirror of a female Republican president who vindicated a special form of a noun in order to distinguish not only herself but other groups from a hegemonic male crowd.

preceded by a preposition and, as such, having their own stress, but still subordinated to the verb. With his observation, Camara Jr. reasserts the traditional split of personal pronouns into *retos* (nominative, i.e., subject pronouns) and *obliquos* (oblique, i.e., object pronouns), the latter distributed again in two groups – the *átonos* (unstressed object pronouns) and the *tônicos* (stressed pronouns in prepositional phrases). Finally the *obliquos átonos* (unstressed object pronouns) are divided into direct object (DO/accusative) and indirect object (IO/dative) pronouns. This is how the PGH describe the PPS in Portuguese and, although apparently complicated, following the rules dictated by the PGH would be rather simpler than using the system the way it is currently employed in actual interaction in BP.

A summary of what has been previously explained can be seen in Table 1 below, adapted from Bechara (1999) and Azeredo (2008):

Table 1: PPS according to PGH⁴

STRESSED		UNSTRESSED (CLITICS) ⁵		STRESSED ⁶
NOMINATIVE		OBLIQUE		
SUBJECT		DIR. OBJECT (DO)	IND. OBJECT (IO)	PREP. PHRASE (PP)
P1	eu	me		mim/comigo
P2	tu	te		tí/contigo
N3	ele/ela	o/a, (se)	lhe, (se)	ele/ela/si/consigo
P4	nós	nos		nós/conosco
P5	vós	vos		vós/convosco
N6	eles/elas	os/as, (se)	lhes, (se)	eles/elas/si/consigo

Notice that only N3 and N6 do not share the same forms for DO and IO (in the column of unstressed oblique forms): each function is represented by a distinct clitic (although *se* is a common reflexive form). From a formal perspective, the only difference between *o/a* and *os/as* (DO) and between *lhe* and *lhes* (IO) is the final morpheme *-s*, which is a plural marker. In the “stressed” column, one can see the special forms *comigo* (with me), *contigo* (with you, singular), *consigo* (with him/her), *conosco* (with us) and *convosco* (with you, plural), which already bring the preposition *com* (with) incorporated into the forms themselves. Generally these distinct forms do not function as

⁴ From now onwards, the persons of discourse will be called P1 (*eu*), P2 (*tu*), N3 (*ele/ela*), P4 (*nós*), P5 (*vós*) and N6 (*eles/elas*), as shown in Table 1, where P stands for “person” and N stands for “non-person”, as will be explained later.

⁵ Henceforth, *unstressed oblique forms* will be referred to as *clitics*.

⁶ Henceforth, *stressed oblique forms* will be referred to as *PP pronouns*.

complements (objects) to verbs, but indicate a circumstance of company (see 1a below). The other prepositions (such as *para*, *por*, *de* and so on) are set off from the forms that the stressed pronoun can take (refer to 1b below).

(1) Use of prepositional phrase stressed pronouns

- a. *Maria foi ao supermercado **comigo** / **contigo***
 Maria went to supermarket with me / with you
 the (sing.)

- b. *Maria comprou um presente **para mim** / **ti** / **si***
 Maria bought a present for me / you / herself

Most of the times it is semantically, but not pragmatically, indifferent to construct the sentences using either clitics or stressed forms. Only the latter, however, would be able to be placed at virtually anywhere in the sentence (focus), since the clitics, mandatorily clung to the verb, offers quite little mobility as compared to PP.

(2) Use of clitics and PP pronouns

- a. *Eu **lhes** trouxe um presente de Londres*
 I them brought a present from London
 ‘I brought them a present from London’

- b. *Eu trouxe **-lhes** um presente de Londres*
 I brought them a present from London

- c. *Eu trouxe **para elas** um presente de Londres*
 I brought to them a present from London

- d. *Eu trouxe um presente **para elas** de Londres*
 I brought a present to them from London

- e. *Eu trouxe um presente de Londres **para elas***
 I brought a present from London to them

- f. ***Para elas** [não para vocês] eu trouxe um presente de Londres*
 To them [not to you: I brought a present from
 PL] London

In 2a and 2b the pronoun *lhes* is used in a proclitic (before the verb) and in an enclitic (after the verb) position, respectively. In either example, despite differences in distributing stresses in the resulting phonological word (*lhes trouxe* and *trouxe-lhes*) (Camara Jr., 1994), the “weak” form must be secured to

the predicator *trouxe*, compulsorily revolving around it.⁷ Examples 2c through 2e, on the other hand, show instances of the PP *para elas* assuming different locations within the sentence, still linked to the verb, but not necessarily neighboring it. Consequently, this mobility feature allows the interlocutor to advance or to postpone the insertion of new information at his/her discretion, therefore making his/her addressee⁸ wait less or longer to know who the target of the process is.

In 2f the speaker highlights *para elas*, moving it to the front of the sentence and turning it into a focal structure. This is an obvious device through which to elaborate the form (in comparison to the “simpler” clitic *lhes*) correspondingly to the cognitive effort made to carry out all of the operations necessary to produce the utterance with every special nuance that the utterer wishes to deliver. That appears to be a principle of iconic coding that Givón (1995a) calls “the quantity principle”. Another way to place emphasis to the PP is to cleave the sentence by means of the structure *é que* (literally, “is that”), which can be positioned after *para elas*. The 3rd-person verb form *é* in *é que* is conjugated in the present tense, but it can also be inflected in the past, depending on the degree of contrast between the tenses that the user wishes to yield through his/her utterance. Compare 3a and 3b below:

(3) The use of cleaving structures with PP pronouns

a. *Para elas* ***é que*** *eu trouxe* *um presente* *de Londres*
 To them is that I brought a present from London
 ‘It is to them that I brought a present from London’

b. *Para elas* ***foi*** *eu* *um* *de Londres*
 que *trouxe* *presente*
 To them was that I brought a present from London
 ‘It was to them that I brought a present from London’

Additionally, the PP pronoun, together with its preposition, is endowed with mobility enough to split the cleaving structures *é que* and *foi que* themselves (refer to 4a and 4b below). Such a “maneuver” constitutes an even more effective means to draw the audience’s attention to the PP. As an embedded structure, at this point, the phrase can no longer be replaced by the corresponding clitic *lhes*, as it would in the less marked sentences given in 2c, 2d, and 2e.

⁷ Cf. Camara Jr. (1994: 34-37) defines “phonological word” as a prosodic unity containing one primary stress. In footnote 2 on page 35, he explains that the primary stress includes the ictus (marking expiratory force/intensity) and the tone (voice loudness and pitch). In proclitic position, the pronoun would have force 1 and, in enclitic position, force 0, while the stressed syllable “trou-” would have force 3.

⁸ In this article, “interlocutor” designates the speaker or the utterer, while “addressee” refers to the listener, hearer or audience and reader.

(4) The use of cleaving structures with pronouns in PP

a. *É para elas que eu trouxe um presente de Londres*
 Is to them:FEM that I brought a present from London
 ‘It is to them that I brought a present from London’

b. *Foi para elas que eu trouxe um presente de Londres*
 Was to them:FEM that I brought a present from London
 ‘It was to them that I brought a present from London’

If Haiman (1980:528) is right when he poses that “markedness is iconically motivated: categories that are marked morphologically and syntactically are also marked semantically”, then we can assume here a continuum that increases degrees of markedness from sentence type 2a-2b, through 2c-2f and 3a-3b, to 4a-4b (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Levels of markedness in structures using oblique pronouns



2a-2b 2c-2f 3a-3b 4a-4b

However, if we are to consider Givón’s (1995:28) three main criteria used to distinguish marked from unmarked category —

Criterion 1: Structural complexity: marked structure tends to be more complex (or larger) than the corresponding unmarked one;

Criterion 2: Frequency distribution: marked category tends to be less frequent, thus cognitively more salient, than corresponding unmarked category;

Criterion 3: Cognitive complexity: marked category tends to be cognitively more complex – in terms of mental effort, attention demands or processing time – than unmarked one.

— we have to admit that Criterion 2 would hardly ever be accommodated here, since the use of stressed oblique pronouns⁹ by far surpasses the employment of clitics in daily oral interaction, at least in BP, although the conventional system is still prototypically in vogue in European Portuguese (EP) nowadays. Therefore, once again, we feel compelled to agree with Givón (1995:27) when he affirms: “Markedness is a context-dependent phenomenon par excellence. The very same structure may be marked in one context and unmarked in another”. In BP, while Criterion 2 may be still applicable to P1’s and P2’s clitic forms (*me* and *te*)¹⁰ and, perhaps, to P4’s *nos*

⁹ As we will explain below, there is a complementary column of non-prepositional phrase pronouns (NPP pronouns).

¹⁰ Although that is still pretty much subjected to diatopic, diastratic, diaphasic and diamesic variations in Brazil. *Me* is certainly used in large scale, as is *te*, but the latter is employed together

form in specific urban educated contexts (PUV), we cannot claim the same for *lhe*, *lhes*,¹¹ *o*, *a*, *os*, *as*, and mainly *vos*, the latter one being confined to highly monitored or obsolete use of the language and/or quite specific genres (such as the Bible, Mass, and so on).

BP has had its own specificities along its history, and, therefore, there has been a large expansion of the PPS in the vernacular that complicates a great deal the scenario dictated by the simplistic norms recommended in PGH. Although there is a non-linguistic conservative tendency to consider such a growth as a divergence from the norm, these variations are here to stay¹² and are in effect in everyday language life of both popular and elite strata of urban and rural societies.

4. The expansion of the PPS in BP under a functional perspective

Now we have finally reached the point at which we will need to push a little further and attempt to portray how the PPS is really utilized in everyday interactive language. Such a “portrayal” should highlight features concealed by the simplification of normative prescription. But it seems obvious that we can do this only to a very limited measure, since the heterogeneity issuing from the varieties (PUV and SLV) is nearly impossible to account for in detail.¹³ Therefore, we start by depicting how the PPS evolved in BP by means of a great expansion of P2, N3, P4, and N6, as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Personal pronouns and indexes in effective use in Brazil

STRESSED		UNSTRESSED		STRESSED	
		OBLIQUE			
NOMINATIVE		ACCUSATIVE	DATIVE		
	SUBJECT	DO	IO	NPP	PP

with *voçê*. This causes a “conflict”, since *te* is a clitic for *tu*, not for *voçê*, which is conjugated as N3. Therefore, as one can easily note, the system has lost its normative austerity in BP. Example: “Eu **te** vi no shopping. **Você** parecia triste” (I saw you at the mall. You looked sad), instead of *Eu **te** vi no shopping. **Tu** parecia triste*.

¹¹ *Lhe* (and maybe to a lesser extent its plural *lhes*) is still alive in everyday spoken language in some parts of Northeastern Brazil and other areas, but its actual use most of the times deviates from the “proper” convention prescribed by the rules in PGH, since speakers employ it accusatively too (as a DO pronoun, although *lhe* is considered an exclusively dative form, i.e., generally used as an IO).

¹² Some can even be considered as “definitive” changes.

¹³ We will refrain from exposing too radical cases of use in detail (both normative/prescriptive and not overtly accepted appropriations) and will concentrate mostly on an average urban accomplishment of language agreed upon as acceptable by a majority of interlocutors.

P1	eu	me		eu (SLV)	mim/comigo	
P2	tu	te		tu (SLV)	ti/contigo	
	você	te/o/a	se	lhe se	você	você
	o senhor	te/o			o senhor	o senhor
	a senhora	te/a			a senhora	a senhora
N3	ele	o			ele	ele/si/consigo
	ela	a	ela	ela/si/consigo		
P4	nós	nos		nós (SLV)	nós/conosco	
	a gente			a gente	a gente	
P5	vocês	os/as	se	lhes se	vocês	vocês
	os senhores	os			os senhores	os senhores
	as senhoras	as			as senhoras	as senhoras
N6	eles	os			eles	eles/elas/si/consigo
	elas	as	elas			

It is necessary to underline that an entirely new column of NPP pronouns (generally functioning as DO) appears under the oblique stressed pronouns tab, which is basically constituted by the same pronouns usually employed with a nominative function. It means that, except for *eu/nós* and *tu*,¹⁴ all of the other nominative forms can nowadays be used as object pronouns in PUV, although that may depend on several conditions, such as the genres being produced and the user’s degree of command of the language.

(5) Use of NPP

- a. *Eu vi você / o senhor / a senhora no cinema*
I saw you:SING at the movies
- b. *Eu vi vocês / os senhores / as senhoras no cinema*
I saw you:PL at the movies
- c. *Eu vi ele no cinema*
I saw him at the movies
- d. *Eu vi eles no cinema*
I saw them:MASC at the movies

¹⁴ Actually even *eu/nós* and *tu* can be used as objects in SLV and PUV-: “José trouxe *eu* no carro dele” (José brought me in his car); “Maria viu *tu* no shopping” (Maria saw you at the mall); “A professora escolheu *nós* como representantes” (The teacher chose us as spokespersons).

- e. *Eu vi ela no cinema*
I saw her at the movies
- f. *Eu vi elas no cinema*
I saw them:FEM at the movies
- g. *Ela viu a gente no cinema*
She saw us at the movies
- h. *Eu quero ela na banca*
I want her on the committee
- i. *Ele fez ela chorar*
He made her cry

The NPP pronoun is commonly used right after most of the verbs with nearly no rejection from the majority of interlocutors, as in 5a-g, perhaps with the exception for circumstantial dissonances arising from the combination of the verb *ver* (to see), conjugated in P1 preterit, and *ela(s)* (5e and 5f), which forms the word *viela(s)* (dead-end or narrow street[s]), interpreted by some meticulous hearers as an unpleasant noise in communication.¹⁵ The same speakers who avoid constructions such as 5e and 5f, though, would not hesitate to utter sentences as 5h and 5i, which strengthens the assumption that, while they have concerns toward the form, they are not entirely conscious of the functioning of the system as a whole. In short, unwilling to use a specific form, speakers are pushed back to the prescriptive clitic pronoun *a(s)* when they utter *eu a(s) vi*, in this case an alternative to *Eu vi ela(s)*, not motivated by a conscious choice of the most appropriate decision (learned *a[s]* x internalized *ela[s]*),¹⁶ but simply to prevent cacophony. As a consequence, while *Eu a(s) vi no cinema* can occur in BP with a certain frequency among average educated speakers (PUV), *Eu a quero na banca* – a similar alternative construction to 5h – would sound a little flamboyant or at least too elaborate in spoken language and in most colloquial/informal occasions.

Sentence 5i is a special instance of use and requires more careful examination. As the pronoun *ela* is placed between two verbs, it is believed to play two roles at the same time, working as the DO of *fez* and the subject

¹⁵ This also happens to some extent with other verbs ending in *-ver*, whether deriving from *ver* or not: *rever*, *promover* etc., although the resulting dissonance does not sound as harsh as with the one-syllable verb *vi* + *ela*.

¹⁶ Duarte (2013:17-18) provides a better explanation for this topic and explains how even linguists can find it difficult to distinguish formal/informal use of language from internalized/learned grammar.

of *chorar*. If one were to follow the same interpretation made by traditional analysts, for whom the construction would have to be reworded to *Ele a fez chorar*, the form *a* would match the function of a DO of *fez*, considering that, as a clitic pronoun, it would not be conceived as a subject for *chorar*, at least not without a serious contradiction between forms and analyses.¹⁷ Such is the impasse reached by the traditional approach, because the analysis they provide gives rise to difficulties in defining the form *a* as a subject in the non-finite clause.

We will move the DO pronoun *a* to the position right after the finite verb (enclitic use, which implicates morphophonemic adjustments) to make it easier to understand how the clauses are bound, according to traditional analyses. In so doing, one can have a better view of the allegedly overlapping constructions in *Ele fê-la chorar*, where *Ele fê-la* is the matrix clause, whereas *[l]a chorar* is the embedded clause. From a purely linguistic perspective, changing the rule is the most reasonable solution to resolve this discrepancy between a prescriptive rule and a concrete manifestation of a phenomenon. It would be easier to concede that oblique pronouns can be used as subject pronouns on occasions. By the same token, that reasoning leaves “the door open” (or, at least, “ajar”) for other unwelcome phenomena to become perfectly natural and explicable, such as, for instance, the highly condemnable use of the PP form *mim* as a subject in clauses containing infinitive verbs (refer to note 18).

But 5i is a good example only to a very limited extent, because, although each verb has a different subject, they are both conjugated as N3 and, as we know, N3 presents morpheme \emptyset to express number and person when it is required to inflect verbs in the personal infinitive form.¹⁸ A clearer description would be attained from the group of sentences below:

(6) Use of NPP

¹⁷ Some rules in traditional approaches seem not to be susceptible to changes along the decades. Two basic golden principles dictated and revered by some analysts are the following: 1) oblique pronouns cannot be placed in the front of a sentence; so, a construction such as *Me dá um cigarro* (Give me a cigarette) would be labeled as “wrong” (the would-be correct option is *Dá-me um cigarro*); and 2) oblique pronouns cannot be used as subject pronouns (in a way that a construction such as *Ele trouxe um livro para mim ler* (He brought a book for me to read) would be unacceptable (the “proper” construction would be *Ele trouxe um livro para eu ler*). These rules, nonetheless, are hardly ever followed in less monitored oral language in general and completely ignored by a vast majority of speakers (SLV and even PUV-).

¹⁸ In Portuguese, there is a personal infinitive that can be inflected, i.e., the verb takes inflectional morphemes cumulatively representing number and person for P1 (\emptyset), P2 (-es), N3 (\emptyset), P4 (-mos), P5 (-des), and N6 (-em), just to mention the simplified PPS. Therefore, in a sentence such as *É perigoso as crianças atravessarem a rua sozinhas* (It is dangerous for the children to cross the street by themselves), *atransessarem* is a personal infinitive whose basic form *atransessar* is conjugated as N6 (*elas, as crianças* [they, the children]).

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| a. | <i>Ela os</i> | <i>fez</i> | <i>chorar</i> |
| | She them:MASC | make:PRET N3 | cry |
| b. | <i>Ela fez</i> | <i>eles</i> | <i>chorarem</i> |
| | She made | them masc. | cry (infl. N6) |
| c. | <i>Ela fez</i> | <i>Marco e João</i> | <i>chorarem</i> |
| | She made | Marco and João | cry (infl. N6) |

Prescriptive option 6a makes it very noticeable that, notwithstanding the subject of *chorar* being in the plural (N6) (Who cries? *They* do), the infinitive verb remains uninflected, differently from what comes about in 6b and 6c. If the form *os* were simply a DO as described in most of the PGH, then there would be no reason why the infinitive verb in 6b and 6c should be conjugated as N6, since *eles* and *Marco e João* would also be DO, and no agreements would have to be made in this case. At least, that is how native speakers interpret the phenomenon. Here we pause to point that the same analysis offered above for 6a is incapable of explaining 6b and 6c, and the reason seems to be very simple: while in 6a *os* mandatorily comes along as an anaphoric piece of information – i.e., the clitic pronoun functions as a thematic item (topic) that addresses something past in the text/utterance –, in 6c, *Marco e João* is featured as a rhematic item (comment or new information) whose referent is only retrievable, depending on context, by extrapolating text/discourse as primary sources. In construction 6b, however, the role played by *eles* can be either anaphoric or deictic, depending on whether the information represented by the pronoun has already been given or is to be found beyond the limits of discourse. In any case, perhaps a better analytic solution would be to set off *eles chorarem* (6b) and *Marco e João chorarem* (6c) as dependent clauses functioning as complements of *fez*, an analysis not quite likely to be applied to 6a by traditional approaches, owing to the constraint imposed on clitics, which cannot be used as subjects.

While we can affirm that, in 6b and 6c, *eles chorarem* and *Marco e João chorarem* are clauses that are more embedded to their respective matrices (*Ela fez*) than their finite clause versions (in italics) in sentences *Ela fez (com) que eles chorassem* and *Ela fez (com) que Marco e João chorassem*, we cannot deny that, in 6a, *chorar* is even more deeply embedded, to such a degree that the verb number-person morpheme is deleted (the embedded sentence relinquishes agreement with an inferably plural subject), whilst a possible subject (*eles*, experiencer) is upgraded to the DO form *os*, whose semantic role is hard to define (maybe a target of *fazer*, since it is a “causation” auxiliary verb). In short, while the subject appears explicitly in 6b (as a pronominal item) and in 6c (as a nominal item), it is only a far-fetched and opaque entity

in 6a.¹⁹

As one can see, 6b contains inarguably more coding material than 6a, which not only indicates an increasing tendency for BP speakers to abandon clitic pronouns, but also expresses that semantically more important or cognitively more complex information will be rendered through additional coding material, according to the quantity principle described by Givón (1995a:49), since it has become possible and essential, with the emergence of the novel NPP pronoun column, to make the subject of the infinitive verb appear as a separate entity from the one in the matrix finite clause. Thus, from a highly grammaticalized construction such as 6a (*Ela os fez chorar*), the would-be DO pronoun *os* is definitely pushed to the embedded clause as a subject pronoun in order to play its indisputable role as a subject (*Ela fez [eles chorarem]*).

One could go further and say that, as there is a personal infinitive in Portuguese, then the morpheme *-em* (in 6b) would be enough to reveal the subject. But here we run into one of the issues with which we have to cope henceforth: this apparently complicated expansion of the PPS, as a matter of fact, has an effect of simplification on the conjugation of verbs. The previous six different morphemes for the six persons of discourse now are reduced to a maximum of three, depending on the tense in which the verb is conjugated. Table 3 below shows how the morphemes are distributed according to persons that are effectively used in spoken language (for the personal infinitive):

Table 3 – Inflecting morphemes used in the conjugation of personal infinitives

	SUBJECT PRONOUN	NUMBER-PERSON MORPHEME	REMARKS
P1	eu	∅	
P2	tu	-es ∅	In competition with <i>você</i> , but losing ground Confined to some regions in Brazil. When used, mostly conjugated as <i>você</i>
	você		Conjugated as N3
	o senhor/a senhora	∅	Conjugated as N3

¹⁹ Actually the boundary between the clauses in 6a seems more obscured than it does in 6b and 6c, which indicates they are syntactically more integrated, and, hence, more grammaticalized. Although in all the three constructions clauses are tightly bound, only 6a presents an embedded clause whose verb is immutable, notwithstanding changes in tense and person that could be made in its matrix clause, behaving more as a second element of a compound verb. Cf. Hopper&Traugott (2003) and Green (2012).

N3	ele		
	ela		
P4	a gente		Conjugated as N3
	nós	-mos	In competition with <i>a gente</i> , but losing ground
P5	vocês	-em	Conjugated as N6
	os senhores/as senhoras		Conjugated as N6
N6	eles/elas		

As one can see from Table 3 above, morpheme *-em* would not be enough to specify the person functioning as a subject of a personal infinitive verb, since the form is shared by P5 and N6.

Back to Table 2, it is still necessary to distinguish, as did Benveniste (1971), between P1 and P2, on the plane of enunciation, from N3, on the plane of utterance. Inspired by the “Arab grammarians, [for whom] the first person is *al-mutakallimu* ‘the one who speaks’; the second, *al-muḥāṭabu* ‘the one who is addressed’; but the third is *al-yā‘ību* ‘the one who is absent’”, Benveniste finds in these denominations “a precise notion of the relationships among persons; [...] precise especially in that it reveals the disparity between the first and second persons and the third” (Benveniste, 1971:197). He states very clearly that “‘the third person’ is not a ‘person’; it is really the verbal form whose function is to express the *non-person*” (Benveniste, 1971:198, emphasis added).

Although we refer to P1 and P2 as subject *pronouns*, they are considered personal *indexes* instead, since they are not able to carry out an endophoric function, i.e., they cannot be used to refer to a word or expression preceding or following them within a text. In fact those indexes are the authentic persons of discourse that take turns at speaking (P1) and listening (P2), one at a time. From an endogenous viewpoint of interaction, therefore, whenever “I” utters something, “I” becomes a P1 and P1’s listener becomes P2; on the other hand, whenever “I” listens to someone else, “I” becomes P2 and, reversely, P2 becomes P1. The subject of conversation, however, is stuck to an N3 condition and, therefore, does not constitute an effective party in interaction. When N3 gets his turn to speak, though, he becomes P1, in such a way that the previously outlined dynamics of interaction is only made possible between P1 and P2. In short, while N3 is a genuine pronoun (since it can be employed to replace a noun in the flow of discourse), it is exactly a non-person from the perspective of enunciation, for N3 is never able to voice his speech without becoming an “I”. Contrariwise, whilst P1 and P2 are *bona fide* persons of discourse, empirically endowed with the power to engage in conversation, they are not actually pronouns, because they are devoid of the necessary features to function endophorically.

Some linguists in Brazil, such as Bagno (2011:743ff), seem to show no hesitation when they include the whole set of items in slots of P1, P2, P4 and P5 (refer to Table 2) in a list of *indexes*, which would be readily acceptable if P4 (we) were simply the form of pluralization of P1 (I), and P5 (you plural) were the pluralization of P2 (you singular). But that is not the case whatsoever. If one considers that P4 can simply stand for P1 as a plural of modesty or, in Benveniste’s (1971:203) words, “‘I’ is amplified by ‘we’ into a person that is more massive, more solemn, and less defined; it is the royal ‘we’”, we ought to admit its uselessness as an endophoric device. But, beyond this magnified (for whatever reason) use of P4, the plurality contained in P4 can account for other possibilities. Even as a representation of P1+P2 (I+you), P4 retrieves its capacity to refer to a specific chunk of information within enunciation, thus fulfilling a role claimed as a pronoun (7a). But P4 can embody other possibilities that would consecrate it as an endophoric device more easily. Always implying a built-in “I” in itself, P4 can combine P1 and N3 (7b); P1 and P5 (7c); and P1 and N6 (7d). Those are all representations whereby P4 can fully accomplish its function as a pronoun. Refer to the examples below:

(7) P5 as a pronoun

a. **Você** e **eu** *trabalhamos* *demais* *esta semana.*
 I:P2 and you:P1 work:PAST P5 a lot this week.

Quando nós descansaremos?
 When we:P4 rest:FUT?

‘You and I worked a lot this week. When will we have some rest?’

b. **Minha** e **eu** *pintamos* *a casa.* *Nós* *a pintamos*
mulher

My and I:P1 paint:PAST the **We:P4** it paint:PAST
 wife:N3 house

‘My wife and I painted the house. We painted it’

c. *Tanto* **eu** *quanto* **vocês** *precisamos* *estudar.* *Nós*
 Both I:P1 and you:P5 need:PRES study:INF We:P5
 P5

tivemos *notas* *muito* *baixas*
 have:PAST *grades* *very* *low*
 P5

‘We both need to study. We had very low grades’

d. **Meus** e **eu** *passamos* *o fim de semana* *juntos.*
sobrinhos

My nephews:N6 and I:P1 spend: the weekend together.

PAST P5

<i>Nós</i>	<i>nos</i>	<i>divertimos</i>	<i>muito</i>
We:P5	<i>ourselves:REFL</i>	amuse:PAST	a lot

P5

'My nephews and I spent the weekend together. We had a lot of fun'

So, as can be inferred, "pronoun" is a label whose application has to do much more with the functioning of P than with its form, since even N3 (*ele*) can play a deictic rather than an anaphoric or cataphoric role. It suffices to say that the form *ele* can refer to a target located outside of utterance and, in doing so, despite its virtual capacity to function as a pronoun in other contexts, it will not be a pronoun, but an index, in such cases. This is also true as regards to P5, which can embody either one of these functions: it can operate as a pronoun or as a (deictic) index, depending on the context.

In these very brief notes on the expansion of the PPS on BP, we still have to mention that *me*, *te* and maybe *nos* and *se* are the only accusative and dative forms effectively and massively used in vernacular BP. The use of the exclusive dative form *lhe(s)* is confined to specific regions of the country and written genres, and *o(s)*, *a(s)*, although acquired at school, cannot stand up against stronger competitors such as the stressed oblique forms (NPP and PP).

As for the P1 series, nominative verbal inflection is different from verbal inflections for other persons in most verb tenses²⁰ or, at least, in verb tenses used more often. Dropping of the P1 nominative form, however, is occasional in BP as compared to EP, a variety that, except for the obsolescence of *vós* (P5), maintains the prototypical pronoun system and conjugations almost intact. Consequently, with number-person and tense-mood morphemes preserved in the conjugation of verbs, it is not imperative for EP speakers to make nominative forms mandatorily explicit as subjects in their utterances. That is a common sense explanation easily found in critical texts, although it is only partially effective in regards to BP. In the corpus analyzed by Neves (2015), as for the co-occurrence of P1 nominative form and verbal inflections, one can verify that the slot preceding verbs are filled by *eu* in approximately 70% of the cases.

P2 nominative encompasses three (and P5 Nominative includes two) different forms, which echoes a broader pragmatic necessity for diversified means to address interlocutors in distinctive manners (relations of

²⁰ There are exceptions, of course, such as when P1 nominative verbal inflection coincides with the inflection for other persons. For instance, *disse* is the way that the verb *dizer* (to say) is conjugated for *eu*, *voçê*, *ele*, and *a gente*. The same happens to some of the irregular verbs in the preterit (*querer* - to want; *saber* - to know; etc.); to all of the synthetic imperfect; to all conditional tense; and to the future and past tenses of the subjunctive mood.

parity/hierarchy, for instance). What is most noticeable when comparing nominative forms under P2 and under P5 is that the system has become asymmetric, since the *vós* form, the counterpart of *tu*, has simply and completely vanished from PUV, in BP at least. Therefore, most of the comments on P2 are also applicable to P5, except the ones relative to *tu*.

Besides the forms *o(s) senhor(es)* and *a(s) senhora(s)*, which derive from old treatment pronouns, N3 and N6 pronouns are the only nominatives in the PPS to indicate gender explicitly. As non-persons of discourse, N3 and N6 can be used for both human and non-human reference, as Bagno (2011:796-797) points out. While there is a clear tendency for expressing nominative forms in PB, there is also a strong predisposition to omit accusative forms (ellipsis of the object), especially in PUV- and SLV. Comparing a 10-hour recording with 13 different speakers, Bagno (2011:410-471) found out that 95.8% of 500 occurrences of objects in spontaneous conversation are null, which means that the favorite anaphoric strategy employed in PUV outnumbers by far the use of clitics (only 0,6%) and of *ele* (and its feminine and plurals) to recover nominal phrase subjects or nominative N3/N6. In previous research, Duarte (*apud* Bagno, 2011:410) had demonstrated that, in similar corpora with 1974 occurrences, 62.6% were null objects; 4.9% clitics; *ele* 15.4%; and anaphoric NP 16.1%.

P4 prototypical form *nós* is increasingly losing space to the alternative expression *a gente*, which is conjugated as N3. This means that *a gente*, although conveying a plural idea, is unmarked as for inflections, such as the singular non-person *ele*. Although unmarked in a way, *a gente* is marked in another, for it cannot be generally omitted in a nominative position, since its verbal form is common to *você, ele, ela, o senhor, a senhora*. Thus, for the sake of disambiguation, the nominative slot to the left of the verb will have to be filled whenever *a gente* is meant to be used. A very common use in SLV is to conjugate the verb following the P4 paradigm (number-person morpheme - *mos*), which is exclusively used for *nós* in PUV and PNV. So, sentences such as *A gente vamos na praia* (we will go to the beach) may still cause some uneasiness among speakers with higher level of literacy, who would prefer to use the alternative forms *A gente vai à/na praia* or *Nós vamos à/na praia*.²¹

Last, but not least, we have the clitic *se*, which is a very flexible pronoun, since it can nowadays serve a couple of functions. However, this subject matter, as well as more specific comments on each person and non-person of discourse, is very intricate and could only be fully explained in a separate article. By now we can only say it can work as a reflexive pronoun, a reciprocal pronoun, a passive voice pronoun, a subject indetermination pronoun and even as a subject (in PUV- and SLV).

²¹ Although *a* and *para* (to) are the prepositions prescribed to be used with the verb *ir* (to go), in PVL- and SLV *em* and its contracted forms *no, na, nos, and nas* are largely employed.

5. Brief final words

With over 200 million speakers, nowadays the BP faces no competitor as an official and national language spoken in virtually every corner of Brazil. The importance of BP PPS expansion lies in that it follows the inexorable virtue of adjustment of a society that has long ago learned how to absorb new cultural and pragmatic challenges arising in everyday life. Those challenges needed to be linguistically dealt with, and BP speakers succeeded in finding their own way to profitably imprint their identity on the body of a language that transcended its status of a provincial imitation of the colonizer's tongue toward a cosmopolitan vocation acquired through a daily reinvention of its reality. While some variations are still looked upon as deviations from a supposedly correct "archetype", others have already managed to fashion a countenance of unsuspected normalcy, i.e., they have become changes that are definitive for the time being. Let us wait and see what is to come about in the next centuries.

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