

VARIATION IN ADDRESS FORMS IN 16TH-CENTURY SPANISH PROSE DRAMA

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Resumen. Este artículo pretende estudiar la variación en las formas de tratamiento, dentro de la misma diada conversacional, en el español del siglo XVI, a base de las cuatro *Comedias* en prosa de Lope de Rueda. Llama la atención la frecuencia de este tipo de variación, debido a cambios en la relación entre dos interlocutores, la presencia de otros personajes, y sobre todo a cambios de actitud por parte de los hablantes, por los que delatan estima, desprecio, ironía, confianza o ánimo. También se desprende de forma muy clara la ambivalencia de *vos* con valores tanto ameliorativo como peyorativo, sin que haya evidencia conclusiva de la degradación general de *vos*. En términos más generales el estudio aboga por la utilidad de textos dramáticos como fuentes de información sobre el cambio lingüístico en el siglo XVI.

1. Introduction

16th-century Spanish had a complex system of address forms which has naturally been the object of extensive interest and study. In summary, the Old Castilian binary distinction between *tú* and *vos* (the latter also serving for plural reference like Modern French *vous*) was extended by the adoption of 3rd person honorific forms with second-person reference, the commonest of which, *vuestra merced*, was the ancestor of present-day *usted*; a distinctively plural form *vosotros/as* also emerged in opposition to *vos*, which eventually came to have exclusively singular reference. While the use of address forms in what we might regard as stable dyadic relationships has been well studied, variation within the same dyad and the motivation for such variation has been much less well charted, and so my primary purpose in this article is to focus on such cases, necessarily in some detail.

2. Data

The texts from which I have drawn the data for this study are the four prose *Comedias* by Lope de Rueda (first decade of the 16th-century–1565). Rueda has long been recognized as an important source of knowledge about 16th-century Spanish usage. He was clearly very sensitive to language and language variation: verbal humour and the manipulation of register is a striking characteristic of his work, and his characters' language is sharply differentiated according to social

status. Because the *Comedias* include a wide variety of characters of all classes and ages, they can give us a valuable insight into the sociolinguistic variation of their time and are particularly suited to a study of politeness (address forms in the *Pasos*, which are largely interactions between members of the servant class have been studied by Pedroviejo Esteruelas 2003).¹

However, there are a number of philological caveats. Rueda's sources were Italian and so it is possible that the language of the plays was influenced by the Italian originals (to my knowledge, there has been no systematic investigation of this beyond the purely literary level). The plays were published by Joan Timoneda, a Valencian bookseller and himself an actor and playwright, who tells us explicitly in two prefaces to the *Comedias* that he pruned and heavily edited the speech of the servants and *simples* and removed matter which was unacceptable to the Church, as well as expressions which he found ugly and atypical of Rueda's time. Timoneda almost certainly also introduced Valencian lexis into the plays (González Ollé 1982). There is also the problem of the scope for inconsistency and error which the editorial work of bringing the plays to the press may have entailed, not to mention the possibility of typographical error. However, the 'purity' of the authorship of Rueda is not an issue so long as the linguistic features of the text can be taken as typical of the time, and indeed Timoneda's editing may actually have enhanced their typicality.²

3. Methodology

The basic texts of the four plays for analysis, *Armeline* (*Arm*), *Eufemia* (*Euf*), *Los engañados* (*Eng*) and *Medora* (*Med*) (scenes are indicated by Roman numerals), were taken from the Chadwyck-Healey electronic edition, a palaeographic transcription of Timoneda's 1567 Valencia edition, though for ease of reading, examples are here quoted from the modern edition by Alfredo Hermenegildo, which also records variants in the 1576 Seville edition.³ The plays yield 3,208

¹ Pedroviejo Esteruelas does not, however, study variation in address forms systematically, and indeed regards variation as essentially unprincipled and a consequence of the instability of the value of 2sg forms, a position with which it will be evident I disagree.

² Cf. Brown & Gilman (1989, 208): "Dramatic texts offer good possibilities for the study of politeness theory. They offer wide social and characterological scope, and because the speech is not elicited from informants but was invented by authors for purposes of their own, dramatic texts can surprise analysts... into discoveries they had not envisioned..."

³ I record my thanks to the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) of the Cambridge-MIT Institute which paid for the services of two undergraduate students, Julia Angel and Gemma Wheeler, who worked under my supervision to establish a database suitable for the purposes of this and other linguistic investigations of the *Comedias*.

sentences of dialogue, which were classified according to speaker and addressee; the data from each play was then ordered according to the dyadic relationships contracted by each speaker, thus facilitating the analysis of address forms used within each dyad, which are sometimes evidenced across several scenes of the play. Within the 258 character-to-character relationships contracted by speakers, 66, or just over 25%, show variation in address forms by the speaker, which at first sight is a surprisingly high number.

Address form is indicated in Spanish by a number of factors: (a) personal pronouns, (b) verb forms, (c) possessives. In the *Comedias* approximately 50% of sentences (1,518) have such overt marking. In this article I shall use the designations 2sg to refer to *tú*, *tu(s)* and 2sg verb forms, 2pl to refer to *vos*, *vuestro/a(s)* and 2pl verb forms (with exclusive singular reference), and 3sg to refer to any 3sg pronoun, *su(s)* and 3sg verb forms⁴ – this is for convenience only, however, and does not presuppose that personal pronouns will always be consistent with other forms.⁵

4. Stable dyadic relationships

I begin by briefly outlining the stable dyadic relationships which can be observed in the *Comedias*. These will provide us with the default expected address forms for a particular dyad and so form a basis for judging relationships which exhibit variety; they will also reveal to what extent the text is itself consistent and hence how trustworthy it is as a reflection of the usage of the time. Symmetrical relationships are indicated by \leftrightarrow ; asymmetrical relationships by \rightarrow . ‘Free’ address forms will be mentioned where relevant. In the examples cited, ‘bound’ address forms are single-underlined, and free forms double-underlined.⁶

4.1. Stable relationships

4.1.1. Husband and wife

There are three such dyads: Pascual \leftrightarrow Inés (*Arm*), Acario \leftrightarrow Barbarina, and Águeda \leftrightarrow Lupo (*Med*). All use 2pl reciprocally with the free forms (*señor*) *marido* / (*señora*) *muger*.

⁴ *Vosotros* only appears twice in the *Comedias* – Neptuno in *Arm* VI and the Gipsy in *Med* VI – and so no conclusions can be drawn about its use; *vuestra merced* is commonest 3sg pronoun.

⁵ Calderón Campos 2002 draws the conclusion from the ‘mixing’ of forms in the letters of the Conde de Tendilla that the pronoun *vos* underwent pejoration before its other associated forms, though I have found no conclusive evidence for this in the *Comedias*, where, as will be seen, changes of *vos* to *vuestra merced* do not produce inconsistent syntax and have independent motivation.

⁶ For the potential importance of this distinction, see Braun (1988, 11–12) and Dickey (2002, 5–6).

4.1.2. Parents and children

Parents consistently use 2sg *tú* to their children: Inés and Pascual → Armelina, Pascual → Justo (*Arm*); Verginio → Lelia (*Eng*). There is only slight and inconsistent evidence of the reverse relationship: Justo uses 3sg to Pascual at the point where it is revealed that Pascual is his natural father, and Armelina uses 3pl to her adoptive parents Pascual and Inés; but when Armelina is reunited with her natural father, Viana, she uses 2pl.

4.1.3. Masters / mistresses and servants

Masters and mistresses generally address their servants as 2sg. However, 2pl is often used for older, or 'senior' servants: Verginio uses 2pl to Marcelo, his daughter's tutor, and to Quintana, Fabricio's tutor (*Eng*), and Angélica uses 2pl to the elderly Águeda and Lupo (*Arm*). See also 4.1.4.

The address forms used by servants to masters/mistresses suggest two basic kinds of relationship, which I will label 'confidant' and 'non-confidant'. The non-confidant relationship, in which 3sg is used, may be taken as the default: Mencieta → Justo, Inés, Diego and Pascual (*Arm*); Melchior → Leonardo and Eufemia (*Euf*); Julieta → Verginio and Clavela, Crivelo → Gerardo (*Eng*); Estela → Acario (*Med*). In the confidant relationship, in which the servant enjoys the confidence of the master / mistress, the servant uses a symmetrical 2sg: Mencieta ↔ Armelina, Beltranico ↔ Justo (*Arm*); Cristina ↔ Eufemia, Paulo and Leonardo ↔ Valiano (*Euf*); Crivelo ↔ Verginio and Lauro, Lelia (as Fabio) ↔ Lauro (*Eng*).

However, there are two problematic dyads which do not seem to be consistent with the patterns observable elsewhere in the *Comedias*: Paulilla → Angélica and Falisco → Casandro (*Med*). These must be 'confidant' relationships: Angélica and Paulilla frankly discuss the inappropriate behaviour of her mother Barbarina; Casandro uses the free form *Falisco amigo* to his servant and Falisco is called upon to advise him in his wooing of Angélica. But in both these cases 2pl is used by servant to mistress/master – surprisingly, since, otherwise, the use of 2pl by a member of the servant class to a social superior plainly shows rudeness, e.g. Periquillo → Acario (*Med*), where Periquillo is disparaging to Acario, made a figure of fun in his inappropriate wooing of the young Estela.

4.1.4. Among the servant class

While there is a good deal of variation in forms of address used amongst servants, the default seems to be 2sg: Melchior ↔ Cristina (*Euf*); Crivelo and Julieta → Fabricio, mistaken by Crivelo for Fabio / Lelia, a page (*Eng*); Águeda ↔ Gargullo, Gargullo ↔ Estela, Ortega ↔ Paulilla (*Med*). This is also the form used reciprocally between Leonardo and Vallejo in *Euf*, where, despite differences of class, they are fellow-servants of Valiano. 2pl is sometimes used (asymmetrically)

to older servants, as it is by masters/mistresses: Crivelo, Lauro and Lelia → Quintana (*Eng*), Gargullo → Lupo, and Falisco → Águeda (*Med*).

However, in some servant-class dyadic relationships 2pl and even 3sg are used. These are motivated by a variety of factors but appear to be marked. Polo and Vallejo (*Euf*) by default address one another as 2pl. The motivation for this seems to be exaggerated respect: Vallejo is a braggart who calls on Polo as an honest broker to resolve a dispute between himself and Grimaldo, and Polo reciprocates. Similarly, Logroño, who mediates between the boastful Gargullo and Peñalba, uses 2pl to Gargullo and 3sg to Peñalba (*Med*).

4.1.5. Unknown people and more distant relationships

There are a number of examples of meetings between members of the master/mistress class and other people's servants in which the default situation seems to be that the master / mistress uses 2pl to the servant and the servant responds with the 3sg which, as we have seen, is the normal non-confidant mode of address: Leonardo → Polo (*Euf*); Lauro, Lelia and Verginio → Quintana (*Eng*). A more equal relationship seems to demand reciprocal 2pl. Fabricio and Verginio (*Eng*) initially use 2pl. Fabricio and Frula, the landlord of the inn where he is staying, who offers Fabricio friendly advice about personal security, also use 2pl.

4.1.6. Gentlemen and ladies

Gentleman address ladies with 2pl: Valiano → Eufemia (*Euf*), Gerardo → Fabricio, whom he believes to be Lelia (*Eng*), Casandro → Medoro, whom he believes to be Angélica (*Med*). There are almost no instances of the reverse situation (ladies' fates are decided for them), with the exception of the enterprising Eufemia (*Euf*), who catches out the villainous Paulo in front of Valiano, whom she addresses residually as 2sg.

4.2. Variation

4.2.1. Error in text or edition

In just one or two cases, apparent variation appears to be due to nothing more than an error in the original text or in subsequent editorial interpretation. Space does not permit further analysis: it will be clear enough that the vast majority of cases respond to principled description.

4.2.2. Instability in the usage of speakers

There is gross inconsistency in the usage of the black characters (Eulalla in *Euf* and Guiomar in *Eng*), whose *bozal*-like speech contains many 'foreigner errors' (gender and number agreements, verb forms) which must have been a source of

humour to the audience, and in which instability and inappropriateness of forms of address is another ingredient. Such variation is not further considered here.

4.2.3. Change in the nature of a character

When characters change their identity, they change their address form to match. In *Arm* III, the cobbler Diego's default form of address to the marriage-broker Rodrigo is 2pl, but when the latter plays the role of his servant, he switches, appropriately (see 4.1.3.) to 2sg. In *Med* V, Barbarina is in pursuit of a 'magic' cure and has dressed accordingly; Ortega, the *simple* and a servant, takes her for a ghost. She begins by addressing him in her habitual way as 2sg but then changes to 2pl, probably motivated by the need to play the role of a stranger (4.1.5.).

4.2.4. Changing relationship between speaker and addressee

Address forms also change when the relationship between speaker and addressee changes. In *Arm* VI, Justo changes from 2pl to 3sg in the form used to Pascual when it is revealed that Pascual is in fact his father. Similarly, in *Eng* X, the revelation that Fabricio is Verginio's son triggers a switch from reciprocal 2pl as 'unknown' people (4.1.5.) to 2sg Verginio → Fabricio and 3sg by Fabricio → Verginio (4.1.2.)

In *Eng*, Verginio and Gerardo begin (I) by using reciprocal 2sg as *compadres* (Verginio has agreed that his daughter Lelia will marry Gerardo); following Lelia's disappearance and then apparently inappropriate behaviour (VII) they use reciprocal 2pl, and finally (X) when this relationship is broken and they become 'consuegros y hermanos' (since Verginio's newly-recognized son Fabricio will marry Gerardo's daughter Clavela and Lelia has married Lauro), they switch to symmetrical 3sg.

Between a servant and a master / mistress, a switch from 3sg to 2sg signifies a change from a 'non-confidant' to a 'confidant' relationship. In *Arm* II, the servant Mencieta abandons the respectful 3sg and adopts 2sg when she shares a confidence with Armelina:

MENCIETA. – Est'otra mañana estaban hablando mi señor y mi señora muy en secreto, y, no pensando que yo los escuchaba, dezían no sé qué de vuessa merced.

ARMELINA. – ¿De mí? ¿Y qué?

MENCIETA. – Pues dame albricias.

ARMELINA. – Buenas sean. ¿Qué hay?

MENCIETA. – Que según parece andan por casarte.

The above changes may be interpreted as movements from one 'stable' dyadic relationship to another. There remain a large number of changes, however, which appear to be motivated by changes in circumstance and attitude on the part of speakers.

4.2.5. Audience design

Characters may vary their address forms in the presence of others outside the dyad as a result of audience design (Bell 1984, Dickey 2002, 8). A clear case of this is the relation between Cristina and her mistress Eufemia in *Euf*. The default appears to be that Cristina addresses her mistress as 2sg, since she enjoys a confidant relationship with her (see 4.1.3.). But she consistently switches to 3sg in the presence of Melchior in *Euf* I and VI, in the presence of the Gipsy in V, and as Paulo and Valiano approach in VIII. This example from VI shows such a switch even in the middle of a turn:

CRISTINA. – Calla señora mía [2sg, privately, as confidante]: no diga tal [now taking account of Melchior's presence], que aquéste [ie Melchior] sin duda desvaría. ¿No lo conosce ya vuessa merced?

In *Arm* III, Diego, discussing strategy for the wooing of Armelina with the marriage-broker Rodrigo, addresses the latter as 2pl; but when Mencieta and Guadalupe, servants from Armelina's household, come upon the scene, he switches to 3sg.

4.2.6. Attitudinal motivation

By far the majority of shifts in address form are motivated by changed attitudes. I have noted 44 dyadic cases in all, though a number of these are inter-related. The range of shifts is impressive, with every possible type of shift represented. The value of the shift is dependent on the stable relationship which it violates, as well as on the relationship between the participants; thus the same formal shift may have a quite different value from dyad to dyad.

4.2.6.1. Direct pejoration

Pejoration may be signalled by a 'downwards' shift in a putative hierarchy 3sg > 2pl > 2sg:

- 2pl to 2sg

In *Euf* V, Cristina uses 2sg to the Gipsy when she is offended by the latter's suggestion that she may have things she would rather her mistress did not hear.

CRISTINA. – ¿Qué puedes tú dezir que sea cosa que perjudique mi honra?

Similarly, in *Med* III, Águeda responds to the gipsy's insult to her (she calls her a witch) in kind, but otherwise uses 2pl, even within the same turn.

GITANA. – ... ¿Y qué piensa hazer esta bruxa?

ÁGUEDA. – Tú eres la bruxa. Y a esta moça yo la conozco muy bien, y ha de ir conmigo a pesar vuestro, don diablo meridiano.

- 3sg to 2pl

In *Arm* III, the *simple* Guadalupe makes this switch as he returns Diego's threat to him:

GUADALUPE. – Señor desposado: no deje vuesa merced de feriar ese gesto a unos fuelles, y haréis más provecho a mi amo. Y no os atreváis más de pasar nuestra calle; si no, podrá ser que volváis cargado de leña seca, porque verde no la hay en casa.

In *Eng* X, Crivelo similarly responds to Verginio's insulting switch to 2pl:

VERGINIO. – ¿Venís vos hecho de concierto con Gerardo?...

CRIVELLO. – Señor Verginio, ¿cómo os puede dar vuestra hija no teniéndola?

But an 'upwards' movement from 2sg to 2pl can also be pejorative:

- 2sg to 2pl

Between equals, this shift can be plainly insulting, as in the escalation of the dispute between Vallejo and Grimaldo in *Euf* II:

VALLEJO. – Espérame aquí, ratonzillo.

GRIMALDO. – Vuelve acá, cobarde.

VALLEJO. – Ora, pues sois porfiado, sabed que os dexara un poco más con vida si por ella fuera.

There are also many instances of a switch from 2sg to 2pl by a superior to an inferior which indicate annoyance. In *Arm* V, Pascual's frustration with his servant Mencieta causes such a shift, reflected also in the free forms used:

PASCUAL. – Ven acá, hija Mencieta. ¿Quién es aquel que te busca?

...

PASCUAL. – ¡Ah, traidora! Acabad, decí quién es aquél.

There are similar shifts by Diego → Guadalupe and Inés → Mencieta (*Arm*), Leonardo → Melchior (*Euf*), Gerardo → Guiomar (*Eng*). In *Eng* VII, the two old men, Verginio and Gerardo, move from their reciprocal 2sg as *compadres* to reciprocal 2pl when their relationship cools.

4.2.6.2. Direct amelioration

Amelioration may be signalled by an 'upwards' shift:

- 2sg to 2pl

Between equals, this shift can represent an increase in respect. In the confrontation between the servants Vallejo and Grimaldo in *Euf* II (see also Pountain 2001, 146-152), Vallejo makes this switch when he recognizes his misjudgement and wants to show respect to Grimaldo, and Grimaldo reciprocates. In *Med* VI, Acario at first addresses the Gipsy with 2sg, since he regards her as a liar. But as the Gipsy reveals the secret of his lost son Medoro he changes to 2pl, and free forms such as *señora*, *hermana* and the general context show his greater respect.

- 2sg to 3sg

The switch to 3sg is used to signify greater politeness or deference, or to ask a favour. Cristina adopts this strategy (using the form *su merced*, which can be taken as being a degree more polite) to ask her mistress Eufemia for forgiveness for her indiscreet confidences to Paulo (*Euf* VIII). The servant Polo initially uses 3sg in his deceitful courtship of Eulalla (*ibid.*) to gain her attention and favour before reverting to the more expected 2sg.

A switch to 3sg seems often to be associated with the asking of a favour or pleading insistence. During her exchange with Marcelo in *Eng* II, Lelia breaks her otherwise fairly consistent use of 2pl to her tutor with an instance of 3sg (*Déxeme concluir*), which is possibly associated with greater insistence. In *Arm* III, Rodrigo adopts 3sg when remonstrating with Diego to let Guadalupe alone. A final exchange is sometimes 'upgraded' to 3sg where there is cause for gratitude: Leonardo → Polo (*Euf* III); Viana → Mulién Búcar (*Arm* IV).

4.2.6.3. *Raising the level of discourse*

- 2sg to 2pl

This switch sometimes formalises a situation or makes it in some way more official. In *Arm* VI, when Guadalupe is ordered by his master Pascual to seize his fellow-servant Mencieta, he adopts 2pl with the free form *señora Mencieta* (and then 3sg) before reverting to 2sg and the free form *rapaza*. In *Euf* VIII, Paulo uses the possessive *vuestra* to Valiano apparently to underline the seriousness of his oath.

- 2sg to 3sg

Also in *Euf* VIII, Paulo's switches earlier from 2sg to 3sg as he lays his charge against Eufemia's honour to Valiano. Eufemia, who has hitherto addressed Valiano as 2sg, uses 3sg when she appeals to Valiano to force Paulo to take his oath. Vallejo switches to 3sg when he reports back to Valiano on Paulo's imprisonment.

4.2.6.4. *Ironical amelioration*

- 2sg to 2pl

'Upward' shifts can, however, also be ironical. In *Euf* I, Leonardo switches from 2sg to 2pl following Melchior's revelation that his father was an executioner:

LEONARDO. – ¡Por cierto que sois hijo de honrado padre!

In *Eng* VI, Julieta similarly uses 2pl ironically when she does not believe Fabricio's claim that he has bought his cape with his own money (she thinks that Fabricio is Fabio):

JULIETA. – ¿Ya mandáis dineros, Fabio?

- 2sg to 3sg

In *Euf* I, Eufemia scorns the *simple* Melchior's boast of education:

MELCHIOR. – ¿Retórica? Sabé [plural reference] que la mamá en la leche.

EUFEMIA. – ¿Tan sabia era su madre del señor?

The use of *el señor* here also contrasts with the other unbound forms Eufemia uses to Melchior: the names (*Melchior*) *Ortiz* and the insult *traidor*.

- 2pl to 3sg

In *Euf* I, the servants Melchior and Ximena switch from reciprocal 2pl to 3sg with insulting 3sg subject forms as their bickering dispute escalates:

MELCHIOR. – Debe dormir la señora abierta la boca.

XIMENA. – Si duermo o no, ¿qué le va al gesto de renacuajo?

and use the same device in a show of mock courtesy as they leave the stage:

XIMENA. – Passe delante el de los buenos recados.

MELCHIOR. – Vaya ella, la de las buenas veces.

4.2.6.5. *Encouragement*

A 'downwards' switch from 2pl to 2sg by a superior to an inferior can indicate encouragement. In *Arm* V, where everyone is attempting to get information from Mencieta about the disappearance of Armelina, Diego adopts a more conciliatory approach which is signalled by a switch to 2sg:

DIEGO. – Di, hija mía, la verdad, que yo rogaré a tu señor que no te haga daño.

In *Euf* V, Eufemia switches from 2pl to 2sg when the gipsy gives her to understand that her brother is in great danger, probably motivated by shock and by her need to plead with the gipsy to find out more.

5. Conclusions

Based on the evidence of the *Comedias*, we can see quite clearly that changes in the use of address forms were frequent in 16th-century Spain. Their value must be determined relatively: for example, a 'downward' move to 2sg from an expected 2pl or 3sg may be insulting if it is made by an equal or an inferior but encouraging if made by a superior to an inferior; from an inferior to a superior it may indicate the assuming of a confidant relationship. 'Upward' moves generally denote intensified respect or raising of the level of discourse, but may also be ironical, especially from a superior to an inferior. The frequency of attitudinally based switches in address forms is very striking: this is redolent of Brown & Gilman's (1989) conclusions regarding pronouns of address in Shakespeare; however, they follow Jespersen (1972) in suggesting that movement between pronouns of

address in Shakespeare to express mood and tone was greater than between cognate pronouns in other European languages, while the evidence I have presented here would seem to suggest otherwise. The ambivalent (and hence changing) nature of the 2pl address form emerges from the fact that it can be used with a pejorative value relative to both 2sg and 3sg but that it is also used amelioratively to denote respect to older servants and appears to be the default form with strangers of an equal status, or even of an inferior status (masters to other people's servants): this is consistent with Pedroviejo Esteruela's suggestion that, in the *Pasos*, *vos* varied in the between its older ameliorative value and a newer pejorative value. Last, but by no means least, despite some problems in exhaustively systematizing address form usage in all dyadic relationships in the *Comedias*, I suggest that this modest contribution to a growing body of studies on dramatic texts increases confidence in regarding such texts as a rich source of data on variation and change in 16th-century Spanish.

TEXTS

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