

## Reflexive/passive syncretism in Tupi-Guarani and the emergence of a middle voice in Paraguayan Guarani

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The Paraguayan Guarani prefix *je-* (nasal allomorph *ñe-*) is variously described as a reflexive (Krivoshein de Canese y Acosta Alcaraz 2007), a passive (ibid.), a middle (Velázquez-Castillo 2008), and an agent-demoting voice (Estigarribia 2020). Indeed, this prefix has a broad range of uses: passive or reflexive with transitive bases (1), impersonal or generic agent with intransitive unergatives (2) and unaccusatives (3), anticausative (4), and self-benefactive uses where the event result is broadly construed as in the sphere of interest of the subject, often with a sense of pretension or deception (to be expected if *je-* is conceptualized as expressing events as pertaining to the subject's own sphere; Maldonado 2007) (5). For this reason, we adopt here the label **middle** for this marker.

1. re-je-japi  
2SG.ACTIVE-MIDDLE-injure.by.shooting  
'you were shot' / 'you shot yourself' (Estigarribia 2020: 210)
2. Kañada=pe o-je-jeroky  
Kañada=in 3.ACTIVE-MIDDLE-dance  
'In Kañada there is dancing' (Velázquez-Castillo 2008: 393)
3. Heta gueteri o-ñe-mano-ve-ta...  
much even 3.ACTIVE-MIDDLE-die-more-FUTURE  
'Even more dying will occur...' (Velázquez-Castillo 2008: 393)
4. o-ñe-mo-pẽ  
3.ACTIVE-MIDDLE-CAUSATIVE-fracture  
'to break (by itself)' (own unpublished data)
5. o-ñe-mbo anti Cartés  
3.ACTIVE-MIDDLE-CAUSATIVE-anti-Cartés  
'they feign to be anti-Cartés' (own unpublished data)

This heavy syncretism of functions for this marker is not documented for other languages in the Tupi-Guarani family. We provide evidence that, of all 8 branches in the family (Rodrigues & Cabral 2012), only some of the Guaranian languages in Branch 1 show it, with Paraguayan Guarani displaying it to the largest extent. Lingua/GeralOld Tupi in Branch 3 has documented extensive reflexive/passive syncretism, but not the other uses (Anchieta 1595). Tembé and Tapirapé in Branch 4 have reflexive uses, and also passive uses, but only for morphologically causativized bases similar to (5) above (Rice 1934, Neiva Praça 2007). Languages in branches 2 and 5 to 8 only have reflexive uses. For these languages, there is no general agent demotion mechanism and patient promotion is accomplished by the person-sensitive inverse morphology common in Tupi-Guarani.

Given this, we propose that Proto-Tupi-Guarani *\*je-* was a reflexive marker that acquired passive interpretations first in combination with a causativizing prefix (as shown in Branch 4). This could be a characteristic of a whole Diasporic branch as reconstructed by Michael et al. (2015). Subsequently, *je-* extended first its range of passive uses (as in Branch 3 languages), and then in Branch 1 (Guaranian) acquired more syncretisms typical of middle and mediopassive voices cross-linguistically, perhaps favored by the extensive contact with Spanish and Portuguese, two languages that show similar syncretic patterns for their pronominal clitic *se*.

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