

The Meaning of Reciprocal Markers: Approaches and Generalizations

1

**EKKEHARD KOENIG
(FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN)
CLAIRE MOYSE-FAURIE
(LACITO, CNRS)**

Reciprocal Constructions: English

2

- (1) The British love Madonna and she loves them back/too.
- (2) John loves Mary and vice versa.
- (3) John and Mary hate each other.
- (4) They were walking hand in hand.
- (5) They met on Monday.
- (6) They mixed the eggs, the sugar and the flour together.
- (7) They were singing together/in harmony.

Reciprocal Constructions: Italian

3

(7) Si ammirano.

(8) Ci ha presentati l'un all'altro.

(9) Maria e Giovanni non fanno regali ai propri figli, ma fanno regali l'una all'altro.

(10) Hanno lavorato spalla a spalla per diversi anni.

- More than one construction in individual languages (interaction, ecology)

Reciprocal constructions: German

4

- Die Teilnehmer kennen **sich** sehr gut.
‘Participants know each other/themselves very well.’
- Diese beiden sind stolz auf **sich**.
‘These two are proud of themselves.’
- Diese beiden sind stolz auf**einander**.
‘These two are proud of each other.’
- Diese Dozenten meiden **sich/einander**.
‘These lectures avoid each other.’

Reciprocal constructions: French

5

- Chirac et Sarkozy **s'évitent** le plus souvent possible.
'C. and S. avoid each other as much as possible.'
- Ils sont fiers **les uns des autres**.
'They are proud of each other.'
- Les participants **se** sont salués (**les uns les autres/mutuellement**).
'The participants greeted each other.'
- Pierre et Marie **se** sont rencontrés à Paris.
'Peter and Mary met in Paris.'
- Ils ont **échangé** leurs opinions.

General semantic properties

6

- Problem: encoding an extremely complex relation in a simple sentence (itr., tr., di-trans.)
- A plurality of participants
- Double roles of participants; identical participation
- Joint actions or sequence of actions (+ delay)
- Symmetry (in contrast to the typical asymmetry of actions associated with transitivity)
- Reliable tests for identification but problems of definition (cf. Nedjalkov, 2007)

Strategies of encoding reciprocity

7

- Wide variety of solutions for the basic problem of encoding (Nedjalkov 2007; Evans, 2008); canonical typology
- Multiclausal reciprocals (vs. monoclausal reciprocals)
 - Bi-clausal vs. degrees of reduction and fusion
- Monoclausal reciprocals:
 - Argument-marking vs. predicate-marking
(quantifiers, noun, pro-N) (affix, auxiliary, lexical)

Concepts of reciprocity outside linguistics

8

- Biology: cooperative interaction (reciprocal altruism); motivation; usefulness; its role in the behavior of primates;
- Sociology and anthropology: basis for social organization and ethics; (based on exchange):
 - Two forms of exchange:
(a) Direct reciprocity - (b) generalized reciprocity
 - Two further types (cognitive abilities are required)
(c) Reciprocity of roles – (d) recip. of perspectives

Examples

9

- Direct vs. generalized: Intergenerational reciprocity, solidarity, charity, generation chain
- (14) Immigrants from Albania help each other.
- (15) We support each other in times of need.
- Complementarity of roles
 - Assuming the perspective of others (including their thoughts concerning one's own perspective)
 - Concepts of reciprocity outside of linguistics: role for social organization; motives; primates and humans; positive; exchange; chaining; neither symmetry nor simultaneity are central;

Semantic Analysis: Formal Semantics

10

- Truth-conditions; two quantifiers involved;
- Small inventory of meanings, one of which is selected depending on the context

(11) People in this house know each other.

$\forall x \in A \forall y \in A [(x \neq y) \rightarrow xRy]$ (strong recip.)

(12) The students stared at each other.

$\forall x \in A \exists y \in A [(x \neq y) \rightarrow xRy]$ (weak recip.)

- Add condition: $|A| \geq 2$? (Dalrymple et al., 1998)

(13) The actors followed each other onto the stage.

Semantics within Typology

11

- What kind of polysemy do we find?
- Which types of markers manifest polysemy?
- Which patterns of polysemy do we find?
- Which patterns are excluded?
- Which semantic distinctions are drawn in individual languages?
- How can we analyze marginal uses of reciprocal markers?
- Linguistic vs. cultural concepts of reciprocity
- Semantic maps as tools for comparative semantics

Patterns of Polysemy

12

- Economy: polysemy or vagueness?
- Recurrent patterns of polysemy

middle

|

- reflexive → reciprocal → sociative

↑

iterative

- Semantic motivation

The reflexive-reciprocal polysemy

13

- Disambiguation through context (PL, +/- other-directed)

(wide-spread in Europe; same set of referents for subject and object position; 30% of all languages? Reflexives as source or target?)

Germ. (14) Die Professoren zitieren sich oft.

a. 'Professors often cite themselves'

b. 'Professors often cite each other'

(Romance, Polish, Swahili)

The reciprocal-sociative ambiguity

14

- Plurality of participants in same event with same roles; overlap

Yakut (15) a. *kör-* ‘to see, look’

b. *kör-üs-* ‘to see each other, meet’

‘to see sth/sb together’

(16)a. They live together. (work together vs. cooperate);

b. They were singing in harmony.

Lat. *com-*; Gk. *syn-*

(17) ‘bring/join together’

The reciprocal-iterative ambiguity

15

- Plurality of events; ‘back’ and ‘again’ as sources of grammaticalization;
 - Austronesian, South-East Asia; possible with sg. subjects (dispersive, alternative, distributive);

(18) a. Madonna loves the British and they love her back.

b. She did not return his love.

Mandarin (19) Tāmen dǎ lái dǎ qù.

(they hit come hit go). ‘They hit each other’

Toqabaqita (20) fale ‘give’ – fale olili

‘give presents to each other (oli ‘to return’)

Patterns of triple polysemy

16

- Reflexive-reciprocal-sociative (Australia)
- Reflexive-reciprocal-iterative (Tagalog)
- Reflexive-reciprocal-middle (Europe, some Melanesian)
- Iterative-reciprocal-sociative (Oceanic)
- Not attested: reflexive-sociative-iterative
- Reflexive-reciprocal-sociative-iterative
- Semantic maps as descriptive tools

Non-attested polysemy

17

- Recurrent patterns of polysemy

middle



*reflexive → reciprocal → sociative



iterative

Evaluative component

18

- Biology and sociology: The concept 'reciprocity' is only used for positive interactions
 - There is no evaluative component in the linguistic term.
 - Reciprocal markers in Sanskrit (post-Vedic)
 - *paras-para*: used with hostile activities
 - *anyonya*: used with friendly or neutral activities
- (21) *parasparadveṣa* 'mutual hatred'
(22) *anyonyāraṅkṣa* 'mutual protection'
(Kulikov, 2007)

Chaining

19

- (23)a. The children chased each other through the garden.
- b. The students were sitting next to each other.
- c. Members of this family have inherited the shop from each other.
- special truth conditions of *each other*
 - Distinction drawn in many languages
 - La boîte de chocolat est passée de main en main.

Chaining II

20

- For these situations special markers can be expected and do in fact occur.
- Quechua: -na-ku ‘rcp-refl’ as standard reciprocal marker
- Chaining is expressed differently:

(24) Juanito chura-n patam patam-pi cajonesta.

Juanito put-3sg on.top.of RDP-LOC box

‘Juanito is stacking the boxes on top of each other.’

Reciprocity of roles: Converse terms

21

- Symmetric predicates and converse terms
- Symmetric predicates as source of reciprocal markers ('friend', 'mate', 'with', 'meet', etc.)
- Derivational processes deriving reciprocal predicates from member of converse opposition

(25) Tigak: *tama* 'father' > *rek e-tama* 'they are father and son'

(26) Tagalog: *ina* 'mother' > *mag-ina* 'mother and child'

Fr. l'hôte 'guest, host', louer 'lend, borrow'

Reductive use of sociative markers

22

- *Together* and *zusammen* as sociative markers

German (relation to ‘with’):

(25)a. Die Minister kamen zusammen.

‘The ministers got together.’

b. Der Direktor brachte die Leute zusammen.

(26)a. einen Schrank zusammenbauen ‘to put a wardrobe together’

b. Vorlagen zusammenheften ‘to staple handouts’

- To form a unit, to bring parts together, reduce the size

Reductive use II

23

(26) Papier zusammenfalten ‘to fold the paper’

(27) jmd. zusammenschlagen ‘to beat sb. up’

- Use with SG arguments
- A weird aspect of German grammar?
- Dutch uses the regular reciprocal markers

(28) Een groepje jongens heeft gisteren een bejaarde man in elkaar geslagen.

‘A group of young men beat up an elderly man.’

(29) Een kast in elkaar zetten ‘to put a wardrobe together’

Summary

24

- Core and periphery of reciprocity
- Number of types to be distinguished
- Analysis in terms of dimensions (canonical typology)
- Discussions in formal semantics are of limited use for comparative studies (e.g. analyses in terms of interaction between *each* and *other*)
- Vagueness in the meaning of reciprocal markers
- Semantic maps as a analytical tool

References

- Axelrod, R., Hamilton, W.D. 1981. The evolution of cooperation. *Science* 211:1390-96.
- Dalrymple, Mary et al. 1998. Reciprocal expressions and the concept of reciprocity. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 21.159-210.
- Evans, Nicholas. 2008. Reciprocal constructions: Towards a structural typology. In König & Gast (eds.), Pp. 33-103.
- Evans, Nicholas & Stephen Levinson (eds.) 2010. *Reciprocals and Semantic Typology*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Reference

- König, Ekkehard & Volker Gast (eds.) 2008.
Reciprocals and Reflexives. Theoretical and typological explorations. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Nedjalkov, Vladimir P. (2007) (ed.) *Reciprocal Constructions.* 5 vol. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- De Waal, Frans. 2005. How Animals Do Business.
Scientific American, 73-79.
- Stegbauer, Christian. 2002. *Reziprozität – Einführung in soziale Formen der Gegenseitigkeit.* Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**