The Meaning of Reciprocal Markers: Approaches and Generalizations

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(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.
(7) Si ammirano.
(8) Ci ha presentati l’un all’altro.
(9) Maria e Govanni 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)
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 aufeinander.
‘These two are proud of each other.’
Diese Dozenten meiden sich/einander.
‘These lectures avoid each other.’
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.
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

- 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

- 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

- 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;
• 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.
∀x ∈ A ∀y ∈ A [(x ≠ y) → xRy] (strong recip.)

(12) The students stared at each other.
∀x ∈ A ∃y ∈ A [(x ≠ y) → xRy] (weak recip.)

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

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

- 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

- Economy: polysemy or vagueness?
- Recurrent patterns of polysemy
  - middle
  - reflexive $\rightarrow$ reciprocal $\rightarrow$ sociative
  $\uparrow$
  - iterative
- Semantic motivation
The reflexive-reciprocal polysemy

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- Recurrent patterns of polysemy
  - middle
  - ↓
  - *reflexive → reciprocal → sociative
  - ↑
  - iterative
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) parasparadvesha ‘mutual hatred’
(22) anyonyarakscha ‘mutual protection’  
(Kulikov, 2007)
(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.
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

- 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-in* *a* ‘mother and child’

Fr. *l’hôte* ‘guest, host’, *louer* ‘lend, borrow’
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
(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

- 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


THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION