Basic patterns in a typology of reciprocity

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0. Introduction

- Reciprocity lies at the very root of social organization and ethics. (interesting for may disciplines)
- An enormous semantic complexity is expressed by a simple clause or sentence. → great variety of solutions;
- Events and states expressed by symmetric predicates (They met) and other joint actions (They kissed) are not cases of verbal plurality.

1. Concepts of reciprocity outside of linguistics

a. Biology

Both the theory of ‘kin selection’ (Hamilton, 1971) and the theory of ‘reciprocal altruism’ (Trivers, 1971) set out to explain the evolution of cooperative behaviour among animals (among kin and among non-kin; the vampire bats, Wilkinson, 1984)

- Reciprocity among primates; reciprocity mechanisms (attitudes) (Frans de Waal, 2005)
  (a) symmetry-based (mutual affection; without need to keep track of daily give-and-take)
  (b) attitudinal (conditional; parties mirror one another’s attitude, exchanging favours on the spot; humans: strategies with strangers)
  (c) calculated (individuals keep track of the benefits they exchange with particular partners, which helps them to decide to whom they want to return favours; humans: in distant and professional relationships)

b. Applied mathematics/economics

- The tit-for-tat strategy in the Prisoner’s Dilemma (Axelrod, 1984)
- the live-and-let-live strategy in the trench warfare of World War I (Ashworthy, 1980).

c. Sociology and anthropology

- reciprocity as a prerequisite for ending a condition of war of everyone against everyone” (Hobbes)
- the gift as a total social phenomenon; a community is founded on a ritualized recognition of interdependence (Marcel Mauss)

- forms of reciprocity (Stegbauer, 2002): positive interaction and exchange
  (a) direct reciprocity; the one who gives also receives; (“tit for tat”); corruption; buying/selling;
  (b) generalized reciprocity (no direct exchange; group membership; time delay; solidarity; tax; pension; transitivity of friendship or enmity))
  (c) reciprocity of roles (exchange is determined by positions of complementary roles: doctor – patient; artist – audience; friend – friend); converseness; auto-converseness;
  (d) reciprocity of perspectives (mind reading; understanding; to put oneself in somebody’s place; try to see it my way) → self-reflexive perspective;
- **Summary:** concepts of reciprocity outside of linguistics are positive, organised around interactions like ‘giving’, ‘exchange’, based on self-interest, remarkable cases, neither symmetry nor simultaneity are central;

2. **Concepts of ‘Reciprocity’ in Linguistics** (cf. Dalrymple et. al., 1998)

   (1) Inhabitants of this village help each other. (positive, weak)
   (2) Paul and Mary hate/ruined each other. (negative, simultaneous/sequential)
   (3) The boxes were stacked on top of each other. (chaining)
   (4) Inhabitants of these islands used to eat each other. (generalized)
   (5) People in this house know each other. (strong)
   (6) Many people at the party are married to each other. (pair wise reciprocal)
   (differences depend on verb, tense, number: dual vs. plural, etc.)

- **essential semantic properties**
  (i) **plurality** of arguments/participants (|A| ≥ 2)
  (ii) **double thematic role** of all participants
  (iii) **symmetry** expressed by predicate (different degrees of saturation)
  (iv) the relevant sentences express a **joint action** or **plurality of events** depending on the lexical meaning of the predicate and on the strategy chosen;

- **Summary:** symmetry is central: source of reciprocal markers (‘meet’, ‘exchange’, ‘comrade’, ‘friend’); symmetric predicates exhibit minimal marking; no evaluative component; definable only via a prototype; centrality of the dual situation;

- **semantic analysis in the style of Heim, Lasnik & May (1991)?**
  (7)a. The students stared at each other. (weak)
  b. What really happened is anyone’s guess but afterwards each accused the other of cheating. (strong, distributive)
  c. Each side continues to hold the other responsible for this ongoing conflict. (cf. Haas)

3. **Types of reciprocal constructions: an overview**

   - **A first distinction:** mono-clausal vs. multi-clausal strategies

   ![Fig. 1](image_url)

   - **strategies for encoding reciprocity** (specialized recip. constructions)
     - multi-clausal strategies
     - mono-clausal strategies
       - adverbial
       - predicational/verbal
       - argumental/nominal
- Subtypes of multi-clausal strategies

multi-clausal reciprocals

bi-clausal(a)  fused predicates

verb compounding  symmetric signing(e)  fused contrastive subj.(f)

with symmetric predicates(c)  repeated predicate(d)  

Fig. 2

Type a:

CANTONESE
(8) Léih mohng ngóh, ngóh mohng léih. ‘We stare at each other’
   I stare at you, you stare at me

MANDARIN
(11) T Men zēngshi n b ngzhù w_, w b ngzhù n_.
   They always you help me I help you
   ‘They always help each other.’
(12) ∀x,y ∈ A (x≠y → help (x,y)

Type c:

Lexical specification of action + joint/symmetric action

(13) JAPANESE  tasukeru ‘help’ > tasuke-au ‘help each other’ (with accusative)
   a. Hanako-ga Taro-o tasuke-ta.
      Hanako-NOM Taro-ACC help-PAST
      ‘Hanako helped Taro.’
   b. futari -wa tasuke-at-ta.
      two.CLASS(person)-TOP help-meet-PAST
      ‘These two helped each other.’

(14) MANDARIN
   T_men d l d qu.
   3PL beat-come-beat-go
   ‘They beat each other’

Type d:

Tok Pisin (Mosel 1980 : 108)  Godié/Kru (Marchese 1986: 231)
(15) Tupela i pait-im-pait-im.  (9) wa waw wa
    3du pred hit-tr hit-tr
    ‘They hit each other.’
    ‘They love-love

‘They love each other.’
Mono-clausal reciprocals

Single clause

- argument-marking strategy
- predicate-marking
- adverbial(p)
- bi-partite quantifier(g)
- nominal(h)
- pronoun
- affix(l)
- auxiliary(m)
- lexical(n)
- free(i)
- bound
- suffix
- prefix
- circumfix
- clitic(j)
- affix(k)

Fig. 3

Type g:

(16) ITALIAN
Si ammirano l’un l’altro.

RUSSIAN
(17) Oni _asto vid’at drug drug-a.
They often see.3PL one another-GEN
‘They often see each other.’

- variables; assignment function; change of direction; different degrees of grammaticalization;

Type h:

(18) Seychelles Creole
Nu a kapav tròp kamarad ê zur.
we FUT be.capable deceive REC one day
‘One day we will be able to deceive each other.’

Type i:

(20) HAUSA (Newman, 2000)
Kù tàimâki ju#nan-kù
2PL:AUX help RECIP-2PL (NUMBER MARKING)
‘You should help each other.’

Type j:

FRENCH
(21) Paul et sa femme ne s’entendent plus du tout.
‘Paul and his wife don’t get along anymore.’
Type l:
SWAHILI, Ashton, 1956
(22) Ali na Fatuma wa-na- pend-an -a
   Ali  and Fatuma 3.Pl-PRES-love-REC-final vowel
   ‘Ali and Fatuma like each other.’

Type p:
(24) MANDARIN
   T_men hú-x_ang daò-qian-le.
   They mutually apologize-PERF
   ‘They apologized to each other.’
(25)a. Jean aime Marie et réciproquement.
   b. Aidons-nous mutuellement !
   - How can we assign the enormous variety of cross-linguistic data to these different types ?
   - How many types should we distinguish?

4. Interaction with other categories, implicational connections

4.1. interaction with predicates (three classes of predicates)
(a) symmetric predicates (meet, divorce, agree, marry, similar, friend, mate, with, etc.),
(b) non-symmetric predicates (love, avoid, help, etc.),
(c) asymmetric predicates (follow, chase, talk at, on top of, etc.)
Parsimonious encoding of reciprocity for symmetric relations and joint actions: simple valency reduction

(26) They met/dated/danced/embraced/kissed/agreed/married/quarrelled/split up/divorced...

4.2. interaction with transitivity
reciprocal constructions are often (though not exclusively) intransitive; the oscillation between transitivity and intransitivity is a reflection of conflicting demands made on the syntax of reciprocal constructions; in ergative languages subjects sometimes exhibit ergative sometimes absolutive marking; contradictory signs of transitivity (cf. Evans, 2004):

   - In Oceanic languages reflexive constructions are always transitive, whereas reciprocal ones are often intransitive and invariably so (with one or two exceptions) with circumfixes as reciprocal markers:

KUSAIEAN (Micronesian)
(27) Macrike ac Sacpacinis a-mweun-i ke 1942.
   America and Japan REC-fight-REC in 1942
   ‘America and Japan fought against each other in 1942.’ (Lee, 1975: 201)

IAAI (Loyalty islands)
(28) Òdrine i-hmehmë-kòu.
   3PL_REST-REC=REC be ashamed-REC
   ‘They are ashamed of each other.’
   - In many languages (Hebrew, Russian, Swedish, Finnish, Turkic, Hungarian, Somali, etc.) intransitive reciprocal verbs are the result of derivational processes.
(29) De hjälpas åt.
    They help-MID to/for
    ‘They help each other.’

- The 3rd person “reflexive” pronoun in Continental European languages loses its **reciprocal interpretation** under stress (and in the context of a PP). The relevant constructions are intransitive (cf. Gast & Haas, 2004):

**GERMAN**
(30) Vor allem bewundern sie sich (SELBST)/SICH.
    ‘Above all they admire each other/they themselves.’

**4.3. interaction with grammatical relations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>direct obj</th>
<th>indirect object</th>
<th>possessive</th>
<th>adverbial</th>
<th>subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>(Nedjalkov, 2007)</td>
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(31)a. They admire each other’s house.
   b. They gave each other presents.
   c. They hate each other.

**FINNISH**
    Matti and Liisa like-3PL other-PL-ELA-3POSS
   b. Matti ja Liisa pita-vät toinen toise-sta-an. ‘Each of you brings joy to the other.’
    Matti and Liisa like-3PL other other-ELA-3POSS
   c. Toinen toise-nne tuotta-a teille ilo-a. ‘Each of you brings joy to the other.’
    other the other-2PL.POSS brings 2PL.ILL joy-PART

**4.4 Further cross-linguistic generalizations** (cf. Haspelmath, 2007)

(a) Only verb-marked reciprocals allow a discontinuous reciprocal construction.
(b) All recip. constructions with two arguments that refer to the set of reciprocants are anaphoric constructions.
(c) Different reciprocal markers are never used for different diathesis types (indirect, possessive, adverbial)
(d) In verbal reciprocals the reciprocants are always encoded by the subject.
(e) In all languages that have both an anaphoric and a verb-marked reciprocal, the former is younger and etymologically more transparent.
(f) All languages have lexically symmetric predicates.
(g) The higher the marker is on the Independence Scale, the longer it tends to be. (König & Kokutani, 2006)

**6. Historical observations**

- symmetric predicates are a frequent source for the development and grammaticalization of reciprocal markers (‘with’, ‘comrade’, ‘fellow’, ‘meet’, ‘exchange’, ‘opposite’); just like expressions for reversing the direction ‘back again’;
- different degrees of grammaticalization: the quantificational strategy
- Do these quantifiers combine with a pronoun? Is the pronoun obligatory? (Italian vs. French vs. English)

**FRENCH**
(32) a. Il nous a présentés l’un à l’autre. ‘He introduced us to each other. (Ci ha presentati l’un all’altro.) Il nous a présentés les uns aux autres.
b. Ils s’admirent (les uns les autres). Si ammirano (gli uni gli altri/l’un l’altro).
c. Maria e Giovanni si donano (l’un l’altro) regali.
d. Maria e Giovanni non donano regali ai propri figli ma donano regali l’una all’altro.

- further differences
  (a) Subject agreement: Romance vs. Germanic/Slavic
  (b) Case marking for second quantifier: Slavic/Romance/Finnish/Japanese vs. Germanic
  (c) Article: Romance vs. Germanic
  (d) Possessive Affix: Turkish, Finnish vs. Germanic, Romance, Slavic
  (e) Fusion or reduction of the quantifier: Germanic, Finnish, Turkish vs. Romance, Slavic

(33)a. Türk. birbir-imiz-e yardım ediyor-zu ‘We are helping each other.’
    One-one-2PL.POSS-DAT help be.PROG-2PL
b. Jap. tagai-ga tagai-o tasukeau, sore-ga ii.
   each-other-NOM each-other-ACC help.RECIP such-NOM be-good
‘It is good to help each other.’

References


