

Reciprocal-sociative coexpression and lexical semantics

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Some languages use one and the same marker for expressing reciprocal ('each other') and sociative ('together') meanings. Coexpression of reciprocal and sociative is described for Oceanic (Moyses-Faurie 2008), Turkic (Nedjalkov 2004), Bantu (Bostoen & Nzang-Bie 2010) and a number of other, typologically and geographically diverse, languages (Nedjalkov 2007b). However, compared to reflexive-reciprocal coexpression that has been studied extensively (e.g. Maslova & Nedjalkov 2013), much less is known about sociative-reciprocal coexpression. This talk presents a study on the coexpression of reciprocal and sociative in 39 languages from 25 different language families and discusses the role of lexical semantics in dividing the reciprocal-sociative domain.

In some languages coexpression of reciprocal and sociative is realized in one and the same predicate, such as the Yakut (Turkic) verb *ölör-üs* (kill-REC) 'to kill each other' or 'to kill someone together' (Nedjalkov 2007a: 237). More frequently, however, the meanings are complementary distributed according to the lexical semantics of the predicate, such as in (1), where certain predicates are associated with a certain meaning/function.

(1) Martuthunira (Pama-Nyungan (>South-West Pama-Nyungan: Dench 1995: 155);

a. *Ngaliwa thani-yarri-nguru*
1PL.INC hit-REC/SOC-PRS
'We're hitting one another'

b. *Ngaliwa mungka-yarri-nguru*
1PL.INC eat-REC/SOC-PRS
'We're eating together'

In earlier studies, the role of lexical semantics in reciprocal-sociative polysemy has only received limited attention. In this study, I investigate what kind of predicates are associated with which functions across languages with this polysemy. The data come from grammars and other available literature.

The reciprocal meaning tends to be restricted to a subset of bivalent verbs that allow a patient-like argument that can also function as an agent (e.g. 'hit', 'love'). Less obviously, the sociative function mostly emerges with movement verbs and verbs of social interaction (crying, singing, playing together). Between these two poles, verbs have a more reciprocal or a more sociative interpretation depending on semantics and number of participants.

Ingestion verbs stand out in that they tend to be associated with the sociative function ('eat together' rather than 'eat each other'), and if a reciprocal marker is only marginally used with the sociative function, it tends to be with verbs of eating and drinking. For example, in Gayo, the circumfix *bersi-...-(n)en* is reciprocal (2a), but with ingestion verbs it functions as a sociative (2b).

(2) Gayo (Austronesian>Oceanic: Eades 2005: 162)

a. *Bersi-tipak-an paké=a*
REC-kick-REC 3PL=that
'They kicked each other.'

- b. *bersi-angas-an*
REC-chew.betelnut-REC
'to chew betelnut together.'

It also seems that the distinction between reciprocal and sociative is neutralized with certain predicates that can be described as being in the middle of the transitivity continuum. As an illustration, the difference between English *talk together* and *talk to each other* is minimal compared to the difference between *kill together* and *kill each other*. Kemmer (1996) suggests that the diachronic development from reciprocal to sociative and vice versa goes through this group of predicates, such as 'dance', 'play', 'compete', 'quarrel' and 'talk', that involve interaction (like reciprocals) with a low level of affectedness (like sociatives). I discuss to what degree my data align with this hypothesis.

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