Verbal and Nominal Reciprocals in South Asian Languages: A
Syntactic Typology
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A. Introduction

- Strategies, and a typology of reciprocalization
- Overview of the languages of India
- Some Case Studies
- A Typology of the reciprocal construction in South Asian languages

B. Anaphoric strategies

- Deconstruction of the notion 'anaphor': Instead of distinguishing 'anaphors' from 'pronouns' (Chomsky 1981), we could distinguish types of 'reflexives' (Reinhart & Reuland 1993) and 'reciprocals'. One step further is deconstructing 'reflexive strategies'/reciprocal strategies'; the morphosyntactic makeup of 'reflexives'/reciprocals' will trigger certain (more fundamental) grammatical mechanisms (=> 1) resulting in what we recognize as the 'binding conditions'.
- Languages regularly use more than one reflexive/reciprocal strategy, and there is no a priori reason to distinguish primary from secondary strategies.

(1) Reflexivization strategies (based on grammatical mechanism)

(i) chain formation (triggered by underspecified pronominal element)
(ii) agreement (person/gender/number agreement; case agreement)
(iii) arity operations (morphosyntactic marking of the verb; incorporation (triggered by semantic underspecification)

(2) Dimitriadis & Everaert (2004), following up on Faltz (1977)

(i) Reflexivity is taken as a construction, not a morpheme. That is, not necessarily linked to a word or morpheme that could be called a reflexive. In other words it could be the use of a pronoun, noun, morpheme, change in verb form, or any other morphosyntactic means used by a language to carry out the reflexive function.
(ii) A construction is reflexive if it can be used to express identity, coreference, between two arguments of a single predicate. => (3)
(3) **Types of Reflexive Strategies** (*compatible with Reinhart & Reuland (1993))

a. via reflexive marking of one of the arguments
   i. designated pronoun (German *sich*, Polish *sobie*)
   ii. designated noun Albanian (*vetja*), Japanese (*zibun*)
   iii. pronoun+designated noun ‘and’ pronoun+designated noun (Mizo *amaah leh amaaḥ*)
   etc.

b. via reflexive marking of the predicate through
   i. adding a derivational affix (Kannada *koLLu*)
   ii. adding a clitic (French *se*)
   iii. adding an ‘auxiliary’ verb (Tamil *kiDu/kol*)
   etc.

c. via a combination of a. and b. (Kannada *taanu & koLLu*)
   etc.

(4) **Types of reciprocity strategies** (*based on König & Kokutani 2006 a.o.*)

a. nominal strategy: via reciprocal marking of one of the arguments
   i. pronominal: Hindi
   ii. quantificational: Malayalam
   etc.

b. verbal strategy: via reciprocal marking of the predicate
   i. synthetic (Kannada *koLLu*)
   ii. compound (Tamil *kiDu/kol*)
   etc.

c. via a combination of a. and b. (Kannada, Telugu *taanu & koLLu*)
   etc.

D. **The languages of India:**

There are four language families in the South Asian subcontinent:

(i) Austro-Asiatic (Mon-Khmer and Munda): Juang, Khari, Khasi, Mundari, ....

(ii) Dravidian: Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, ...

(iii) Indo-Aryan: Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Oriya, ....

(iv) Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman: Angami, Ao, Mizo, Hmar, ....
E. Anaphoric binding in South Asian languages is expressed either in terms of:

(i) **A nominal anaphor** (reflexive or reciprocal, or a simple pronoun)
Most of the Indo-Aryan languages except Gujarati, Marathi and Sinhala and some Tibeto-Burman languages have only the nominal form of the anaphor.

(ii) **A verbal anaphor** (a verbal clitic for the reflexive or reciprocal), or
Most of the Munda (Austro-Asiatic) languages have only a verbal device and the nominal device is not present except in a few languages such as Juang (Patnaik & Subbarao 2000) and Korku (Nagaraja 1999).

(iii) **Both nominal and verbal**.
All Dravidian languages except Malayalam, and many Tibeto-Burman languages and Khasi (Mon-Khmer) have both the nominal and verbal anaphor.

E.1 The nominal reciprocal

**Dravidian**: Telugu
okalla- ni okalla
One acc one (nom)
‘each other’
okalla- mida okalla- Ki
One One dat
‘at each other’ (when the antecedent is dative case-marked)

**Indo-Aryan**: Hindi-Urdu
ek dusre Ko
one another Acc/dat
‘(to) one another’

**Mon-Khmer**: Khasi
i- wêi ya i- wêi
hon- one acc Hon- one
‘each other’

**Munda**: Juang
apein āpein- Te
Self Self acc
(Patnaik & Subbarao 2000:844)
**Tibeto-Burman Mizo**

Direct object

\[ \text{an-} \quad \text{māʔ-} \quad \text{ni-} \quad \text{le?} \quad \text{an-} \quad \text{māʔ-} \quad \text{ni-} \]

3 pl self Pl And 3 pl self pl

‘each other’

**E.2 The verbal reciprocal**

- The verbal reciprocal is monomorphemic in all South Asian languages.
- Indo-Aryan languages do not have a productive verbal reciprocal.

**Dravidian:** Telugu

kon-

\[ \text{vrec} \]

Tibeto-Burman: Mizo and Hmar

\[ \text{-in-} \quad \text{vrec} \]

Mon-Khmer: Khasi

\[ \text{-ya-} \quad \text{vrec} \]

Munda: Mundari, Santali, and Ho

\[ \text{-pA-} \quad \text{vrec} \]

where the vowel –\( \text{A} \)- harmonizes with the preceding stem vowel.

**F. Some case studies**

**F.1 Case 1: Munda language family**

- Most of the Munda languages have only the verbal reflexive and reciprocal and the nominal device is totally absent.

\[ \text{Santali (Munda)} \]

5. \[ \text{unkin-} \quad \text{kin} \quad \text{∅} \quad \text{dā-} \quad \text{pā-} \quad \text{vrec-} \]

\[ \text{they dual-} \quad \text{dual} \quad \text{hit1-} \quad \text{vrec-} \]

l-

\[ \text{kā-} \quad \text{n-} \quad \text{a} \]

\[ \text{Hit2-} \quad \text{Pst-} \quad [\text{tr-}] \quad \text{fin} \]

‘They hit each other.’
Mundari (Munda)

6. sanātan butnī-lo?ō bagaica-rekiŋ na- pa- m ke-n-a

Sanatan Butni-with garden-in meet1 v rec meet 2 pst[-tr] fin

‘Sanatan met with Butni in the garden.’

- Absence of the verbal reciprocal:
(i) With psychological predicates the expression korege ko ‘amongst themselves’ is used, and no verbal reciprocal is used.

7. hon- ko korege ko kayrao?- tana
child pl amongst themselves getting angry- progr

‘The children are getting angry at each other.’

(ii) The verbal reciprocal marker does not occur with predicates borrowed from Hindi/Sadri, the dominant superstrate languages spoken in the area.

8. hon- ko iskūl- re mulakat jana/ milāo- jana
child pl school in meeting pst meet pst

‘The children met each other in school.’

(iii) Mundari seems to have calqued the nominal reciprocal from Hindi/Sadri, and in such cases the verbal reciprocal –pe- may or may not be used.

9. hon- ko Ako ako- regi e- pe- ger
child pl each other with abuse1 v rec abuse2
ke- n- a- ko/ eger ke- n- a- ko
Pst [-tr] fin- pl abuse pst [-tr] fin- pl

‘The children abused each other.’

- The verbal reciprocal in Kharia (Munda)

Kharia (Munda)

10. kol baʔi- ki- kiyar
v rec like middle pst dual agr

‘They (dual) liked each other.’

(Peterson 2005: 169)

11. pro, yo- do- ki- kiyar
They see- v r- Middle pst- dual

‘They saw themselves (e.g., in the mirror.)’

(Peterson 2005: 223)
- Lichtenberk (1985) distinguishes four types for reciprocal constructions:
  (i) reflexive: -
  (ii) reciprocal: *kol* as a verbal reciprocal as in (6) above.
  (iii) Collective/group marker ‘to do some thing together or help one another’.
  12. Kol buli- taʔj- kiyar
      \(_{\text{vrec}}\) \(_{\text{wander}}\) \(_{\text{middle}}\) \(_{\text{progr}}\) \(_{\text{dual agr}}\)
      ‘They’re (dual) walking together.’
      (Peterson 2005: 169)
  (iv) Chaining situations
  13. Kol kuday- ki- kiyar
      \(_{\text{vrec}}\) Chase \(_{\text{middle}}\) \(_{\text{pst}}\) \(_{\text{dual agr}}\)
      ‘They (dual) chased each other (“closed chain”, Lichtenberk 1985:25)
      (Peterson 2005: 169)

F.2 Case2: Khasi (Mon-Khmer) (SVO)
- Khasi has a verbal reciprocal as well as a nominal reciprocal. The verbal reciprocal (VRec) *ya-* occurs as a prefix on the verb unlike the verbal reflexive which occurs as a suffix. The nominal reciprocal is *i-wɛi-ya-i-wɛi* ‘honifortic-one-accusative-honorific-one’. (Data collected from Ms. Grace Temsen).

  **Khasi (Mon-Khmer)**
  14. ki- \(_{\text{kʰ+naʔ}}\) Ki- ya- do? (i- wɛi- ya- i- wɛi)
      \(_{\text{Pl- Child}}\) \(_{\text{Pl- vrec- kiss hon- one- acc- hon- one}}\)
      ‘The children (many) are kissing one another.’

- The verbal reciprocal performs a variety of functions:
  (i) The marker *ya-* indicates that the activity performed is a group activity.
  15. ki- \(_{\text{kʰ+naʔ}}\) ki- ya- \(_{\text{bam}}\) \(_{\text{ŋa}}\)
      \(_{\text{Pl- Child pl- group mkr}}\) \(_{\text{Eat rice}}\)
      ‘The children as a group are eating food.’

  (ii) *ya-* also functions as a hortative marker
  16. ya- ni- n- ya- \(_{\text{ɛyt}}\) \(_{\text{(nuʔ)}}\)
      \(_{\text{hortative pl- fut- vrec- go descend (sec. verb)}}\)
      ‘Let’s go (right away).’

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(iii) As collaborative effort marker (-cem).

17. u- ban u- ya- kīndat ya- ka- borti
masc Ban masc.sg cem kick acc fem bucket

‘Ban and the others are kicking the bucket.’

(collaborative effort to achieve a common goal)

F.3 Case 3: Dravidian

- In all Dravidian languages the nominal reciprocal is polymorphemic.

- The verbal reciprocal in Telugu (Dravidian) is kon; the verbal reciprocal just as the verbal reflexive is subject-oriented.

**Telugu (Dravidian)** (Subbarao & Lalitha Murthy 2000:261)

18. abbāyilu₁ ammāyila₁ ki okāllā- ni okāllu₁,
boy-pl Girls Dat one.pl acc one.pl
Paricayam cēsu- konn₁,₁j ā- ru

*Introduce* Do vrec- pst pl

19. abbāyi-lu₁ ammāyili₁ ni okāllā- ki okāllā- ni₁,₁j
boy-pl Girls acc One dat one- Acc
paricayam cēs- ā- ru/ *paricayam cēsu- konn- ru
*introduce* Do pst Pl *introduce* do Vrec- pl

‘The boys introduced the girls to each other (to the girls themselves, and not to the boys).’

- The occurrence of the verbal reciprocal is not permitted when the reciprocal occurs as a modifier. (Subbarao & Lalitha Murthy 2000:260)

20. vālli okāllā- pillali-ni okāllu muuddu koḍatāru/
They one’s children- one.polite pamper/ acc
cēstāru/ hit/ Scold
tidatāru

‘They pamper/scold/hit each other’s children.’

- Evidence for case copying comes from the dative subject construction.

21. pillala- ki okāllā- mīḍa okāllā- ki prēma kaligindi
Children dat one- on one Dat affection developed

‘The children developed affection towards each other.’
- While the occurrence of the verbal reciprocal is obligatory in Telugu (Dravidian), the occurrence of the nominal anaphor is optional in Kannada (Dravidian).
- Verbs such as kalusu konu ‘meet-vrec’, muddu pettu-konu ‘kiss-vrec’, pōḷāḍu-konu ‘quarrel-vrec’, etc. invariably carry the verbal reciprocal: inherently reciprocal verbs.
  The verb kalusu konu ‘meet-vrec’ with a non-coindexed argument
  22 talli tandrulul, pillali- ni kalusu- konni- ā- ru
  parents children meet vrec pst pl
  ‘The parents met (their) children.’

F.4 Case 4: Tibeto-Burman
-In Mizo, Hmar the verbal reflexive and reciprocal are homophonous, and they have a nominal anaphor too. Verbal anaphor: obligatory.
- Nominal anaphor: optional in Mizo and Hmar.

Mizo (Tibeto-Burman)
- Anaphor in DO position: No ergative marker permitted for a set of speakers.
  23. Zovi le? lali an- mā?- Ni le?
     Zovi and Lali they self Pl
     an- mā?- ni an- in- suāl
     They- self pl 3pl- vrec- fight
     ‘Zovi and Lali are fighting with each other.’

- Anaphor in IO position: The verbal reciprocal occurs and the ergative marker with the subject is obligatory (Lalitha Murthy & Subbarao 2000:822).
  24. Zovi le? lali- n an- mā?- ni
    Zovi and Lali- n They self pl
    hnēna? lomān An- an- Pe
    Dat prize An- vr/vrec- give
    ‘Zovi and Lali gave a prize to each other/themselves.’

Hmar (Tibeto-Burman)
- The ergative marker is obligatory when the anaphor occurs in the direct object position. (fieldnotes)
25. **Zovi** le lali- n an- mā- ni

**Zovi** and Lali **erg** they **self** **pl**

Le an- mā- ni an- in- hmuŋ

And They- **self pl** 3pl- **vrec-** See

‘Zovi and Lali are looking at each other.’

- Universal Grammar provides two options: In some languages the direct reflexive is a detransitivizing device, because it conflates the Agent and Patient into a single core NP, and in some others such conflation does not take place and hence, the detransitivizing effect is not present. Thus, Mizo belongs to the former group, while Hmar belongs to the latter.

- In the Tibeto-Burman family, in Angami, aka, Tenyidie, and Ao of the Naga group spoken in Nagaland and in Rabha spoken in Assam, only a verbal reciprocal is available. There is no verbal reflexive.

**Rabha (TB)**

- In Rabha (TB) the verbal reciprocal is **-jin-**, and the nominal reciprocal is ina una ‘each other’. The verbal and nominal anaphor may together occur, or either of them can be present.

**Rabha (Tibeto-Burman)**(Subbarao et al 2004)

26. orong ina una nukbar -jin- ba

they each other fall in love vrec pst

‘They fell in love with each other.’

- When ina una ‘each other’ is present, the verbal reciprocal **-jin-** can be dropped.

27. orong (-be) ina una nukbar Ø -ba

they nom each other fall in love vrec pst

‘They fell in love with each other.’

**Angami (aka, Tenyidie) (Tibeto-Burman)**

- Angami presents a very fascinating case with regard to the nature of the verb in reciprocal constructions.

(i) Angami has only a nominal reflexive, and it has no verbal reflexive, but it has a verbal reciprocal ke occuring to the left of the verb in Angami. (Kevichusa 1999)
28. \text{uni-e,} \ e \ lešə \ thu
\text{ke} \text{-tsə-} \ ya
v \text{rec-give-} \ pres

‘They (dual), write letters to each other.’

(ii) It has a nominal reciprocal \text{huo-nie-huo} ‘some-dual-some’ (‘each other’), which is a reduplicated form.

29 unie-
\text{they (dual)} \ E \ \text{thisonhie} \ \text{huo-nie-huo} \ \text{ŋũ-} \ ya
\text{ŋũ-} \ ya
\text{v rec} \ \text{see} \ \text{pres}

‘They see each other everyday.’

When the \text{nominal reciprocal} occurs, a monotransitive verb has \text{falling–rising tone}. (cf 29) When the \text{verbal reciprocal} \text{ke} occurs, the \text{verb has rising -falling tone}. (30):

30 unie-
\text{they (dual)} \ E \ \text{thisonhie} \ \text{ke-} \ \text{ŋũ-} \ ya
\text{ŋũ-} \ ya
\text{v rec} \ \text{see} \ \text{pres} \ \text{pres}

‘They see each other everyday.’

The nominal reciprocal and the verbal reciprocal cannot cooccur for there is a \text{Tone Clash/Tonal Conflict}. (Kevichüsa 2007:105)

31 *unie-
\text{they (dual)} \ E \ \text{thisonhie} \ \text{huo-nie-huo} \ \text{ke-} \ \text{ŋũ-} \ ya \ \text{ŋũ-} \ ya
\text{ŋũ-} \ ya \ \text{v rec} \ \text{see} \ \text{pres} \ \text{pres}

‘They see each other everyday.’

\text{Ao (Mongsen)}:
- The verbal reciprocal is \text{təp."}; No verbal reflexive. (Pangersenla 2005: 65).
- The complex nominal reciprocal is \text{a nə a} ‘one nominative marker one’.

\text{Manipuri (TB)}
- In Manipuri (TB) the verbal reciprocal marker is \text{–na-} and the nominal reciprocal in the direct object position is \text{ama-na ama-bu}.
- While the occurrence of the verbal reflexive is optional, \text{the occurrence of the verbal reciprocal is obligatory}. Thus, there is an asymmetry with regard to the occurrence/ presence of the verbal reciprocal and reflexive. (Sarju Devi & Subbarao 2005)

32. \text{makhoi-} \ \text{na} \ \text{ama-} \ \text{na} \ \text{ama-} \ \text{bu} \ \text{thagat-} \ *\text{(na)-} \ \text{rammi}
\text{they} \ \text{nom} \ \text{one} \ \text{nom} \ \text{one} \ \text{acc} \ \text{praise} \ \text{vrec} \ \text{pst}

‘They each praised the other.’

V. Differences between reflexives and reciprocals

V.1 Possessor Suppression:

*Telugu (Dravidian)*

33. mādhuri moham kaḍugu- koṇ- di
    Madhuri face wash vr agr
    ‘Madhuri washed her own face.’

34. mādhuri tana cētuḷu kaḍugu- koṇ- akunḍā
    Pillala self’s hands wash vr without
    ‘Madhuri washed the children’s hands without washing her hands.’

(Subbarao & Lalitha Murthy 2000: ibid)

- In contrast, with regard to reciprocals, (i) the verbal reciprocal is not permitted and consequently, (ii) the occurrence of the possessor reciprocal is obligatory.

35. pilḷalu okalla cētuḷu okalla kaḍì-
    children each one’s hands each wash
    ēru/ *kaḍuṇ- konn- ēru
    pst.agr wash vrec pst.agr
    ‘The children each washed their hands.’

V.2. Long-distance binding

- A composite anaphor in South Asian languages (except Marathi) does not permit long-distance binding while a simplex anaphor does, provided the embedded clause does not contain a verbal reflexive. Reciprocals never allow long-distance binding.

*Hindi-Urdu (Indo-Aryan)*

36. adhyaṇapō, - ne chātṛa- se [s₂PRO] ek dūṣre- i,j ko
    teachers Erg students with each other acc
doṣ blame Na dene ko s₂,] kahā
    said
    ‘The teachers, asked the students, not to blame each other, i,j.’

- Marathi (IA) is the only language that we know of that permits long-distance binding of a nominal reciprocal (35) and reflexive (36) that is a complex form.
37. tyā lokā- ni, śam- lā [[PRO ekamekā- those people erg Sham- dat each other
nā, bockārār- u]] dila
dat pinch inf allowed
'Those people, allowed Sham to pinch each other.'
(Wali 2000:555)

38. lili, Ni sham, [s2PRO] (āplyā) swatāh-lā,ij bockār-u s2] dila
Lili erg Sham self self-acc pinch allowed
-Lā

'Lili allowed Sham to pinch self iij.'
(Wali 2000:534)

VI Summary:
- reflexives/reciprocals are alike in being anaphors, and the overview above showes that similar/identical strategies are used. (39) gives a somewhat more detailed overview of reciprocity strategies:

(39) Types of reciprocity strategies
a. nominal strategy: via reciprocal marking of one of the arguments
   i. pronominal: Hindi, Oriya, Bangla, Gujarati
   ii. quantifiational Malayalam
      - 'same case strategy'
         Kannada, Tamil: [case position] [case antecedent]
         Malayalam: [case antecedent] case position
b. verbal strategy: via reciprocal marking of the predicate
   i. synthetic (Kannada koLLi)
   ii. compound (Tamil kiDu/koLi)
      - Vrec=Vrefl: Kannada, Sinhala
      - Vrec obligatory: Telugu for DO
      - Vrec barred: Telugu when Dative subject
      - No Vrec: Bangla, Gujarati, Punjabi
c. via a combination of a. and b. (Kannada, Telugu taanu & koLLi)
d. Adverbia (Malayalam, Hindi)

Some implications: Mental organization of the human language, language typology and Universal Grammar

Abbreviations:


Acknowledgements:
We are grateful to our language consultants Grace Temsen, Poonam, John Nag, Mimi Kevichusa, Sarju Devi and Upen Rabha Hackcham for their invaluable help.

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