

Berlin – Utrecht Reciprocals Survey: Marker Inventory & Overview

Version: 10 January 2008. Edited by Alexis

Background

The purpose of this Reciprocals Survey is to identify reciprocal “markers” in your language, and determine a few of their properties. By **reciprocal marker** we mean any **grammaticalized**, i.e., conventionalized, means of expressing reciprocity.

1. Languages frequently have several markers; some markers are typically limited to a certain group of verbs, or to reciprocity between certain syntactic positions, certain types of situations, and so on.
2. Reciprocal markers often have other meanings (e.g., reflexive) in addition to the reciprocal.
3. A legitimate (and common) marker is the “null” strategy: e.g., in English “*They met*” is used with reciprocal meaning, ‘they met each other’.

It is up to you to determine whether a particular marker (including the null strategy) is used often enough in your language to be included. For borderline cases (or if in doubt), you can list a marker in the Marker Inventory (Part 1 of the questionnaire), but not complete the more detailed questions in Part 2 (or give only the most basic information).

The first part of the questionnaire, the Marker Inventory, supports the identification of the reciprocal markers. Please translate the sentences provided, and identify the **distinct** reciprocal strategies used. Then consider questions in the remainder of Part 1; perhaps they will help identify additional reciprocal markers.

After completing the Marker Inventory, please answer the more detailed questions, in Part 2 of the questionnaire, for **each** marker identified in the Inventory. (If there are many markers, or if some are very marginal, you can only provide details for the most important ones).

Please gloss and translate example sentences you provide. In some cases, it is useful to construct *ungrammatical* sentences. When you do so, please indicate ungrammaticality clearly (e.g., with a * before the sentence).

You are always encouraged to add comments or clarifications whenever you consider this appropriate.

0 Session information

0.1 About the language

Name of the language

Ethnologue code

Dialect/variety reported, and/or region where it is spoken

Transliteration conventions or special characters used.

Background (published) sources consulted

0.2 About the session

Analyst conducting session:

Analyst's familiarity with the language:

What language is the session conducted in?

Date(s) of interview session

General comments about the session

0.3 About the language consultant

Name:

Is it ok to credit you by name for this information, in the web database?

[Note: If not, DO NOT enter the name, or any potentially identifying information, in the database. Use initials or leave the field empty]

Year of birth:

Gender:

Occupation:

Level of education:

Language biography: List your major places of residence, years, and the language(s) you spoke there. For each language, indicate what it was used for (home, friends, education, market, work, ...)

How old were you when you learned this language?

How well can you use the reported language?

Native speaker

Near-native command

Very well (fluent)

Limited communication skills

How much do you know about the grammar of the reported language?

as speaker only, no formal knowledge

was taught traditional grammar in school

specialized knowledge, e.g., as language teacher or linguist

Berlin-Utrecht Reciprocals Survey, Part 1

Inventory of reciprocal markers

Please complete the **session information (Part 0)** first.

1A. Free translation

Please provide translations of the following sentences, into your language in the most natural way:

1. Bill and Jane pinched each other.
2. Jane and Bill hate each other.
3. The students met.
4. Jane and Bill argued.
5. Bill and Jane are sitting next to each other.
6. They gave each other a present.
7. They complained about each other.
8. Bill introduced the guests to each other.
9. They cut each other's hair.
10. They followed each other (in a line).
11. The five guests arrived one after the other.
12. The boxes are stacked on top of each other.

1B. Identifying Markers

Please identify the **different** reciprocal markers used in the above sentences. It is possible that some of your translations did not use a reciprocal marker at all (e.g., if a noun or other construction was used instead of an action verb).

For each reciprocal marker you identify, choose a short name (e.g., “-ana”, “einander”, “passive morphology”, etc.), and give a typical example sentence (you can refer to the translations you've given above, of course). If appropriate, you can use translations of the same sentence for different reciprocal markers: e.g., “They hate *each other*” and “They hate *one another*”. For comparison, please also record an equivalent non-reciprocal sentence (e.g., “They hate John”).

1C. Additional reciprocal markers

Now consider the following types of predicates and situations, as exemplified by the test sentences below. Can any of them be expressed using a reciprocal marker **not** already identified? (Some of the sentences have already appeared on the list above; you should now consider whether there are different ways of translating them).

At this point it is enough to get a **single** example sentence for each reciprocal marker. It is not necessary to translate these sentences if they use a marker that has already been identified. (But it's also ok to translate extra sentences for later use). The remainder of the questionnaire will further investigate each marker identified here.

1.1 General transitive predicates

Bill and Jane hate each other.
Jane and Bill kicked each other.

1.2 Symmetric predicates

Jane and Bill met.
The students met.
Jane and Bill argued.
They are similar.
Bill and Jane are sitting next to each other.

1.3 Oblique objects, PPs, (Adjuncts?)

They gave each other a present.
They went to each other (visited each other).
They complained about each other.
Bill introduced the guests to each other.
Mary told the boys about each other.
Jane and Bill have a picture of each other.
They cut each other's hair.

1.3 Asymmetric predicates

They followed each other.
They followed each other (in a line).
The five guests arrived one after the other.
The boxes are stacked on top of each other.

1.4 Other

Are there other reciprocal markers not yet reported? For example, used only with PPs, or for reciprocation between a main and an embedded clause. Give an example of any marker found.

Have you considered the "null" strategy, which allows some verbs (with plural subject) to be interpreted reciprocally by simply dropping their object?

Berlin-Utrecht Reciprocals Survey, Part 2

Overview of reciprocal marker: . . .

Please complete this part of the questionnaire separately for each reciprocal marker identified in Part 1. If you have identified several reciprocal markers, you may choose to provide answers only for the “important” ones, and put aside marginal constructions.

Select a short name for each marker you have identified (e.g., “einander” or “-an”), make a copy of this questionnaire, and enter the name above. Then answer all questions for this marker.

Background

To understand our terminology, consider the simplest case of a reciprocal like English *each other*.

- (1) a. John saw Mary.
- b. They saw each other.

Reciprocalization always establishes some relationship between two arguments of a predicate or extended predicate. In this simple case, the relationship is between the subject and object of the predicate, but might be between the subject and indirect object, the indirect and the direct object, the subject and an adjunct, etc.

In reciprocal sentence (1b), the subject can be considered the *antecedent* of the reciprocal marker. We adopt this perspective even when the reciprocal does not occupy the syntactic position of the object, e.g., when it is a verbal affix, and speak in general of the *antecedent* of the reciprocal. For full generality we will speak of the *higher argument* (the subject, in this case), and the *lower argument* (in this case the object). In sentence (2), the antecedent is the direct object *them* and the “lower argument” is the indirect object:

- (2) He introduced them to each other.

2 Morphology

2.1 Form

What is/are the position(s) of the exponent(s)¹?

[Affix on the verb / clitic / separate NP / adverbial , etc]

Give a detailed glossed breakdown of any parts of the exponent, indicating lexical meaning and/or grammatical function of each part.

Can the exponent be used with its literal lexical meaning (not as a reciprocal)?

[yes/no]

Can you speculate on the historical origin of the exponent or its parts?

If there is a detectable lexical source, what is it?

[one-other, each-other, friend-friend, self, head, etc.]

2.2 Agreement

Is the exponent invariant (always the same)?

[If the answer is “yes”, the next few questions do not apply]

Does the marker of reciprocity agree with the antecedent/subject? [y/n]

(If so:) What features of the *antecedent* (higher argument) is there agreement with?

[person, case, gender, noun classes, etc]

Does the case, argument position, or thematic role of the *lower argument* (the one replaced by the reciprocal) affect the form of the exponent? For example, if dative and accusative arguments trigger different forms of this reciprocal. (Note that this question applies even to verbal reciprocals: Does the form of the verbal affix depend on which argument is replaced?)

Give the agreement paradigm, referring to example sentences if necessary. Explain.

Do any other properties of the verb/predicate affect the form of the reciprocal exponent?

Which ones? (Consider verb conjugation classes, tense or aspect, vowel harmony, consonant mutation, lexical particularities, etc.)

¹ The **exponent** is the visible part of the reciprocal marker: The words or affix that are added to a sentence to make a reciprocal construction. If a marker involves both a verbal affix and an NP (as, for example, in French *ils se semble l' un l' autre*), note both positions.

3 Syntax and argument structure

3.1 Argument positions

One grammatical example for each position is enough; if the position cannot be used with this marker, give one ungrammatical example.

A. Possibilities for the “lower” reciprocated argument

Which of the following argument positions can be placed in a reciprocal relation with the subject?

- Direct object:
John and Mary pushed each other.
- Indirect object
Jane and Bill gave a card to each other.
- Prepositional object
They complained about each other
- Adjunct
They sang near each other.
They sang about each other.
Mary and John cooked for each other.
- Possessor of direct object
They painted each other's house.
- Other: If the language has important syntactic categories of NPs other than the above (e.g., “Topic”), test these as well.

B. Possibilities for the higher argument

Can a non-subject serve as the higher argument (antecedent)? E.g., by reciprocating between a direct and an indirect object, or between an object and an adjunct. [Y/N]

If yes, give 1-2 different examples, like the following

John told the children about each other
Bill introduced the travellers to each other

[Section 4 is omitted from this version of the questionnaire]

5 Selection and Semantic/Syntactic classes

5.1 Verb class

With which of the following verb classes can the marker be used, *as a reciprocal*?

Non-symmetric (general transitive)

Bill and Jane push each other.

They hate each other.

Jane and Bill kicked each other.

Symmetric (social interaction: talking, loving, fighting)

The students met.

Jane and Bill argued.

They are similar.

Bill and Jane are sitting next to each other.

Asymmetric

They followed each other. (i.e., in a line)

The five guests arrived one after the other.

The boxes are stacked on top of each other.

Grooming

They shaved each other. (combed, cut hair, delouse, ...)

Stative

They distrust each other.

They love each other/ get along with each other.

5.2 Antecedent class

Are there any restrictions on the animacy or concreteness of participants?

Which of the following classes of participant can the marker be used with? (Add language-specific categories if appropriate).

Human

Animal

Inanimate

Abstract

Other: (language-specific categories)

5.4 Other word classes

Can this marker be applied to nouns or adjectives, instead of verbs? [yes/no; 1 example]

E.g., help / destruction of each other; proud / afraid / suspicious of each other; etc.

6 Polysemy Classes

In **addition** to their reciprocal use, many markers have other uses. In many European languages, for example, reciprocal markers such as *se* and *sich* can also form reflexives or middles.

Can this reciprocal marker take any of the following **non-reciprocal** meanings, when used with appropriate verbs?

Collective/ Distributive

They cultivated the field (together).

They built a raft.

Dispersive

They were running around.

They ran away from each other.

Intensive/Repetitive

They dug a lot.

They jumped over and over.

Reflexive

He defended himself.

Medio-reflexive (self-directed intransitive)²

He sits/shakes/awakes.

Medio-passive³

The door was painted.

This book reads easily.

Referential (pronominal)

Bill hit him/them (OR: his friend/other person).

Impersonal subject

People admire this painting.

Depatientive/Arbitrary

The dog bites [unspecified people] / is liable to bite.

² The category *medio-reflexive* is traditionally termed “middle” in the grammar of Ancient Greek. The marker is applied, perhaps obligatorily, to predicates that describe moving one’s own body, etc., and could therefore be expected to be intransitive.

³ The category *medio-passive* is also known as “middle” or “pseudopassive”. It is applied to a transitive predicate, promoting its object to a subject of the resulting form. (E.g., *I read the book* → *the book reads easily*)

Other systematic meaning

If there is a *systematic* alternative meaning that is not included above, describe it and give some examples.

Can a single sentence have several of the above meanings? Discuss.

6.1 Special idiomatic/non-compositional uses

Are there uses of the marker whose meaning is lexicalized? (I.e., idiosyncratic, unpredictable, non-compositional).⁴ For example: Ger. *sich schlagen* ‘hit + *sich*’ means ‘to argue, have a fight’. The non-lexicalized meaning would be ‘to hit each other’.

If yes, give some examples. In their translation, indicate whether an example is ambiguous between a lexicalized and a literal meaning (or if it can only have the lexicalized meaning).

7 Discontinuous Reciprocals

Background

In the “discontinuous reciprocal” construction, the logical subject of the reciprocal (the participants in the reciprocal relationship) is split up into two different arguments: the syntactic subject and a “comitative argument”, usually expressed with the preposition *with*, instrumental or comitative case, etc. An example from German:

Johann schlugt sich mit Maria
Johann hits RCP with Maria
‘Johann and Maria argue with each other’

Examples in other languages might look like this:

John met-RCP with Bill (Meaning: John and Bill met each other)
John hit-RCP with Bill (Meaning: John and Bill hit each other)
John kissed-RCP with Mary (Meaning: John and Mary kissed [each other])

(Only the *meet* and *kiss* sentences correspond to grammatical English examples).

Recognizing a discontinuous reciprocal can be non-trivial in SOV languages, or where there is no clear difference between *and* and *with*. The crucial property is whether the reciprocated participants form one constituent or two separate ones. Depending on the language, this may be indicated by having singular instead of plural agreement on the verb (i.e., only with the subject part), or by allowing an adverb or other word between subject and comitative, etc. Please consider what would make a good test in your language, and provide appropriate examples.

⁴ An idiomatic meaning is one that cannot be described by a systematic (or productive) meaning shift such as “reciprocal” or “reflexive”.

Some reciprocal markers in some languages can be used in the discontinuous construction, others cannot. For example, in German it is possible with the reciprocal *sich* but not with the reciprocal *einander*.

Even if a marker can be used discontinuously, this may be possible with some verbs and not with others. We are interested in knowing which verbs allow the construction, and also which verbs do not.

Questions

1. Can this marker be used with the “discontinuous reciprocal” construction?
2. Translate the following reciprocal sentences (if grammatical for this marker; if not, use other appropriate verbs).

John and Bill met-RCP.
John and Bill hit-RCP.
Bill and Mary kissed-RCP.
John and Bill taught-RCP.

[Skip this question if you do not understand what it means:]

3. Which of the above sentences *could* describe a “non-symmetric” situation, involving separate (perhaps sequential) events? Which ones *could* describe “symmetric” events, with joint participation in each event?

4. For each grammatical sentence constructed above, you should now try to construct the discontinuous version: Split up the subject into a singular subject plus an oblique “with-phrase”. Which of these are grammatical, with *reciprocal* meaning analogous to the reciprocal sentence above? Which are ungrammatical?

John met-RCP with Bill.
John hit-RCP with Bill. (Meaning: John and Bill hit each other).
Bill kissed-RCP with Mary.
John taught-RCP with Bill.

[Skip this question if you do not understand what it means:]

5. Which *could* describe a “non-symmetric” situation, involving separate events? Which ones *could* describe “symmetric” events, with joint participation in each event?

6. Please give examples of some other verbs that can be used discontinuously.

7. Can you think of any verbs (from the above list, or other verbs) that can be used with this marker in the normal way (non-discontinuously), but cannot be used discontinuously? Give examples.