

Reciprocal Constructions in Historical and Cross-Linguistic Perspectives
poster presentation for
10th International Contrastive Linguistics Conference (ICLC-10)

The prototypical reciprocal meaning describes situations with at least two entities which perform two identical semantic roles of agent and patient each. In other words two sub-events are shown as one event or situation – the meaning of the reciprocals indicates that they cannot form a construction with a single non-collective participant unless it is an elliptical construction. Predicates denoting situations with only one participant cannot be reciprocal.

For this brief poster presentation I chose Old Japanese and Modern Japanese language, also as Chinese and some Turkic languages to follow the development of the aforementioned construction.

Old Japanese reciprocal was lexical, but with an unchangeable first verbal component indicating stability, thus the beginning of the grammaticalization process (Example). At the same time Old Japanese reciprocal form showed the transit from preverbal to an analytical agglutinative, adding the Old Japanese syntax double or free word-order trace (Example). Among the verb stems which followed the preverbal reciprocal in Old Japanese, the most frequent (approximately 50%) were stative *miy-* to see (each other) and *omop-* to think (about each other).

In Classical Japanese the analyzing form became purely agglutinative (Example). Though typologically morphological subtype is the most cross-linguistically spread-out, lexical reciprocal forms words without a reciprocal marker, root verbs, collocations are typical for isolated languages, such as Chinese (Example).

In Modern Japanese lexical form *omo-i-au* is used, where reciprocal suffix lost its reciprocity and does not essentially change the meaning of the base verb when affixed with the verb *to think*:

- *omo-u* to think **omoi-aw-as-u* to call to mind, but also, for instance,

in Karachay-Balkar:

- *ojla-* to think, ponder *ojla-n-* to fall to thinking *ojla-n-6š-*.

An even closer parallel is attested in Kirghiz where the reciprocal (-6š-/-uš) and the causative (-tur) suffixes are affixed simultaneously without adding reciprocal and causative meanings:

- *ojlo-* to think, ponder *ojlo-n-* to fall to thinking *ojlo-n-uš-tur-* to think; cf. also *ojlo-š-* i. to think, ii. to change one's mind (-n = refl)

References

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