

## A unified analysis of the semantic licensing conditions for *huxiang* in Chinese

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Whereas many languages encode reciprocity in terms of pronominals, Chinese reciprocals often occur as adverbs (Liu 2015).

The present study is an investigation into the semantic licensing conditions of the reciprocal adverb *huxiang* (“mutually”) in Chinese. It is observed that the use of *huxiang* is sensitive to the number of reciprocants (2 or  $\geq 3$ ) (see (1)), the logical properties of predicates (symmetry and transitivity) (see (2)), and partitions (1 or more than 1 group) (see (3)).

- (1) a. *Tamen liang ge (\*huxiang) shi pengyou.* (literally: They **two** are mutually friends.)  
b. *Tamen ji ge huxiang shi pengyou.* (literally: They **several** are mutually friends.)
- (2) a. *Zhe xie zhaopian (\*huxiang) yiyang.* (literally: These picture are mutually the same.)  
(yiyang (“be the same”): symmetric and **transitive** predicate)  
b. *Zhexie zhaopian huxiang butong.* (literally: These picture are mutually different.)  
(butong (“be different”): symmetric and **nontransitive** predicate)
- (3) a. *Beijing lai de baoguo he shanghai lai de baoguo (\*huxiang) die zhe fang zai jiaoluo li.*  
(Literally: The **two** packages from Beijing and Shanghai are mutually stacked in the corner.)  
b. *Beijing lai de baoguo he shanghai lai de baoguo huxiang die zhe fang zai jiaoluo li.*  
(Literally: Those packages from Beijing and Shanghai are mutually stacked in the corner.) (**Context: in twos in separate piles**, each pile consisting of a package from Beijing and a package from Shanghai)

An attempt is made to give a unified analysis of the licensing condition for *huxiang* in the varied situations. A close examination of examples like (1) and (2) reveals that the logical properties of symmetry and transitivity have a role to play, but only by way of contributing to cumulativity. It is cumulativity that excludes the use of *huxiang*. For further clarification, we also consider and rule out a possible non-triviality account (proposed on the basis of divisiveness, a notion closely related to cumulativity). By incorporating further examples like (3), the incompatibility of *huxiang* with cumulativity is then attributed to the semantic prespecification of *huxiang* for distinctness of relations.

Unlike the Chinese pronominal *duifang* (“other”) which involves distribution over entities, the adverbial reciprocal *huxiang* involves distribution over relations. *Huxiang* and *duifang* illustrate two distinct kinds of distributivity and hence two distinct kinds of reciprocity. The discussion is carried out in the light of the reciprocity strategies proposed in Heim et al. 1991, Dalrymple et al. 1998, Winter 2000, Dotlac̃il 2009, 2012, among others.

In this study we also take into consideration exceptional uses of *huxiang* which do not seem to be subject to the “distinctness of relations” constraint. We argue that *huxiang* in those cases is derived from the pronominal reciprocal *xiang* (“other”) in Classical Chinese. They pattern with the English pronominal *each other* and the Chinese pronominal reciprocal *bici* (“that this) in regard to the “distinctness of relations” constraint. Comparing *huxiang* with those cases may provide insights into the possible relationship between morpho-syntax and semantics in the domain of reciprocity.

### Selected References

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