Comments on Dalrymple and Haug’s paper

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Workshop on the cross-linguistic semantics of reciprocals
Utrecht University, 7-8 October 2019
Dalrymple and Haug (2019):

“the relational approach to reciprocals provides a better solution to a range of puzzles of reciprocals than the competing approaches”

- operator-based, distributivity-based approaches

**General aim:** hedge the claim about “better solutions” in this context, especially in relation to cross-linguistic studies.
Semantics of English reciprocals

**Operator approach:** *each other* denotes an operator from binary predicates to (collective) unary predicates.

Sue and Dan like each other.

\[
\text{like} = \{ <\text{sue},\text{dan}>, <\text{dan},\text{sue}>, <\text{a},\text{b}>, <\text{b},\text{a}>, <\text{c},\text{d}> \}
\]

\[
\text{like each other} = \{\text{sue+dan, a+b}\} \quad \text{(not c+d)}
\]

**Distributivity approach:** before being interpreted, *each other/one another* is decomposed into a floating distributor ("each") and an anaphor ("other").

*Sue and Dan like each other :*

\[
\text{Sue and Dan each like each [the] other.}
\]

\[
= \text{Sue and Dan each like the other.}
\]
Semantics of English reciprocals (cont.)

Relational approach: *each other* restricts information states by imposing *collective identity* and *individual variation*.

*Sue, Dan and Ann like each other*

**Collective identity:**
Between them, Sue, Dan and Ann collectively like Sue, Dan and Ann

**Individual variation:**
For each of Sue, Dan and Ann, there is someone in the group other than herself that she likes

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English *each other*: +CI+IV
Romance *SE*: +CI-IV

+CI+IV +CI-IV -CI+IV
Scope phenomena

(1) *Sue and Dan thought that they like each other.*
   (i) Sue thought: “I like Dan”/“he likes me”, and Dan had a similar thought
   (ii) Sue and Dan thought “we like each other”

Levels of representation:
- Operator approach: None – direct interpretation
- Distributivity approach: Logical Form – movement, binding
- Relational approach: DRT – translation to logical language

Tradeoff between flexibility and predictiveness:
- Flexibility: Operator < Distributivity < Relational
- Predictiveness: Operator > Distributivity > Relational

Other phenomena?

Key factor for evaluation – predictiveness:
To what extent does the phenomenon’s description follow naturally from basic assumptions?
Common reciprocity phenomena (1)

Lexical vs. grammatical reciprocity (Kemmer 1993)

(1) a. Sue and Dan kissed each other – possibly unrelated events
    b. Sue and Dan kissed – simultaneous/related events

(2) a. Birbiri-ni gör-dü-ler (Turkish)
    RCP-ACC see-PAST-3PL “they saw each other”
    b. Gör-üş-tü-ler
    see-RCP-PAST-3PL “they met”

No advantage in predictiveness to any theory:

(1a)/(2a) – quantification
(1b)/(2b) – a lexical collective intransitive entry
Common reciprocity phenomena (2)

Reciprocal/Reflexive underspecification:
(1) *Les étudiantsse* sont frappes (French, Cable 2014) 
the students **RFL/RCP AUX slap** 
“the students slapped themselves/each other”

**Vagueness** ➔ advantage to relational approach

- English *each other*: +collective identity, +individual variation
- French *se*: +collective identity, –individual variation

**Ambiguity** ➔ advantage to operator/distributivity approaches

**Decision is a tricky matter** (Palmieri, this workshop):
- per language
- lexical properties of different verbs
Common reciprocity phenomena (3)

Multiple reciprocals

**Japanese** (Haug & Dalrymple, from Kosuge 2014):

(1) John-to Bill-ga (otagai-o) naguri-au-ta
    John-and Bill-NOM (RCP-NOM) HIT-RCP-PST “J&B hit e.o.”

**French:**

(2) Ils se sont battus (l’un l’autre)
    They RCP/RFL AUX beat (the-one the-other)
    “they beat each other (in turns)”

Need for licensing mechanism of reciprocity.
No advantage in predictiveness to any theory.
Common reciprocity phenomena (4)

Different reciprocal interpretations:
(1) The men know each other.
(2) The trays are stacked on top of each other.

“The challenge … is to find a natural locus of variation that can yield the different readings” (Haug & Dalrymple 2019)

Operator-based approaches:
1. Reciprocal ambiguity + context-based selection of strongest meaning (Dalrymple et al. 1998).
2. One general meaning + sensitivity to logical or conceptual restrictions (Sabato & Winter 2012, Poortman et al. 2018).

Distribution-based approach – Beck 2001
Relational approach – Haug & Dalrymple 2019
## Summary

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### Suggestions:

1. Concentrate on basic assumptions and predictive power of theories.
2. Try to figure if, and to what extent, “reciprocity” is a unitary cross-linguistic notion (Palmieri)