Reciprocals
in Austronesian languages

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Formosan languages

Amis 4 dialects
The Middle, reciprocal domain in Austronesian

1. In Austronesian languages: reciprocal relations are mostly expressed by affixes occurring in monoclausal constructions - not by reciprocal pronouns, anaphors or quantifiers (‘each other’)

2. Affixes reconstructed in PAN as *maR-/paR-
   in POc *paRi-
   - PAN *maR-/paR- > Amis (Formosan) mal(a)-
   (m<al>a-: from middle prefix ma- + infix <aR> marking plurality of relations or co-participation (Blust 2009, Sagart, Zeitoun 2002)
   - POc *paRi- > Nêlêmwa (N.C.) pe-
Source & direction of evolution

Starting from reconstructed prefixes PAN *maR-/*paR-
POc *paRi-

The semantics of these affixes include
- collective, collaborative/plural relations
- reciprocals
- in some languages (esp. Oceanic), these prefixes take on Middle functions & develop other semantics (Lichtenberk 2000, Bril 2005)

but: generally exclude reflexives

no reconstructed PAN or POc reflexive morpheme
Source & direction of evolution

- **Reflexives** are generally expressed by
  - *intransitive* verbs
  - *transitive* verbs with coreferential pronominal arguments,
  - *lexically*: verbs like ‘return’; nouns like ‘body’ (Amis) modifiers ‘alone’, etc.
  - in some Oceanic lang., by reflexes of *paRi*- (-i / -aki & additional morphemes)
    (Bril, L.T. 2005)
    (Moyse-Faurie 2008)
Outline

Focus: on the *reciprocal, collective* meanings, *dyadic kinship*,

Mostly in Amis (Formosan) & Nêlêmwa (Oceanic, N. Caledonia)

1. Syntactic features

2. Encoding of *reciprocal* relations & distribution of affixes

3. Semantics of the various reciprocal constructions, including
   *dyadic kinship*
1. Morphology : Amis vs. Nêlêmwa

- Few inherently reciprocal verbs, except Amis: *ma-ramud* ‘marry’ (*mal-), *ma-licinuwas* ‘separate from each other’ (*mal-)

- Amis verbs like *cabiq* ‘compete’, *taes* ‘fight’ all have reciprocal affixes.
  - *mal-cabiq* ‘compete with each other’
  - *mal-taes* ‘fight with each other’  
    (mi-taes ‘beat, flog s.o.’)

- In many Oceanic languages, ‘they meet, separate, compete, fight, kiss’ all carry REC affixes.

  Nêlêmwa
  a. Hli pe-ru-i ‘they met’ (REC-tu ‘find each other’)
  b. Hli pe-boima ‘they kissed’
1. Morphology

- **Amis**: 2 distinct morphemes: *mal(a)-; ma-Ca-
  *mal(a)*- tends to **profile** reciprocal events as **one holistic event**
  *ma-Ca-* profile **several** reciprocal **sub-events**
  targets a plurality of **actions**

- **Amis**: *restricted (dual) vs. extended (plural) reciprocity* are marked by distinct types of **reduplication**.

- **Fijian**: exhaustive perspective
  *vei*-vale many houses; *vei*-vale-vale ‘all the houses, every house’

- **Nêlêmwa**: **no** such semantic distinction
  one single **polysemous** prefix *pe-* for restricted or extended reciprocity;
  difference marked on **dual/plural** subject pronouns.
1. Syntactic features

- Reciprocal constructions are all *low transitive* or *intransitive* due to symmetrical relations between *agent* & *patient* (expressed once)

- Nêlêmwa (& many Oceanic languages): one single morpheme but two constructions.
  - ‘Light’ (intransitive, one recip. argument) for one-event reciprocal + reciprocal coparticipants + Middle semantics
  - vs. ‘heavy’ (2 pronominal arguments) for symmetrical & pluriactional reciprocal events.
1. Reciprocals & transitivity : Nêlêmwa

- **Intransitive** construction:
  
  weakly reciprocal or collective actions, *depatientive*,

  Nêlêmwa (Bril 2007)

  1a. Hla pe-taxu agu. *depatientive*
      3PL REC-give.INTR people
      ‘The people are in exchange relationship.’ (one absolutive argument)

- **Transitive** construction:
  
  2 coreferential pronouns
  strongly reciprocal & symmetrical, often pluriactional.

  1b. Hla pe-taxi-hla (o hnoot) + possibly an oblique theme
      3PL REC-give.TR-3PL (OBL riches)
      ‘They give each other (lit. with riches).’
1. Amis: relation to voice & alignment

- **Amis**: reciprocal constructions are **intransitive** or **low transitive** + possibly an **oblique patient/theme**

2. **Mal’ala’alaw=tu k-uhnī t-u da-demak-en.**
   
   REC-CVCV.steel=PFV NOM-3PL OBL-NM CA-work-UV.PASS
   
   ‘(They)’ve stolen from one another the work to be done.’

**Same alignment as Actor Voice *mi-***:

2b. **Mi’alaw=tu k-uhnī t-u da-demak-en.**

   AV-steal=PFV NOM-3PL OBL-NM CA-work-UV.PASS
   
   ‘(They)’ve been stealing the work to be done.’
1. Reciprocal & middle in Amis

- **ma-Ca**- reciprocal constructions > also intransitive or low transitive, reciprocal/collective **subjects** are expressed once

3. **ma-ka**-kuku [k-u wacu atu nani].
   MID-CA-chase NOM-NM dog and cat
   ‘The dog and the cat chase each other.’ (dual, in turn)

4a. **ma-sa**-suwal [k-aku a ci Abas].
    MID-CA-speak NOM-1SG and PM Abas
    ‘[I and Abas] spoke to each other.’

- **ma-Ca**- is a middle-reciprocal morpheme.
  - always combined & distinct from the verb’s basic voice (4b)

4b. s<em>uwal cira.
    <AV>speak NOM-3SG
    ‘he’s speaking.’
II. Semantics of reciprocal constructions: Strong vs. weak symmetry
2. Strong vs. weak symmetry

(i) *Strict reciprocal* relations are *strongly symmetrical*

\[
\begin{align*}
&x \leftrightarrow y \\
&\text{They laugh at each other}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
&x \leftrightarrow y \\
&\text{They laugh at one another}
\end{align*}
\]

Graph 1

All members are reciprocally & symmetrically involved in the relation.
2. Strong vs. weak symmetry

(ii) Other meanings are often weakly symmetrical (Dalrymple 1998)
- collective or plural relations, mode of grouping, chaining
- iterative, intensive, distributive, etc.

\[ x \leftrightarrow y \leftrightarrow z \quad \text{Run after one another (in turn or unspecified co-participation, Creissels 2008)} \]

\[ x \rightarrow y \rightarrow z \quad \text{They walk one after the other (chaining)} \]

\[ x \& z \quad \text{stand in indirect reciprocal relation} \]

The whole chain is the domain of reciprocity
Union of local asymmetries
2. Amis: Strong vs. weak symmetry

- How does the typology of *strong* & *weak* symmetry apply to N. Amis?

- Such distinction is less central than the type of *profiling* of reciprocal events:
  - **one holistic event** (i.e. plurality of participants in reciprocal relations seen as a whole)
  - **low degree of elaboration**
  - **VS. plurality of sub-events** involved, distributed in time

- *Strong* or *weak* reciprocal readings are constrained by *lexical semantics*, NOT so much by different morphemes.
2. Strong vs. weak symmetry

The semantics of the predicate & the associated spatial configuration constrains strong or weak symmetrical interpretations. Some indeterminacy involved.

‘they dance holding each other’s hands’ can read as in graph 1 or 2

**graph 1:** is + strongly reciprocal

```
 x ←→ y
 ↑  ↓  ↑
 z  z  z
```

**graph 2:** weakly reciprocal, chaining

```
 x ←→ y ←→ z
```

Reciprocity between \(x\) & \(z\), is indirect
2. Amis: holistic vs. sub-events profiling

a. REC *mal(a)*-
   - reciprocal relations or collective actions are *profiled* as one event in a holistic way
   - the root’s semantics select the strong or weakly reciprocal relations

5. **mal**-urun k-u ma-ramud-ay. (ma-urun ‘miss s.o.’)
   REC-miss NOM-NM NAV-marry-NMLZ
   ‘The married couple misses each other.’

6. **mal**-paliw k-uhni a mi-sa-umah. (mi-paliw ‘help’)
   REC-collaborate NOM-3PL COMP AV-do-field
   ‘they collaborate with one another to do field-work’
b. Middle marker + Ca- reduplication

ma-Ca- also compatible with strongly or weakly reciprocal actions but profiled as plural sub-events possibly done in turn; & denoting pluractionality.

7. ma-ca-curuk k-uhni a mal-paliw.
MID-CA-take.turn NOM-3PL COMP REC-collaborate
‘They took turns to help one another.’
2. Amis: restricted & extended reciprocals

- 2\textsuperscript{nd} central notion: Distinct types of reduplication
- **RESTRICTED** (dual) reciprocals with 2 participants
  - tend to be more strongly symmetrical
  
  *Ca*-reduplication for **DUAL reciprocals** (reconstructed in PAN)

- **EXTENDED** (plural) reciprocals involve collective relationship.
  - are often weakly or fuzzily symmetrical or not symmetrical.
  - **CVCV** root reduplication
  - e.g. chaining (dance holding hands)
  - mode of **grouping** (piled on top of each other)
2. Amis: reciprocals & reduplication

(1) holistically profiled reciprocal *mal(a)-*

*mal(a)-* : unitary perspective

*mal(a)-(Ca-)* : dual participants, *RESTRICTED reciprocal*

*mal(a)-(Ca-)CVCV* : collective participants, *EXTENDED reciprocal*

(2) reciprocal with sub-events, *ma-Ca- red.* :

*ma-Ca-* : dual reciprocals (actions done in turn)

*ma-(Ca-)CVCV-* : plural relation, *pluriactional*, mode of grouping, chaining,
possibly *durative, intensive*
2. Amis: restricted & extended reciprocals

- **COLLECTIVE** relations or mode of **grouping** are often **weakly** symmetrical

Espec. with entities that are **asymmetrically oriented**: *the wood-planks are piled on top of each other*

- **local** scale: asymmetric relations
- **global** domain: **union** of plural relations

Amis: **ma-Ca**- + **entity-denoting** root √**tungruh** ‘top’

10. **ma-ta-tungruh** k-u kasuy. (**mi-tungruh** ‘carry on the head’)
    MID-Ca-top NOM-NM wood
    ‘The wood-logs are piled on top of each other.’ (asymmetrical)
2. Amis: restricted & extended reciprocals with *mal(a)*-

a. REC *mal(a)*-root √*cabay* ‘companion’

11a. *mal(e)*-cabay k-ami.
REC-friend NOM-1PL.EXCL
‘We’re friends’ (dual, symmetrical relation)

*mal(a)*-CVCV-root

b. *mal(e)*-caba.cabay k-uhni.
REC-CVCV.friend NOM-3PL
‘they’re a group of friends.’ (EXTENDED symmetrical relation)
2. Amis *mal(a)*-

- Reciprocals + reduplication
  1. *mal-* profiles *holistic* reciprocity (± symmetrical relations)

12a. *mal*-paliw k-uhni.
   REC-collaborate NOM-3PL
   ‘they collaborate with one another’

CVCV red. profiles plural *reciprocal* participants engaged in events
   + *intensive*

**mal-CVCV**

b. *mal*-pali-paliw k-ami
   REC-CVCV-collaborate NOM-1PL.EXCL
   ‘We helped each other in turn (?)’
4. Amis: reciprocal & collective actions

- ± symmetrical

1) REC mal(a)- holistic reciprocity
   mal(a)-kiting ‘be linked to each other, tied together’

2) MID ma-Ca- with sub-events

13 a. ma-ka-kiting k-ita a r<em>a</em>
   MID-Ca-link NOM-1PL.INCL COMP <AV>walk
   ‘We (2) walk hand in hand.’ (dual)

   ma-Ca-CVCV (+ weakly symmetrical) > chaining, mode of grouping
   pluriactional, intensive.

13b. ma-ka-kiti.kiting k-uhni a ma-keru.
   MID-Ca-CVCV.link NOM-3PL COMP NAV-dance
   ‘They dance holding each other’s hands.’ (plural participants,
   chaining)

   x <-> y <-> z (indirectly reciprocal)
2. Amis: *ma-Ca-

b. *ma-Ca-* reciprocals involving sub-events

9a. ma-ba-biyanga k-ami.

MID-Ca-tug NOM-1PL.EXC
‘We play tug-of-war.’ (dual)

MID *ma-Ca-CVCV*

b. ma-ba-biya.biyanga k-uhni.

MID-Ca-CVCV.tug NOM-3PL
‘They play tug-of-war.’ (plural, pluriactional)

- Distribution of *-Ca-* & *-CVCV-* reduplication over dual or plural reciprocal relations is fairly regular, but not absolute.
- Intensity may prevail.
Some comparison

In other Formosan, Malayo-Polynesian languages (Tagalog, Malay, Indonesian) &
Oceanic languages (Fijian (Dixon 1988), some N. Caledonian lang., Samoan (Milner 1966):

reciprocal-middle prefixes often combine with reduplication for
- collective, reciprocal relationship, grouping, chaining
- Pluriactionality, distributive action or mode of grouping
  *ber*-ratus-ratus ‘by hundreds’ (Indonesian)
- intensity.
III. Distribution of reciprocal affixes
3. Distribution of reciprocal affixes

1. **Reciprocal affixes** attach to roots denoting
   - *actions* or *events*
   - *kinship* terms
   - & various types of ± *symmetrical relations*

2. The *same* reciprocal affix is generally used for all types of *predicates* (± verbal, ± stative/active) & with *event nominals*.

Affixed to *nouns, event nominals* or *verbs*

*Nêlêmwa* (Bril 2002)

   LOC in those.ANAPH REC-fight-PREP 3PL
   ‘during their mutual fight’ (lit. in those mutual fights of theirs)

b. hla pe-whaayap.
   3PL REC-fight
   ‘They fight with each other.’
3. Distribution of reciprocal affixes

Amis

1) REC mal(a)- + ENTITY or ACTION-DENOTING ROOTS

15. mala-abang k-u cabay.
   REC-put.arm.on.shoulder NOM-NM partner
   ‘The friends held each other by the shoulder.’ (dual, symmetrical)

   mal-paliw k-uhni.
   REC-collaborate NOM-3PL
   ‘They’re enemies.’ (reciprocal, symmetrical)

2) ma-Ca- + ENTITY or ACTION-DENOTING ROOTS

16. ma-ta-tungruh k-u kasuy. (√ tungruh ‘top’)
    MID-Ca-top NOM-NM wood
    ‘The wood-logs are piled on top of each other.’ (asymmetrical)

   ma-pa-padang k-ami (a pa-tireng tu lumaq)
   MID-Ca-help NOM-1PL.EXC
   ‘we helped each other.’ (to build the house) (in turn)
IV. Semantics of reciprocal constructions in Austronesian
Austronesian: widely attested patterns of polysemy of reciprocal prefixes

- dyadic kinship & social relations
- symmetrical spatial configuration comparison (symmetrical property)
- (distributed) plural mode of grouping, chaining,
- pluriactional, intensive
Semantics is **compositional**: derives from composition of *affix* and *root* type/category

- (i) entity-denoting,
- (ii) property-denoting > comparison
- (iii) action-denoting
- (iv) denoting spatial property > symmetrical positions, location

Also affected by **lexical** semantics (inherent (a)symmetry)
4. Spatial configuration : positions, locations

- weakly symmetrical & often not strictly reciprocal.
  1) * mal- (unattested)

2) MID ma-Ca- (dual & plural)

28. ma-ŋaŋata k-ita. (ma-ngata ‘it’s close-by’)
   MID-Ca-close NOM-1PL.INCL
   ‘We are close to each other.’

29. ma-ta-tepar k-ita a m-aruq.
   MID-Ca-side NOM-1PL.INCL COMP NAV-sit
   ‘We are sitting side by side (or) next to each other.’ (dual)

Fijian

vei-taqa.taqa-i ‘piled on top of each other’ (taqa: put on top)
REC-CVCV.put.on.top-i
4. Spatial configuration : Nêlêmwa

- **Nêlêmwa**: all purpose *pe-* (POc *paRi*) (no reduplication)
- *Symmetrical positions, locations or points* between landmarks or objects

**Nêlêmwa** (N. Caledonia, Bril 2002)

20. Ma *pe-aramaa-i.*
   1DU.INCL REC-face-R
   ‘We are facing each other.’ (dual)

21. *pe-jeuk* awôlô mahleena.
   REC-near dwelling these
   ‘These dwellings are close to each other.’ (plural)
4. Symmetry & comparison of equality

- Prefixed to property predicates (age, size, appearance, quantity, property, etc.) which constitute the parameter of comparison,
- express comparison of equality & symmetrical property.

**Amis**: *mal(e)- (or) ma-Ca-

22. **Mal**-singteb k-u tarakaw n-uhni.
   REC-level NOM-NM height GEN-3PL
   ‘They’re of equal height.’ (lit. their height is REC-level)

23. **Ma-sa**-selal-ay a kaput k-ami.
   MID-CA-age.group-MODF LNK team NOM-1PL.EXCL
   ‘We are a team of the same age-group.’

- *mal(a)*- profiles a more global perspective.
- *ma-Ca*- profiles a more atomistic perspective
4. Symmetry & comparison : Nêlêmwa

Nêlêmwa (N. Caledonia)

24a  Wa  pe-khooba-wa.
    2PL   REC-number-POSS.2PL
‘You are in equal number.’

b.  Hlaabai  pe-ida-la.
    those   REC-line-POSS.3PL
‘Those (who are) of the same generation.’

c.  Hli  pe-maariik  âlô  mahliili.   (*hli maariik)
    3DU   REC-be.similar  child  those
‘These children are similar to each other.’
4. Distributed mode of grouping

- Distributed mode of grouping, plural, weakly symmetrical relationships.

Reciprocity involves pair of entities

Nêlêmwa

   2SG put AIM REC-companion
   ‘Put them two by two/in pairs.’ (lit. as mutual companions)

Amis: distributive ha(la) construction is different from reciprocals

25b ma-ha-tulu a mal-kaput (k-uhni).
   NAV-DISTR-three COMP REC-team (NOM-3PL)
   ‘(they) were grouped by 3/(they) make a team of 3.’
4. Chaining and collective actions

With motion & some action verbs: chaining and plural relationship, weakly symmetrical, often not reciprocal.

Reciprocal domain is the union of local relations

Nêlêmwa
   3PL REC-follow-R people those. ANAPH
   ‘These people walk in line’

Amis
27. Ma-ka-kuku k-u wacu atu nani.
   MID-CA-chase NOM-NM dog and cat
   ‘The dog and the cat chase each other.’ (dual, in turn)

Fijian
. vei-taratara-vi ‘follow each other’
   REC-CVCV.follow-VI
vei-sii.sivi ‘pass each other in turn’ (siivi ‘pass, exceed’)
5. Dyadic kinship or social relationship

likewise

social relationship
symmetrical & reciprocal
we're friends

dyadic kinship
asymmetrical
we're husband and wife
or
symmetrical
we're sisters

(Evans 2005)
5. Amis *mal(a)*-

- **only** *mal(a)*- (*PAN maR*-) > for relations profiled **holistically**, as **union** of relations
- affixed to **nouns** denoting ± **symmetrical dyadic kinship**
- or **mutual** social relationship

28. U *mal(e)*-kaka-ay k-ami.
   NM REC-**elder.sibling**-NMZ NOM-1PL.EXCL
   ‘We're elder siblings.’  \(\text{(symmetrical kinship)}\)

29. *mal(e)*-kaput k-ami.
    REC-**team** NOM-1PL.EXCL
    ‘We're class mates.’ \(\text{(symmetrical, social relationship)}\)

30. *mal(e)*-k-api k-uhni.
    REC-**STAT**-**pair** NOM-3PL
    ‘They live together as an unmarried couple.’ \(\text{(symmetrical dual)}\)
5. Asymmetric dyadic kinship

- Much unpredictable variation on whether the root selects the *higher* or the *lower* term of the dyad.

- In Formosan languages, the ROOT tends to be the *higher* term, with some exceptions.

  **Paiwan** (Formosan, Zeitoun, 2002)

  *may-aɣa-aɣak* ‘parent and children’ (*aɣak* ‘child’)

  (tri-moraic **redup**. for **plural**)

  *may-ta-təvələ* ~ *pay-ta-təvələ* ‘answer each other’ (*təm* ‘answer’)

**N. Amis** the ROOT is **always** the *higher* term

31. **Mal(e)-wama k-uhni, mal(e)-wina k-ami.**

  **REC-father** **NOM-3PL** **REC-mother** **NOM-1PL.EXCL**

  ‘They're father and child, we're mother and child.’ (Bril)
5. Asymmetric dyadic kinship

Tagalog, the choice of the \textit{higher} or \textit{lower} term of the dyad has different meanings:

- \textit{mag-ama} ‘mother and child’ (\textit{ama} ‘mother’)
- \textit{mag-anak} ‘parent and child’ (\textit{anak} ‘child’) (Schachter and Otanes 1972: 293)
5. Asymmetric dyadic kinship

- *Higher* term in *Bwatoo*, *lower* term in *Nêlêmwa* (N. Caledonia)

- **Different** affixes

*Bwatoo* (N. Caledonia, Rivierre & Ehrhart 2007)

28. Lu  **xaH-**-(ve)-voona-n.
  3DU  DYAD-(ve)-**maternal.uncle**-DYAD
  ‘The maternal uncle and his nephew.’

*Nêlêmwa* (different from verbal reciprocal *pe-*), Bril 2000, 2002

29. Hli  **am**-xola-n.
  3DU  DYAD-**nephew**-DYAD
  ‘They are maternal uncle/aunt and nephew/niece.’

   Hli  **a**-maawa-n.
  3DU  DYAD-**spouse**-DYAD
  ‘They are spouses.’

30. Hli  **pe**-whan.
  3DU  REC-agree
  ‘They are married.’
5. Dyadic kinship or reciprocal relationship

_Same_ affixes, dual or plural relationships

31. **Caac** (N. Caledonia)

   _Pe-abaa-le._

   _pe-brother-POSS.3PL_

   ‘They are brothers and sisters.’

_Fijian_ (Milner 1972, Dixon 1988)

32a. **Keirau** _vei-gane-ni._

   1DU.EXCL _vei-sibling-ni_

   ‘We(2) are in sister-brother relationship.’

   b. **Erau** _vei-tauri liga._

   3DU _vei-take hand_

   ‘They(2) are holding hands.’
To conclude

- Nedjalkov’s (2007) pointed out: *affixal* reciprocal morphemes are much more polysemous than are *lexical* reciprocal markers.

- true of Austronesian languages

- In *Amis*, the two morphemes *mal(a)- & ma-Ca-* profile distinct reciprocal relations:
  - one *holistic* relation vs. atomistic relations with multiple *sub-events*.

- Strong or weak reciprocity is lexically constrained

- Combination with *–Ca* or with *CVCV*- reduplication denotes *dual* or *plural relations, iterative, pluriactionality & intensive meanings.*
To conclude: Austronesian patterns of polysemy

**REC/COLL**

2 or + participants

*MID*

several events
pluriactional

**Iterative**

chaining
mode of grouping

Comparison
symmetrical
properties or
spatial
configuration & position

dyadic kinship & social relations

**No initiator**: spontaneous, unintentional actions *(anticausative)*

**Intensive, augmentative**

self-directed, grooming actions (reflexive)

**No endpoint**: depatientive aimless or dispersive actions, unbounded actions, distributive

middle


