

**From diachronic observations to synchronic semantic analyses:
the case of the NP-strategy for expressing reciprocity**

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This paper develops a new perspective in the interaction between two linguistic sub-disciplines, by bringing diachronic data into consideration in synchronic semantic analyses. It aims to demonstrate how understanding historical developments in a given language can improve our understanding of the universal semantic properties of that particular language and of Language in general. This paper focuses on a case study: the semantics of the NP-strategy for expressing reciprocity, i.e. constructions that consist of pairs such as "one-another/each-other" in English. While the common assumption in the literature is that the meaning of the NP-strategy for expressing reciprocity entails a symmetric reading, it is impossible, however, to see how the components of the specific expressions, which are used in natural languages, could be reanalyzed to become reciprocal construction. In other words, it is unclear how these expressions could have been interpreted as denoting symmetric relations in a compositional way. This should be a strong motivation to consider a different semantic analysis for the relevant constructions. As for the data in this paper, I will be focusing on examples from the Semitic languages, with parallels from other language families.