

Bipartite reciprocal markers Competing constructions as a support group

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A bipartite reciprocal marker (briefly: *BRM*) can typologically be identified by its source and original structure, namely two nominals in different positions. Apart from this, BRMs may differ in each and every formal property across languages, including their use as arguments in clauses. English is a good illustration for the main thrust of this talk. Its two fully grammaticalized BRMs represent two common sources types: *one another* originates in two selective expressions for members of a group, *each other* uses a universal quantifier (cf. Haas 2006 on *each other*). Although *one another* developed centuries afterwards, it is hard to find any formal or semantic differences beyond matters of style. Both share features which distinguish them from their cognates outside reciprocal constructions and periphrastic constructions like *each one (Prep) the other(s)*, *one ... another*.

My main theoretical issue is the role of formal and semantic analogies and frequencies for the development and maintenance of BRMs. On the one hand, complex constructions may hold relations to their cognates. On the other hand, common properties of constructions may stabilize the whole group. While this is a recurrent theme in studies of grammaticalization and lexicalization, bipartite reciprocal markers combine (near) synonymy with peculiar properties like pre-prepositional parts. Common or contemporary origin may but need not play a role.

My discussion will center on Hebrew and one or two other languages, probably Basque and Albanian. My data stems from grammatical descriptions, native speakers' judgements and corpus research, supported by a typological survey. This talk was inspired by a recurrent phenomenon: some reciprocal markers are recognized as grammatical means in descriptions but are extremely rare in present-day texts. Native speakers usually acknowledge them as dialectal or archaic variants.

For illustration, let me sketch the situation in Modern Hebrew. Glinert (1989: 69) lists five BRMs "in descending order of formality". All share the common structure Part₁ Prep Part₂, the first part being "an 'extra' to the normal structure of a Hebrew clause [...]". NB: There is no variant without preposition since the definite accusative preposition *'et* is obligatory. The two markers (*ha-*)*'exad* '*et ha-sheni* '(def-)one acc defother' and *ze* '*et ze* 'dem acc dem' are equally common. Leaving aside its slightly higher formality, *ze* '*et ze* distinguishes itself by two forms:

- the plural *'ele* '*et 'ele* is rare – less than .5% – and employed for two groups but likewise for larger numbers and generic statements.
- the mixed-gender form *ze* '*et zo* 'dem.m acc dem.f' whose relative frequency reaches 10% – the corresponding form of *'exad et ha-* is used less than 1%!

The three formal markers are nearly non-existent in modern texts. While native speakers accept them, wrong combinations are easily accepted and actually occur more often in texts. NB: the bipartite construction is already found in Biblical Hebrew!

References

- Glinert, Lewis. 1989. *The grammar of Modern Hebrew*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haas, Florian. 2007. The development of English *each other*: grammaticalization, lexicalization, or both?. *English Language and Linguistics* 11.1: 31–50.