Reciprocal marking in Wolof

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Wolof (Niger-Congo, Atlantic) is an agglutinative language with a rich verbal morphology employed for different valence-changing operations (Church 1981; Buell & Sy 2006; Dione 2012). In the literature, three different verbal suffixes are described as expressing reciprocity: -ante as the most productive reciprocal marker (Creissels & Voisin 2008), -e as a suffix appearing with verbs denoting 'naturally reciprocal events' (Voisin, 2002) and -oo as a marker of sociativity and reciprocity (Church 1981). The distribution and the semantics of these morphemes are still unclear: little attention has been dedicated to the reciprocal configurations allowed by each suffix and to the constraints on their use. This paper aims to fill this gap, providing an extensive overview of Wolof reciprocal morphology, relying on novel data elicited through interviews with native speakers.

We argue in favor or a distinct treatment for the morpheme -*ante* as opposed to -*e*/-*oo*: we propose that -*ante* is a productive reciprocal morpheme operating on the valency of the verbs, while -*e* and -*oo* are markers of natural reciprocal entries that do not operate on the argument structure and have no reciprocal semantics *per se*.

Our proposal is based on four observations.

- (i) The morpheme –*ante* is productive: it can reciprocalize the object of any transitive verb, while -*e* and -*oo* are not productive (1).
- (ii) Verbs reciprocalized by -ante always retain the meaning of the transitive verb root (2a). Entries with -e and -oo may undergo a semantic drift: they may express reciprocal readings with different interpretations from the transitive entries (2b-c). In the literature, it has been observed that the acquisition of new drifted meaning is a prerogative of lexicalized reciprocals (Haspelmath 2007; Siloni, 2012).
- (iii) Intransitive verbs lead to ungrammaticality with *–ante* (3a). The morphemes *-oo* and *-e* may appear with intransitive verbs, suggesting that they do not operate on the argument structure: the valency of *dekk* 'to live' is not reduced in (3b) .
- (iv) Only the morpheme -*ante* can appear with naturally reflexive predicates. In Wolof, meanings denoting grooming or body-related actions are expressed with the unproductive verbal morpheme -u (4). Such entries can only be reciprocalized by -ante and lead to ungrammaticality with -e and -oo (5). This is in line with the idea that lexicalized reflexives and lexicalized reciprocals are two closed classes with no overlapping entries (Reinhart & Siloni, 2005).

Accordingly, we propose that the different Wolof verbal morphemes reflect a distinction between 'prototypical' reciprocity, expressed by *-ante*, and 'natural' reciprocity, marked by *-e* and *-oo*. This pattern is not wide-spread cross-linguistically: languages with an overt morpho-syntactic distinction between prototypical and natural reciprocal strategies most commonly employ a pronominal strategy for the former and a verbal strategy for the latter. Some examples include Hebrew (Doron, 2003), Greek (Papangeli, 2004) or Hungarian (Rákosi, 2008). The use of verbal markers for both prototypical and natural reciprocal events is instead less attested, e.g., in the Kikongo Language Cluster (Dom et al. 2016).

Wolof supports Kemmer's (1993) observation that productive markers are morphophonologically more complex than non-productive middle-related markers, showing that this generalization also holds in languages where both markers are verbal affixes. Our findings on Wolof offer valuable insights for the typology of reciprocal constructions and the nature of natural reciprocals cross-linguistically, while also being relevant for theoretical works in this area.

Examples:

- Khady ak Fatou ñu ngi fóon-ante/ *fóon-e/ *fóon-oo (1) Khady and Fatou PREST.3PL kiss-REC 'Khady and Fatou kiss'
- (2) Khadi ak Fatou ñoom naar dañu gis-ante a. FOC.V.3PL see-REC Khady and Fatou 3PL two 'Khady and Fatou saw each other'
 - b. Khadi ak Fatou ñoom dañu gis-e naar Khady and Fatou 3PL FOC.V.3PL see-REC two 'Khady and Fatou met'
 - c. Khadi ak Fatou dañu dogg-oo cut-REC Khady and Fatou FOC.V.3PL 'Khadi and Fatou broke up'
- (3) *Khadi ak Fatou ñoo dekk-ante a. Fatou FOC.V.3PL Khady and live-REC
 - Khadi ak b. Fatou ñoo dekk-oo/ dekk-e Khady and Fatou FOC.V.3PL live-REC
 - 'Khady and Fatou live close to each other (i.e., are neighbors)'
- **(4)** Khady sana-u Khady wash-REF **PFV** 'Khady washed'
- Khadi ak Fatou ñu nai sang-ante/*sang-e/*sang-oo (5) Khady and Fatou PREST.3PL wash-REC 'Khadi and Fatou washed each other'

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