

Discontinuous Reciprocal in Japanese Masahiro Yamada

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It has been noted that the verbal reciprocal allows a discontinuous plural argument for its argument crosslinguistically. The discontinuous plural arguments consist of a noun phrase at a canonical argument position and an oblique or comitative noun phrase, as can be seen in the Japanese example (1).

- (1) **Hiroki-ga** kinoo **Yasu-to** home-at-ta.
Hiroki-N_{OM} yesterday **Yasu-with** praise-**R_{ECIP}-P_{ST}**
'Hiroki and Yasu praised each other yesterday.'
Literally 'Hiroki engaged in a reciprocal praising with Yasu yesterday.'

This piece of data appears to be a counter-example to the observation that the verbal reciprocal requires a plural subject. The canonical argument position is occupied by a singular noun *Hiroki*, but the sentence yields the reciprocal interpretation. I propose an account for this apparent counter-example to the verbal reciprocals.

I will first investigate the comitative phrases' different interpretations to explain the apparent counter-example to the plural requirement of the verbal reciprocal. I will classify comitative phrases into three categories in terms of the linguistic environments and their interpretations. Two out of the three types of comitative phrases appear to be part of a discontinuous plural argument, but they are different in several aspects, and only one of them is a true member of a discontinuous plural argument.

- (2) Three types of comitatives
- a. Type 1: Stan collided **with Kyle**.
 - b. Type 2: Stan built a raft **with Kyle**.
(="Stan and Kyle built a raft.")
 - c. Type 3: Shelly cooked **with her baby**.
(="Shelly cooked and she was with her baby, e.g. carrying her on her back.")

The comitative phrase that appears in the Japanese verbal reciprocal sentences is analyzed on par with the one that appears in sentences like (2)b. I will claim that the Japanese verbal reciprocal uses the comitative phrase that is generally available for the plural predication of the predicates other than the verbal reciprocal. This finding contrasts with the Hebrew-type verbal reciprocals, which Dimitriadis (2004) analyzes along with the sentences like (2)a, and suggests a typological variation of the phenomenon of the discontinuous reciprocal.

Reference

Dimitriadis, Alexis. 2004. Discontinuous Reciprocals. Ms. Utrecht institute of Linguistics OTS. [<http://www.let.uu.nl/~alexis.dimitriadis/personal/papers/discon-long-ms04.pdf>, Last Accessed. Mar.1, 2010]