Reciprocal Constructions

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CHAPTER 20

Reciprocals and reflexives in North-Arawak languages of the Upper Rio Negro
(Warekena of Xié, Bare, Baniwa of Içana)

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1. Introduction

1.1 General remarks

This paper considers reciprocals and reflexives in three North-Arawak languages spoken in the region of the Upper Rio Negro: Warekena of Xië, Bare and Banawa of Içana.1

Warekena is spoken on Xië river in Brazil by a few dozen old people. It is a dialect of Banawa of Guiana spoken by c. 200 people in Venezuela. All the speakers of Warekena use Lingua Geral and Portuguese in their everyday life. Bare is an almost extinct language, formerly spoken in Venezuela and Brazil, around the Casiquiare Channel.

This explains the possible influence of Portuguese and Spanish patterns of reflexives and reciprocals in Warekena and Bare.

Banawa of Içana is spoken in Brazil and Colombia on the Içana river by around 3,000 people (some Banawa dialects are also known as Kurripako).

Within North-Arawak, Banawa of Içana belongs to the same subgroup as Tariana (see Aikhenvald, Ch. 30 in this monograph). The two languages display lexical similarity and significant grammatical differences due to areal diffusion from East-Tucanoan to Tariana (see Aikhenvald 2002). Bare and Warekena are more closely related to each other than they are to Banawa and Tariana. Warekena belongs to the Banawa-Hisurito subgroup of North-Arawak (see Aikhenvald 1998). Bare belongs to the Bare-Guina subgroup (see Aikhenvald 1999a).

These languages belong to three different subgroups of North-Arawak. However, they display a number of typological similarities, some of which are due to common genetic origins and some due to their long-term coexistence in the linguistic area of the Upper Rio Negro, with a certain amount of bilingualism (see Aikhenvald 1999b).

1.2 Typological characteristics

The North-Arawak languages of the region of the Upper Rio Negro are head-marking and predominantly suffixed, with a few prefixes. They tend to display a split-ergative pattern. Cross-referencing prefixes are used to mark subjects of transitive and intransitive active verbs (A=S). Cross-referencing ergatives mark direct objects and subjects of intransitive stative verbs (O=S); see Aikhenvald 1995b). Verbs fall into transitive (which

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1. Materials on Banawa of Içana were collected in 1991–1994, during three field trips. My materials contain about 350 pp. of narratives (Stotz and Hopóbó dialects).

The discussion of Bare is based on fieldwork (July–August 1991) with the last fluent speaker of Bare in Brazil, late Candelerio do Sá, multilingual in Bare, Lingua Geral, Spanish and Portuguese. His Bare displayed symptoms of language attrition, which resulted in a heavy impact of vernacular influence of Spanish and Portuguese. My data contain around 150 pp. of texts. The discussion of Warekena is based on the materials collected during three field trips to the Upper Rio Negro region in 1991, 1994 and 1995. My corpus includes approximately 200 pp. of texts.

2. The only valency increasing operation is causative. Morphological causatives (marked with -a in Bare, -a in Warekena and -da in Banawa) are typically formed on intransitive verbs. Periphrastic causatives are used with transitive verbs.
sitive verbs. -Thi derivation in Bare can also have a few other meanings, e.g. sociative; it is also sometimes used to suppress the identity of the agent (A/S, constituent). These divergencies may be accounted for by the fact that these languages belong to different subgroups within North Arawak.

2. Warekena of Xié

2.1 Reciprocals

-Na 'reflective-reciprocal' in Warekena has a reciprocal meaning with a plural subject. (1) illustrates this meaning of the -na derivation.

(1) ni-wiu-wui ni-nai-na-wa ni-yai-sa-na-wa payalu je ni-nai-ki.
3pl-fight 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill non-ego-neg all what 3pl-do-reflect
'They put on their trousers and shirts, to eat their food.'

A transitive verb -yai'sa 'to kill' is illustrated in (2).

(2) ni-yai-sa pifinwia ni-naiwia.
3pl-kill 2sg albeit 3pl-kill
'I shall kill the snake from you.'

More examples of reciprocal meaning of -na derivation are given in (3) and (4). All verbs with reciprocal meanings in Warekena are -na derivations.

(3) ni-nai-na-wa.
3pl-fight 3pl-kill 3pl-kill
'They fought each other.'

(4) ni-wa-nai-wa.
3pl-quit 3pl-kill 3pl-kill
'They left each other.'

2.2 Reflexives

With a non-plural subject, -na derivation has reflexive meaning, illustrated with ni-teleka-na-wa 'I cut myself' in (5). The transitive use of -teleka 'to cut' is shown in (6).

(5) ni-teleka-na-wa kunyu yu.
3pl-cut 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill
'I cut myself with a knife.'

(6) yu-ni-yai-sa pi-ja pi-teleka acapi.
you-say 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill
'You, brother, go and cut a tree (to make a smoking grid, to smoke our stock).' (7) illustrates the transitive use of -alaka 'to put on (clothes)'. (8) illustrates the reflexive intrusive use of the same verb with the suffix -na alaka-na 'dress oneself':

(7) ni-alaka ni-teleka-ne ni-kumi-na-ne ne-palu ni-nai-me
3pl-cut 3pl-kill 3pl-dressed 3pl-fish 3pl-kill 3pl-kill

(8) wa: telaka na alaka-na-mia-wa.
then soldier then get dressed
‘Then the soldier got dressed.'

There are a few cases of the use of -na 'reflective' with intransitive Ss verbs which are probably influenced by Portuguese, as in (9).

(9) nede wa: na-sailepe-na-wa ifina.
1sg.see jaguar 1sg-except-refl 3pl-kill from
'I saw a jaguar and escaped (lit: 'escaped myself'; cf. Portuguese me 'except') from him.'

Reflexive -na derivation can be formed on a transitive verb:

(10) na-mia-te-pisna daka kunehu pipi-nai-na-mia-wa ifina.
verb-3pl-know 3pl-cut 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill
'The rabbit did not know where to hide himself (lit: 'make himself get lost') from him (jaguar).

A -na derivation can sometimes have a reflexive meaning even if the subject is plural, as in (11). Then, reflexive and reciprocal meanings can only be distinguished by the context. Without a reciprocal marker, -layata is a regular transitive verb.

(11) ale-ha ni-bayata-na-wa-mia-ha.
3pl-quit 3pl-quit 3pl-kill 3pl-kill
'So they (the turtles) spread themselves (over the road) (they went away).'

Reflexive derivation does not apply to S-O amitransitives. The verb -etsa 'to burn' is an amitransitive. (1a) illustrates its transitive use, and (1b) its intransitive use. Note that the prefix is used to cross-reference 3.sg.ne A/S, in Warekena.

(12) a. nata-mia-wa napi.
1sg.burn 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill
'I burnt my hand.'

b. tsai-mia-wa napi-ga.
3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill
'The house burnt.'

If the O is omitted, the construction is understood as reflexive by default, cf.:

c. nata-mia-wa payalu.
1sg-burn 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill 3pl-kill
'I burnt myself all.'

Reflexive derivation in Warekena is not used to emphasize the identity of the A constituent. The instrumental-comitative adposition ima which cross-references A, is used for this purpose, as illustrated in (13):
3.2 Reflexives

-Tini 'reflexive-reciprocal' has a reflexive meaning when the subject is singular. Its reflexive meaning is illustrated with (20). The transitive use of the verb 'to cover' is shown in (21).

(20) mu-bake-’i-tini.
ISO-COVER-INC-wa-bake
'I covered myself'

(21) mu-bake-’i kūki mu-bake-la abi

3.3 Other meanings of -tini derivation

-Tini derivation has a number of other meanings. It has a spatial reciprocal meaning with transitive and intransitive verbs (Section 3.3.1). Other meanings considered here, i.e., subject coreferentiality, full involvement of the subject and unspecified subject, are confined to intransitive verbs. All these uses are rather rare in my corpus. Some of them may be due to calques from Portuguese, or Spanish.

3.3.1 Spatial reciprocal meaning

The reciprocal meaning of the -tini derivation with a transitive verb is illustrated in (22), and with an intransitive one in (24). The transitive use of -wa-bukuda 'to join, collect' is illustrated in (23). The verb -itski 'to return' is used intransitively in (25).

(22) hulmin-ku mu-wa-bukuda-tini mu-nika-wa kuwii.
turse-PPV 3PL-joins-REC 3PL-EAT-PPV jaguar
'Turtles joined each other (came together) to eat the jaguar.'

(23) wa-wa-bukuda ita wa-nika te’di.
3PL-smoker 3PL-JOBS fail-fire-REC 3PL-JOBS burn 3PL-joins then 3PL-eat that
'Our smoked food fell into the fire, it burnt. We joined (it), then we ate (all that).'

(24) ka-wa-bukuda-tini ha wa-bukuda-tini.
1PL-return-REC-REC 1PL-share-REC
'We will return to each other and divide the found money between ourselves.'

(25) mu-diriki kūki hatinka hina-ne.
ISO-hit ha ISO-JOBS return ISO-JOBS-go-PPV
'I hit him (the dog), he went away.'

3.3.2 Subject coreferentiality

-Tini derivation can be formed on intransitive verbs. Then it may express coreferentiality of the subject of a subordinate predicate to that of the main predicate. Such an example is (26). Hela-da in (26) is an intransitive verb, and so hein-da-tini cannot mean 'make himself dry.' These examples are very rare.
4. Baniwa of Içana

Baniwa of Içana uses -kawa 'intransitivizer' for both reciprocal and reflexive meanings (also see Taylor 1991:47).

4.1 Reciprocals

When -kawa is used on a transitive verb with a plural subject, the verb acquires a reciprocal meaning, as in (33). The verb can optionally take a comitative constituent ('with their enemies') in (35). The verb -imua 'to kill' is used transitively in (34).

(33) na-imua-kawa hupada i-apideu.

3sg.kill-rec 3sg.enemy 1sg-hit-with
'They fought (lit. 'killed each other') with their enemies.'

(34) na-imua daami.

3sg.kill 3sg-hit
'They killed each other.'

4.2 Reflexives

When -kawa is used on a transitive verb with a singular subject, the verb acquires a reflexive meaning. Reflexive use of -takha 'to cut' is shown in (35). Its transitive use is illustrated in (36).

(35) kwame-kha bi-kihipiwa daama nu-takha-kawa-ka.

how-hit 2sg.sister 3sg.cut nu-takha-rec do 3sg-cut-rec-rec
'What is there with your sister? Nothing. I cut myself' (answered the daughter).

(36) nu-takha nu-kapi.

3sg-cut 1sg-hand
'I cut my hand.'

If -kawa is used on a transitive verb which can also be used intransitively (as a Lawambi transitive verb), it still expresses a reflexive meaning with a singular subject, see (37). The verb -kapaku 'to turn' is used transitively in (38), and intransitively in (39).

(37) daama kaima-pida li-kapaku-kawa.

dama 3sg.request 3sg.swim li-kapaku-rec
'He (the god) turned around (lit. 'turned himself') twice.'

(38) nu-kapaku taa.

3sg-turn 1sg-canoe
'I turned the canoe.'

(39) ina li-kapaku.

3sg-canoe 3sg-turn
'The canoe turned.'
4.3 Agentless passive

When used with a transitive verb, -kawa derivation may have the meaning of an agentless passive. Example (40) illustrates this use of the verb -phiuta 'to trap', and of -taita 'to finish'.

The verb -phiuta is used transitively in (41).

(40) kamena iteni li-phiuta-kawa li-taita-kawa.
then devil 3SG.NR-trap-NTR.3SG.NR-finish-NTR
'Then the devil was trapped, he was finished.'

(41) na-phiuta datwi.
1SG trap jaguar
'I trapped a jaguar.'

4.4 Other uses of -kawa: Intensive action

The marker -kawa can be used to mark intensive action, both with transitive and with intransitive verbs. (42) and (43) follow each other in the origin myth. (42) contains the transitive predicate -hmaita 'to burn' and (43) contains an intransitiveized -hmaita-kawa 'to burn strongly'.

(42) na-hmaita-pide leka pamudua.
3PL-burn-MIDDLE wood middle
'They burnt the wood in the middle.'

(43) na na-kapuku, na-dana li-hmaita-kawa itte.
3PL-go 3PL-go-around 3PL-around 3SG.NR-burn-INTENS fire
'They went around, around them fire was burning.'

-Kawa is used with an intransitive verb -eku 'to run': -eku-kawa 'to run around (a lot)' in (44):

then-3SG.NR-run-MIDDLE 3SG.NR-run-Around 3PL around 3SG.NR-stay-again
'Then the sun started running around, all it stopped.'

Unlike To'aba'ita, where, according to Lichtenberk (1991) also Lichtenberk, Ch. 36), the depletive function of the morpheme kwai- developed from its reciprocal function, there are no reasons to believe that it happened the same way in Baniwa. The suffix -kawa is polysemous. In this language, there is no reason for considering any of its meanings as primary, or secondary.

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