RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS: FROM DISCONTINUITY TO UNITY

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1. Introduction

Present-day English has two reciprocal pronouns, *one another* and *each other*. According to Quirk et al. (1985: 364-365), they are related to the reflexive pronouns in that they express a 'two-way reflexive relationship'. These pronouns are compound units, and cannot be used in subject position in finite clauses. The reciprocals can co-refer only to plural noun phrases, since reciprocity pre-supposes more than one participant.

Quirk et al. (1985) argue that in actual language usage there is no difference between these two pronouns despite the prescriptivists' preference for *each other* for reference to two and *one another* to many. A stylistic difference exists, however, so that *each other* is more common in informal style and *one another* in more formal contexts. The reciprocals are relatively rare, since the million-word Brown Corpus of American English only contains 114 instances of *each other* and 45 of *one another*.

This paper sets out to find out when and how these two pronouns acquired their compound character. It also explores the textual and, to some extent, social constraints that may have played a role in their development. On the whole, the issue is about grammaticalization, if we interpret it here as a process in which grammatical items become more grammaticalized (e.g. Heine et al. 1991: 2). Two of the elements at issue, *one* and *other*, were originally numerals, and have been the objects of repeated grammaticalizations, acquiring various pro-nominal functions during the history of English (see Rissanen: forthcoming).

2. The data

This study uses *The Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (Nevalainen – Raumolin-Brunberg 1996) and *The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (Kytö

1993) as its main sources. The present version of The Correspondence Corpus (CEEC) covers 2.5 million running words from 1420 to 1680. For this paper I studied approximately 1.8 million words from 1540 to 1680. A systematic quantitative analysis of this material was carried out for 1560-1681. From The Helsinki Corpus (HC) I chose the Early Modern English section covering the years 1500-1710 (c. 550,000 words), which has been divided into three sub-sections, E1 1500-70, E2 1570-1640 and E3 1640-1710. Comparisons were also made with *The Shakespeare Corpus* (Wells – Taylor 1989).

3. Reciprocal pronouns from Middle English to Early Modern English

3.1. Variety of forms

Mustanoja (1960: 153-154) mentions that reciprocal function in Middle English could be expressed by some inherently reciprocal verbs alone, such as *kiss*, which is, of course, the case even today. Usually, however, reciprocity was indicated by *each...other*, *every...other*, *either...other*, and their variants as well as *one...other* and plain *other*. These forms remained in use in Early Modern English as well, as we can see from examples (1-3) for *each...other*, (4-5) for *every...other*, (6) for *either...other*, and (7-10) for *one...(an)other*. Example (11) illustrates the use of *other...other*.

(1)   ... *and in the menetyme, with good counsaile and prayer ech help other thitherwarde.* (1534, Sir Thomas More 545)

(2)   ... *and so wel shall lakke no payementes eche in other's necke, God send me monney to discharge all.* (1549, Otwell Johnson 1084)

(3)   ... *the suspicions that were risen betwene bothe the princes in eche one towardes thothers doinges...* (1547, William Paget 12)

(4)   ... *by the love you beare mee that y^u [all] agree in perfect love and amity and account every one the others burthen to bee his so may plenty andprosperity dwell.* (1613, Nicholas Ferrar 236)

(5)   ... *where as euery lorde loued other, and none other thing studyed vppon, but aboute the Coronacion and honoure of the king...* (E1 More Hist 16)

(6)   *And therfore they muste be trewe eyther to other.* (E1 Fitzherbert 98)

(7)   ... *to deserue as muche good wil and affection as euer one prince owed another, wisching all meanes that may maintaine...* (1586, Queen Eliza-beth 38)

(8)   ... *unfaynedly beseching you all to praye for me as I do for you all, that we maye love hym above all & one of us another as ower selves...* (1584, Dru Drury II 287)

(9)   ... *and setche a lawse company that thay had worke annough to pyke of lyse oon oof onother's clothes.* (1546, Sabine Johnson 788)

(10)   ... *charrs are onely taken (by nett, never by hook) in Windermeer & Coniston waters, (two standing Lakes within five miles one of t' other).* (1665, Daniel Fleming 152)

(11)   ... *do give their faithfull promise and vowe other to other to lyve togithir contynuallie the terme of their lief in mutuall socyetie...* (1575, Stephen Drury I 151)

Most of these examples are characterized by discontinuity, and do not represent the same type of compound unit as the Present-day English *each other* and *one another*. The reciprocal expression is divided between subject and object functions in examples (1), (5) and (7), so that either the first pronoun, like *each* in (1), or a noun with a corresponding determiner (*euery lord* in (5) and *one prince* in (7)) represent the subject and *(an)other* the object.

Discontinuity is also a characteristic of the phrases governed by a preposition, such as examples (2-3), (6), (9-11), in which the preposition is placed between the two elements, e.g. *be trewe eyther to other* in example (6). Several of the examples have the reciprocal in the genitive (examples 2-4 and 9), but here, too, discontinuity suggests that the genitive is only part of the latter element.

In addition, the examples show that the reciprocal expressions varied considerably in form. The first part could be a simple pronoun like *each*, *either* and *one* but, in addition to noun-headed phrases, one can find compound pronouns like *everyone* and pronoun phrases such as *eche one* in (3) and *one of us* in (8). The second element was often *other* or *another*, but the definite form *the other* was not uncommon, e.g. (3-4) and (10).

3.2. Emergence of the compound pronouns

Among the varied structures described above, the following three phrases began to develop characteristics typical of Present-day English reciprocal pronouns: *one another*, *(the) one the other* and *each other*.

Gradually the divided subject use became rarer and these expressions were employed as objects, genitive phrases and prepositional complements. In objects or objective genitive phrases the elements were naturally placed side by side, so that here position cannot be used as evidence for the unity of the phrase, examples (12-14).

(12)   ... *while principal members gerring, and the heade becoming a partye shall seke to annoye one an other, the whole bodye must nedes myscarye...* (1574, John Becon 249)

(13)   *... thickets lined with most pleasant shade, in which the nightingales strive one with the other which should in most dainty variety excel one the other.* (1640, Henry Oxinden 166)

(14)   *... so we may reioyce and enioy ech others company...* (1534, Sir Thomas More 545)

(15)   *... I praie God send them comfort of eche other.* (1546, John Johnson 481)

(16)   *... wryte to me perfaictly from tyme to tyme, for ellis (perchaunce) for lakke of knewledge often of eche other's procedinges we may entre into a confusion of our thinges...* (1547, Otwell Johnson 938)

(17)   *It is good to quicken these affections in these affections in these dead declining tymes, and whet on one another in love and fayth which are the bonds of perfection uniting us one unto another, and all to Christ...* (1629, Sir William Masham 77)

(18)   *Have filled their pockets full of pebble stones*
       And, banding themselves in contrary parts,
       Do pelt so fast at one another's pate
       That many have their giddy brains knocked out.
       (1592, Henry VI, Part I: 85)

(19)   *... and sayed the Scotish men must lett out one and others hott blood...* (1632, Sir Thomas Barrington 243)

Prepositional phrases and genitives can function as a testing ground for the unity of compound pronouns. Examples (2-3), (6) and (9-11) still illustrate discontinuity in prepositional phrases, and in example (13) the first reciprocal expression is also a discontinued prepositional complement.

In my data the first compound units of *each other* are attested in the 1540s in the letters of two London merchants (examples 15-16), but we must not forget that these brothers also used the discontinued forms, as example (2) indicates. The CEEC occurrences show that the grammaticalization of *each other* began earlier than it seemed in a study based on The Helsinki Corpus (Raumolin-Brunberg – Kahlas-Tarkka: forthcoming). *One another* developed into a fixed phrase later on, as the first instances of one unit only stem from the 1620s, illustrated in example (17), in which both variants appear side by side. Its late appearance in the data may also be accidental, since we can find a couple of instances in Shakespeare's language, the earliest of which from 1592 is given in example (18). The spelling error of example (19) may have different interpretations. It may reveal the writer's non-recognition or misinterpretation of the elements of the phrase and hence it might serve as evidence of change.

A comparison between the prepositions used in single-unit and discontinous phrases does not reveal any pattern, since the same prepositions appear in both

types. Neither does the difference mentioned by Quirk et al. (1985: 364), viz. reference to two or more participants, seem to be decisive. During the earliest times there was a slight tendency for *each other* and *(the) one the other* to be preferred in reference to two, and *one another* in reference to many, but the limited size of the corpus does not allow any far-reaching conclusions. The forms of the pronouns might suggest differences in their definiteness. The data do not support this idea, and in fact all referents, let alone their sets, seem relatively well-known to both speakers and hearers. There may be some resemblance with the generic reference here, for which both definite and indefinite expressions can be used (e.g. Chesterman 1991: 78; for further discussion on pronominal reference, see Raumolin-Brunberg – Kahlas-Tarkka: forthcoming).

3.3 Quantitative aspects

Table 1 gives the incidence of *one another*, *(the) one the other* and *each other* in the CEEC and Early Modern English part of the HC. The total in the CEEC is 126 and in the HC 85. As mentioned earlier, Quirk et al. (1985: 365), using the Brown Corpus, regard the reciprocals as rare linguistic elements, giving their joint frequency as c. 14.9 per 100,000 running words. The Helsinki Corpus average frequency of 14.5 does not deviate much from this, but these pronouns are rarer in the CEEC at 8.1 occurrences per 100,000 words.

Table 1. The reciprocal pronouns in the Corpus of Early English Correspondence and The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts

	CEEC		HC		
	1560-1619	1620-1681	1500-1570	1570-1640	1640-1710
One another					
Object/Genitive	6	29	1	6	4
Prep. Phrase	14	32	10	18	13
Total	20 80%	61 60%	11 61%	24 80%	17 46%
(The) one the other					
Object/Genitive	0	7	0	0	0
Prep. Phrase	2	14	4	2	1
Total	2 8%	21 21%	4 22%	2 7%	1 3%
Each other					
Object/Genitive	2	9	1	4	6
Prep. Phrase	1	10	2	0	13
Total	3 12%	19 19%	3 17%	4 13%	19 51%
Total	25	101	18	30	37
Frequency per 100,000w	4.2	10.4	9.5	15.8	21.6

There may be several explanations of these frequency differences. First of all, the corpora are different, the Brown and HC being multi-genre corpora, while the CEEC only represents one genre. The reciprocals may be more common in genres other than correspondence. On the other hand, it may also be that letters, which are close to the spoken idiom, employ a broader variety of other reciprocal expressions, as examples (1-4) and (7-11) show. We must not forget that, beside the grammaticalized compound pronouns, reciprocity could and can be expressed by an open-ended set of other forms.

Both the CEEC and HC show growth in the general frequency of the reciprocal pronouns. This is obviously due to the increasing use of the three items selected for the examination. Table 1 also shows that, of the three alternatives, *one another* is the most frequent until the last section of the Helsinki Corpus, during which *each other* becomes slightly more common. A change has taken place between Early Modern and Present-day (American) English, since the Brown Corpus contains 2.5 times more instances of *each other* than *one another*.

Could we then single out genres or groups of people favouring one or another alternative? The Helsinki Corpus gives a relatively even distribution between the oral and literate genres. During the first subperiod, for example, the instances of *each other* and *(the)one the other* all represent different genres, and even the eleven occurrences of *one another* come from four genres. The present-day stylistic difference mentioned in the introduction appears not to have developed in Early Modern English. As regards different people, one distinction emerges: women prefer *one another*, so that the first instance of *each other* in a woman's letter in the CEEC does not appear until the 1650s. There are no examples of *(the) one the other* in women's letters. This might suggest that *one another* is the most colloquial alternative, since women's letters are practically all very private family letters, and women, owing to their low level of education, did not command formal registers.

Nevertheless, a closer look at the data reveals that it is better to talk about individual preferences than variation between social groups. For instance, one of the earliest women writers, Aphra Behn, differed from her female contemporaries by favouring *each other* during Restoration times, while *(the) one the other* scores relatively high in Table 1 thanks to three male letter-writers, John Holles, Earl of Clare, Henry Oxinden of Barham and Bishop Brian Duppa.

Table 2. Prepositional phrases: development of compound units

	CEEC		HC		
	1560-1619	1620-1681	1500-1570	1570-1640	1640-1710
One another					
Discontinued	14	15	10	18	8
Compound unit	0	17	0	0	5
Total	14	32	10	18	13
(The) one the other					
Discontinued	2	14	4	2	1
Compound unit	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	14	4	2	1
Each other					
Discontinued	0	1	2	0	0
Compound unit	1	9	0	0	13
Total	1	10	2	0	13

Finally, let us return to the issue of compounding. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the prepositional phrases into the old discontinued type (*one* with *another*) and the new compound type (with *each other*). Both corpora testify to the same development: *one another* begins to develop into one unit after 1620, but considerable variation persists throughout the data. *(The) one the other* does not become a compound pronoun at all, while *each other* has practically completed the grammaticalization process by Restoration times.

4. Discussion and conclusion

It may seem a waste of time to spend much energy on a pair of infrequent peripheral pronouns. In fact, they only become interesting in the larger context of grammaticalization in the pronoun category. The reciprocals serve as a further example of what went on at the margins of this category in Early Modern English. Raumolin-Brunberg – Kahlas-Tarkka (forthcoming) show how English develops two parallel series of indefinite compound pronouns with singular human reference. The pronouns with *-body* (e.g. *anybody*) and those in *-one* (e.g. *everyone*) complete their series so that they cover all four pronoun types: assertive (*some-*), non-assertive (*any-*), universal (*every-*) and negative (*no-*). Rissanen (forthcoming) explores the pronominalization of *one*, and shows how the prop-word and the generic pronoun especially increase their frequencies, while some older uses radically diminish. Peitsara (forthcoming) accounts for the regularization of the use of the reflexive pronouns.

It is not unexpected that grammaticalization takes place among the less prototypical members of a category (Raumolin-Brunberg 1994). Different types of grammaticalization also proceed in parallel, so that certain grammatical items

evolve from lexical ones (e.g. the pronouns in *-body*) and some other grammatical elements from less grammatical ones (e.g. those in *-one*). The indefinites and reciprocals share the interesting characteristic that they both develop two parallel forms with approximately the same sense and sphere of usage, suggesting that economy is not necessarily a goal that languages strive after. On the other hand, synonymous expressions tend to acquire different stylistic or social characteristics in the long run, so that free variation does not pertain in language for long, if at all.

On the whole, what these grammaticalization processes lead to is large-scale specialization. Middle English peripheral pronouns seemed to have broader and more diffuse areas of use. This sorting out is also evidenced by the fact that many of the earlier alternative ways of expressing reciprocity discussed in this paper were also specialized later on for different purposes. *Every other* today means 'every second' and 'all the rest' (determiner use), *either* 'one of two', and *the one...the other* is used in symmetrical expressions with two known referents.

On the other hand, there may also be non-linguistic constraining factors for the temporal frame of some of these changes, including the increase in weak-link social networks, which the Milroys (Milroy – Milroy 1985; J. Milroy 1992) claim are channels for the diffusion of sound change. There are on-going morphological changes with steepening S-curves 1640-80, which could be interpreted as evidence of the effect of the Civil War and the Interregnum on the growth of weak links and hence also on the spreading changes in the speech community (Raumolin-Brunberg: forthcoming). One of these is the increasing use of the pronouns in *-body*. Reciprocal pronouns may also belong to this set of changes.

Finally, we could have a look at what happened after 1700. In the area of peripheral pronouns a couple of developments may be discerned without detailed research. The assertive use of *one* ('someone') has given way to the indefinite compound pronouns (*someone* and *somebody*). The indefinites with *other* as an element have become rarer, e.g. *any other* meaning 'anyone else', *another* and *some other* 'someone else', *none other* 'no one else', while *each other* and *every other* have persisted in their specialized meanings. Despite Lass's (1980) strong arguments against functional explanations, one does come to mind, viz. the need to lessen the functional load of both *one* and *other*, which had been in such broad use. On the other hand, it is tempting to suggest that the indefinites with *other* might form such junk as some time in future might become available for some other linguistic purposes (Lass 1990).

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