



# Reciprocal marking in Wolof

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## WOLOF

- Niger-Congo, Atlantic
- ~5.5mln native speakers in Senegal, Gambia and Mauritania
- Agglutinative, SVO
- Rich verbal morphology: causativization, possession, passivization, reciprocity (Church, 1981; Buell & Sy, 2005)
- Three reciprocal verbal suffixes:

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| (1) <i>Khadi ak Fatou dañu bëgg-ante</i><br>Khady and Fatou FOC.3PL love-RECP<br>'Khady and Fatou love each other' | (2) <i>Khady ak Fatou ñoom ñaar dañu gis-e</i><br>Khady and Fatou 3PL two FOC.3PL see-RECP<br>'Khady and Fatou met' | (3) <i>Khadi ak Fatou dañu xul-oo</i><br>Khady and Fatou FOC.3PL argue-RECP<br>'Khady and Fatou argue with each other' |
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## PREVIOUS STUDIES

- **Church (1981)**: semantic contrasts between *-oo* and *-ante*:  
(4) *dog* 'to cut' > *dog-ante* 'to cut each other'  
> *dog-oo* 'to separate from each other'
- **Voisin (2002); Creissels & Voisin (2008)**: *-ante* is the most productive reciprocal marker, *-e* appears with a limited number of verbs denoting naturally reciprocal events, *-oo* is a marker of reciprocity and 'co-participation'

## OPEN QUESTIONS

- What are the **properties** of Wolof reciprocal morphemes and the constraints on their distribution?
- What are the **differences** between these morphemes?

**We propose that different reciprocal verbal affixes reflect different morphological processes:**  
***-ante* is a productive reciprocal morpheme, operating on the argument structure,**  
***-e* and *-oo* are lexicalized markers of naturally reciprocal predicates**

### (i) productivity

- *-ante* can reciprocalize any direct object, *-e* and *-oo* are not productive:

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| (5) <i>Khady mu ngi foon Fatou</i><br>Khady PRS.3SG kiss Fatou<br>'Khady kisses Fatou' | (6) <i>Khady ak Fatou ñu ngi foon-ante/*foon-e/*foon-oo</i><br>Khady and Fatou PREST.3PL kiss-RECP<br>'Khady and Fatou kiss each other' |
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- ***-ante* turns transitive verbs into reciprocal verbs, *-e* and *-oo* are markers of a restricted class of verbs**

### (ii) semantic drift

- Verbs reciprocalized by *-ante* keep the interpretation of the transitive verb stem:

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| (7) <i>Khady ak Fatou ñu ngi laal-ante</i><br>Khady and Fatou PRS.3PL touch-RECP<br>'Khady and Fatou touch each other' |
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- Reciprocal verbs with *-e* and *-oo* may undergo a semantic drift:

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| (8) a. <i>Khadi ak Fatou ñoom naar dañu gis-e</i><br>Khady and Fatou 3PL two FOC.3PL see-RECP<br>'Khady and Fatou met' | b. <i>Khadi ak Fatou dañu dogg-oo</i><br>Khady and Fatou FOC.3PL cut-RECP<br>'Khadi and Fatou broke up' |
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- **The acquisition of new 'drifted' meaning is exclusive to lexicalized reciprocals** (Kemmer 1993; Haspelmath 2007; Siloni 2012)

### (iii) lexicalized reflexives

- Reflexivity is expressed with the NP 'head' (9a), lexicalized reflexives with the verbal affix *-u* (9b):

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| (9) a. <i>Ñun da ñoo bañ sunu bopp</i><br>1PL AUX-FOC 1PL hate 1PL head<br>'We hate ourselves' (Tamba 2008, example ID:5835) | b. <i>Khady sang-u na</i><br>Khady wash-REFL PFV<br>'Khady washed' |
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- *-ante* can reciprocalize stems of lexicalized reflexives, *-e* and *-oo* cannot:

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| (10) <i>Khadi ak Fatou ñu ngi sang-ante/*sang-e/*sang-oo</i><br>Khady and Fatou PRS.3PL wash-RECP<br>'Khadi and Fatou washed each other' |
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- **Lexicalized reflexives and lexicalized reciprocals are two distinct classes that do not overlap**

### (iv) intransitive verbs

- *-e* and *-oo* can combine with intransitive verbs, *-ante* leads to ungrammaticality:

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| (11) <i>Khadi mu ngi dek *(ak/si) Fatou</i><br>Khady PRS.3SG live with/on Fatou<br>'Khady lives with Fatou' | (12) <i>Khadi ak Fatou dañu dekk-oo/dekk-e/*dekk-ante</i><br>Khady and Fatou FOC.3PL live-RECP<br>'Khady and Fatou live close to each other' |
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- ***-e* and *-oo* do not operate on the verb's argument structure**

## TYPOLOGICAL RELEVANCE

- Morphological distinction between 'naturally' reciprocal predicates (marked by *-e* and *-oo*) and productive reciprocal strategy (expressed by *-ante*).
- Rare pattern: both reciprocal strategies expressed by means of verbal affixes. Also attested in To'aba'ita, Austronesian (Lichtenberk 2007), Kikongo Language Cluster, Bantu (Dom et al. 2016).
- Productive reciprocal markers are morpho-phonologically more complex than non-productive middle-related markers (Kemmer, 1993).

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