

A Semantic Study of Reciprocal Pronouns in Hawthorne's Novel "The Scarlet Letter"

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Reciprocity plays a vital role in daily life. It is hard to determine the reciprocal relation in mental actions such as missing and thinking, however, there is symmetry in certain aspect of relevant situations. The paper aims to explore reciprocal pronouns which are employed in Hawthorne's Novel "The Scarlet Letter". The semantic purposes of reciprocal pronouns used in "The Scarlet Letter" are the focus of this study. Reciprocal pronouns may function as the tone of victimization of little Pearl in the data under study. It is hypothesized that reciprocal pronouns have positive and negative indications in some selected texts. Semantically, their uses in one situation is different from their uses in another. It is expected that one pronoun is used more than the other. The findings of the investigation validate the hypotheses above.

Keywords: *reciprocal pronouns, mutual action, The Scarlet Letter, semantics*

1. Introduction

"Reciprocal pronouns" are used to describe symmetric situations. Their basic applications indicate certain harmony of feelings, or equal activities. The paper is restricted to explore reciprocal pronouns which are employed in "The Scarlet Letter". It sheds light on the semantic denotations of them used in this particular novel . It is anticipated that "reciprocal pronouns" have either positive or negative denotations in some selected texts. From the semantic point of view, uses of "reciprocal pronouns" differ from one situation to another. It is assumed that their employments are also varied from one context to another.

2. Literature Review

Many scholars studied reciprocal pronouns from various perspectives, and most of them focused on the analysis of their syntactic functions, while few studied this topic from the perspective of semantics. For instance, Quirk et al. (1985) differentiated between the two pronouns of reciprocity syntactically. Similarly, Levin (1993) classified those verbs that carried mutual relationship. Haspelmath (2007) discussed the forms of expressing mutuality in syntax with or without using reciprocal pronouns. Ekkehard and Volker (2008) and Sultan (2010) studied the topic from the semantic perspective. This paper deals with reciprocal pronouns in terms of semantics so as to bridge this gap. It intends to further validate that reciprocal pronouns can have optimistic or pessimistic indications in some selected texts of Hawthorne's novel "The Scarlet Letter".

3. Reciprocal Pronouns from a Linguistic Perspective

To be dealt with by my scholars, Ekkehard and Volker (2008:3) remark that the term "reciprocal is widely common in all aspects of life. *Sharing, exchange* and *cooperation* are synonyms of the word "reciprocity". In English, there are two reciprocal pronouns, "*each other*" and "*one another*". Quirk et al. (1985: 364-5) differentiate between these two pronouns saying that the former is used in an "informal style" while the latter occurs in "more formal contexts". Kahlas-Tarkka (2004: 122) defines reciprocal pronouns as a way of "expressing mutual action or relation on the part of the persons indicated by the subject". According to Visu (2017:1), reciprocal pronouns "are used to refer to two or more people who are the subject of the same verb". Kaplan (2020:25) demonstrates that reciprocal pronouns are items employed for "combining ideas". In *The Free Dictionary* (2020:1), reciprocal pronouns are used to express mutual relationship. The reciprocal pronouns involve two-way interaction.

1. They love *each other*.

Linguistically, Epoge (2015: 163) states that these reciprocal items can be preceded by psych-verbs such as "*anger, fear, hate...etc*".

2. They hate *each other*.

4. Extra Forms of Expressing Reciprocity

Either explicitly or implicitly, there are various markers of indicating shared actions in language. Levin (1993:200) pinpoints that there are certain markers of reciprocity including verbs of social interaction such as:

1- "**Meet verbs** as "debate, consult, fight, meet, visit"

2- "**Marry verbs** as "cuddle, divorce, nozzle, pass"

3- "**Correspond verbs** as "agree, coexist, collaborate, conflict, correspond, clash"

4- "**Talk verbs** as "speak, talk"

Levin (ibid) asserts that these markers signifying mutual participation potentially. Hurst (2007: 9-11) numerate several constructions that denote the action to be carried collectively such as " *together, mutually, back-to- back* and *between*".

3. They are sitting together.

Kahlas-Tarkka (2004:124) points out that the verbs "*like, love, resemble* and *see* carry the meaning of reciprocity". Ekkehard and Volker (2008: 14) mention that there are certain markers that indicate reciprocity such as verbs (*kiss*), modifiers (*mutually*) and pronouns (*each other*). They (ibid:2) also add that " null reciprcalization" can occur with verbs like *kiss, meet, and divorce* since they imply a mutual activity, but not with verbs like "*see* and *hate*". In other words, it can be said that the co-occurrence of reciprocal pronouns with verbs like "*kiss*" is a way of intensification.

4. They *kissed*.

5. They *kissed* each other

They (ibid: 72) say that the verbs "*quarrel, swap* and *exchange*" have a mutual interpretation. Haspelmath (2007:3) confirms that the words "*back*" and "*vice versa*", can express the mutual meaning by themselves.

6. He hit her, and she hit him *back*.

Haspelmath (ibid: 19) enlists types of verbs that have a joint denotation which are as follows:

1-Verbs of competition: "*fight, quarrel, negotiate, argue*"

2-Verbs of joint action: "*communicate, consult*"

3-Verbs of connecting: "*combine, unite, compare, mix*"

4-Verbs of dividing: "*separate, distinguish*"

Added to that, he "ibid" elaborates his explanation mentioning other words that encompass mutual activity such as "*same, similar, different, friend, colleague* and *match*".

A coordination clause, as Haas (2010: 26) sees, is another way of signifying reciprocity.

7. You help us, we help you.

The nouns "*relative, partner, counterpart* and *opposite*" and adjectives "*equal, divided, compatible* and *apart*" entail joint activity (ibid. 39). To be used only a reciprocal construction, Dixon (2012:155) enlists a group of verbs which "scarcely employed within a reflexive" such as "*capture, believe, encourage, greet, insult, offend, assist, disturb, and envy.*" On the contrary to that position, there are some idiomatic expressions "which are plausible in a reflexive but not in a reciprocal construction, such as *pride oneself on being honest, and cry oneself to sleep.*" (ibid). Maratova (2015:7) classifies markers of signifying combinatory meaning into categories which are as follows:

1- **Social relation:** *marry, quarrel, frond*

2- **Spatial actions:** *adjoin, next to.*

3- **Relations of non- identity:** *same as, different from, resemble.*

In the same token, Kruitwagen et al. (2017: 1) points out that the verbs " *date* and *hug*" are inherently having an exchange in the interaction.

8. Johan and Mary dated.

The verbs like "chat, *gossip*, *get engaged*, *talk*, *fight*, and *discuss*" are integrated within reciprocal verbs (Vázquez, and Fernández, 2016:130)

For Lumanda (2019:3), there are a number of verbs that "allow the reciprocity" such as "insult, greet, call, hate, love, help ect."

9. They insult each other.

One of the restrictions of "*each other*" is that it cannot be used in progressive aspect with the verb "*look at*", but it is used in the past perfective (Hurst and Nordlinger, 2011:17).

10. They looked at each other (not * *they are looking at each other*" which is grammatically unacceptable).

In finite clauses, Kahlas-Tarkka (2004: 122) shows another constrain of reciprocal pronouns which is that "they cannot be used in the subject position.

5. *Each Other* and *One Another*

As it has been stated before, "*one another*" is used in more formal contexts than "*each other*" which occurs in an "informal ones" (Quirk et al., 1985: 365). Kahlas-Tarkka (2004: 123) agrees with Quirk et al. (1985) in the idea of formality saying that "*one another* is common in fiction and academic prose, whereas each other is used in all registers." According to their uses, Haas (2010: 23-4) explains that there is a number of differences between the two pronouns. The first one is that "*one another*" indicated more than two persons, while "*each other*" should be used with two. The second difference is that "*one another*" is compatible with "mutuality", while "*each other*" refers to "commutation". He also states that "*each other*" maintains "a greater degree of precision than *one another*". One of the peculiarities of using "*each other*" is that it adds senses of "rigidity, vividness and musicality" to the text (ibid: 24).

11. They damned each other to hell.

Stylistically, Kahlas-Tarkka (2004: 125) reveals that "*each other* is common in everyday speech, while *one another* is more elevated one". Concerning their denotations, "*each other*" has a positive indication, while "*one another*" implies a negative one (Dixon, 2012:171).

12. John and Mary love each other.

13. Tom and Jane hate one another,

6. Reciprocal Pronouns: Syntactically

Having some restrictions in their uses, reciprocal pronouns cannot appear in all positions in a clause. Maratová (2015:9) and Hurst (2007:4) agree that "each other and one another" cannot be used as a subject.

Dixon (2012:158) indicates that reciprocal pronouns is used within transitive and intransitive verbs"

14 The children are hitting each other.

15. They *play* with *each* other.

Maratová (2015:15) highlights the most common occurrence of reciprocal pronouns which are as follows:

1- **Object:** 16.They love each other.

2- **Adverbial phrase:** 17.They looked at one another.

3- **Attributive phrase:** 18.They looked at one another's books.

4- **Predicative complement :** 19.All we have left in the world is one another

The conjunctions "*and*" is used in mutual contexts (Evans, 2011:133).

20. Sara and Anne speech to each other.

To be formulated with preposition, "*with* and *at*" are the most common prepositions that precede reciprocal pronouns (ibid).

21. They shouted *at* each other

22. They realized that they should cooperate *with* one another.

In genitive case, Lumanda (2019: 3) numerates some verbs that can be used in genitive case and with reciprocal pronouns as well such as "*go, play, travel, smoke, write* etc." -

23. The kids *play* with *each other's* mat.

One of the restrictions of "*each other*" is that it cannot be used in progressive aspect with the verb "*look at*", but it is used in the past perfective (Hurst and Nordlinger, 2011:17) .

24. They looked at each other (not * *they are looking at each other*" which is grammatically unacceptable).

Another restriction of reciprocal pronouns, as Haspelmath (2007:9) asserts, is that they cannot be used in passive voice.

7. Functions of Reciprocal Pronouns

Sultan (2010:156) confirms that "reciprocal pronouns tend to have a wide range of functions and meanings" which are as follows.

1- To express negative attitude

Example: 25.They engaged in a quarrel with each other.

2-Belittlement

Example: 26.They disgraced each other.

3- To show physical activity

Example: 27.They kissed each other.

4-Exaggeration

Example: 28.They need a year to kiss each other.

5-Showing respect and love

Example: 29.It is nice to kiss each other.

6-To be friendly and socially respected

Example: 30.They approached each other.

7- **Sociative Sense:** 31.John and Marry followed each other (Dixon, 2012:149).

6- **Romantic Impression:** 32. John and Marry kissed each other (ibid).

7- **Positivity:** 33. *Inhabitants of this village help each other.* (Ekkehard and Volker, 2008:4)

8- **Negative reciprocity:** 34.*Paul and Mary ruined each other.* (ibid)

9- **Collectiveness:** 35.He is together with his wife (Ekkehard and Volker, 2008:182)

8. Model of Analysis

Relying on the forgoing discussion, it is worthy to mention that the model adopted for analyzing the following selected verses is developed on the basis of other models, such as Sultan (2010), Ekkehard and Volker (2008) and Dixon (2012), in addition to the observations made by the researcher herself. The eclectic model used for the analysis of the present study illustrates the semantic level of reciprocal pronouns.

9. Data Analysis

Text-1-

"We have wronged **each other**" answered he .Mine was the first wrong, when I betrayed thy budding youth in to a false and unnatural relation with my decay." ("Hawthorne ", 1998:69)

In this text, there is a reference to the idea of isolation. The pronoun "each other" depicts an atmosphere which is full of separation and revenge. Instead of being unified, the pronoun "each other" shows their unbalanced relationship which comes out with shame. The victimized child, namely; Pearl, suffers from exclusion and mortification. Little Pearl whose must be innocent is a fruit of unfavourable relation.

Chillingworth's admission of their unequal marriage mirrors senses of betrayal and failed relation. Actually, they have mistaken each other. They share the same guilt and suffering which is living in a deep misery. Here, "each other" reflects rigidness which is compatible with confession.

Text-2-

"One another in silence, till the child laughed aloud, and shouted—"Come away, mother! Come away, or yonder old Black Man will catch you! He hath got hold of the minister already. Come away, mother or he will catch you! But he cannot catch little Pearl" ("Hawthorne ", 1998:124)

In an atmosphere which is full of suspense, Hester and Dimmesdale have met secretly. The pronoun "*one another*" carries the negative attitude of the novelist and Pearl as well. Hester and Dimmesdale are both sinners. They are trying to comfort themselves.

Dimmesdale attempts to bond with Hester who has a strong character in order to alleviate the feeling of the deterioration of his physical condition. This action of the ongoing contact is considered as unhealthy way of thinking. Especially Dimmesdale, he is dishonest with himself. He wants to compensate for his loss of self- satisfaction through such gathering. The pronoun

"one another" expresses the spiritual pain inside every character, such as, Hester, Dimmesdale, and Pearl who is the victim of the illegal relationship.

Text-3-

"I Never, never! Whispered she. What we did had a consecration of its own. We felt it so! We said so to each other. Hast thou forgotten it? Hush, Hester! Said Arthur Dimmesdale, rising from the ground. No; I have not forgotten!" ("Hawthorne ", 1998:185)

Once meeting, Hester feels that she still loves her partner in sin, Dimmesdale. She shares Dimmesdale's pain and his struggle which has made him gradually destroyed. Hester feels sympathy towards him. The pronoun "Each other" here refers to their intention to communicate publicly without fear.

For him, she is the support and the courage; she is the pain and the cure at the same time. The harmony between them is immeasurable. Contacting her absorbs all negative feeling inside Dimmesdale. He feels relax and comfort with her.

Seeing light everywhere, Dimmesdale believes that in spite of his sin, he must not forget God. As a response to his reckless sin, he feels deep inside that God might have a purpose for his suffering. The pronoun "each other" figures out the flicker of hope. It sparkles spiritual calm and inner illumination.

Text-4-

"Shall we not spend our immortal life together? Surely, surely, we have ransomed one another, with all this woe! Thou lookest far into eternity, with those bright dying eyes! Then tell me what thou seest!" ("Hawthorne ", 1998:241)

Cheating both himself and the people surrounding him, Dimmesdale decides to reveal his sin publically. He aims to put an end to his constant suffering. "*One another*" has been employed to show his cowardice and hypocrisy as well. He wants to share his alienation that he feels with his lover, Hester. She makes use of this particular pronoun so as to avoid embarrassment. Committing prostitution is a shameful deed, thus, she wants to soften the meaning intended.

Text-5- "It was no wonder that they thus questioned one another's actual and bodily existence".(" Hawthorne ", 1998:180)

Dimmesdale has encountered Hester in the forest after seven years. They are both in state of separation from God. Being completely exhausted, Dimmesdale and Hester feel spiritual death. They are involved in sins. Without God, life has no meaning. Dimmesdale and Hester admit their wrongs. Comfort has no place in their life because of behaving guiltily. The pain of shame, the pain of blame, and above all the pain of being socially rejected come out with

sorrow. Here, the pronoun "one another" gives sense of the spiritual regret inside Hester and Dimmesdale. It also reveals the melancholy of misery.

Text-6-

"These two learned persons sat themselves down, each in his own domain, yet familiarly passing from one apartment to the other, and bestowing a mutual and not incurious inspection into one another's business." ("Hawthorne", 1998:118)

Being as companions, Dimmesdale and Chillingworth are similar in the idea of selfishness. They are following their interest blindly. They deceive people using double-face. Their relationship looks like a struggle. Dimmesdale stands for spirituality, while Chillingworth exemplifies science. However, neither of these two concepts suffices to cure their inner pains. This twisted relation comes to self-mutilation and self-injury. Here, the pronoun "one another" symbolizes this abnormal association which comes to dissatisfaction of both. It also expresses the meanings of revenge, illusion and self-indulgence.

10. Conclusions

"*One another*" is widely common in this novel. This is due to the topics under discussion which need to be mitigated euphemistically. In other words, it has been used to avoid shame and embarrassment.

"*Each other* and *one another*" stand for Pearl's "crime" of her existence. Being bullied by her society, these two pronouns emphasize the child's innocence and how she is a victim because of adultery.

It is concluded that the pronoun "each other" is employed once talking about hope and optimism. "*One another*" have been used by those characters whom searching for identity.

In the light of the data selected, it is found that reciprocal pronouns, namely "*each other* and *one another*", have shared either positive or negative actions so as to dull one's suffering. The pronoun "*each other*" vitalizes the voice of conscience inside characters, while "*one another*" foreshadows dissatisfaction, cowardice and love which is compatible with agony.



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