

# Anaphors in Toto

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## Abstract

In this paper, I have discussed the anaphors i.e. reflexives and reciprocals in Toto and argued that the language employs nominal expressions and uses the syntactic strategy known as compositional strategy (like *herself* and *each other* in English). In case of reciprocals, there is a lexical counterpart other than the compositional strategy but it is hardly used by the speakers.

**Keywords:** Anaphors, Toto, Tibeto Burman, Endangered language, Nominal strategy

## 1. Introduction

The paper discusses the anaphors i.e. reflexives and reciprocals in Toto, an endangered language of India. My prime argument is that the language employs nominal expressions and uses a syntactic strategy like *herself* and *each other* in English. Totos use a nominal self-pronoun for reflexivity. In case of reciprocals, there is a lexical counterpart other than the compositional strategy but it is hardly used by the speakers. Toto belongs to Tibeto Burman family and it is an endangered language spoken in the Alipurduar District of West Bengal in India. The language does not have a written script and currently the speakers are trying to develop a script on their own.

The paper is distributed over the following sections. It begins with a description of the language and the demography in 1.1. Then, I have accrued a couple of research questions followed by a description of the methodology in section 2. In section 3, I have discussed the reflexives in Toto and section 4 discusses the reciprocals. The conclusions and a summary of anaphora strategies are noted in section 5.

### 1.1 Demography of the Language

According to (Moseley, 2010), Toto is considered as one of the critically endangered

languages of India. According to (Simons, 2017) there are only 1400 people who speak Toto. The other dominant languages of the regions are Bangla and Nepali. Almost all the Toto speakers can speak Bangla and or Nepali along with Toto.

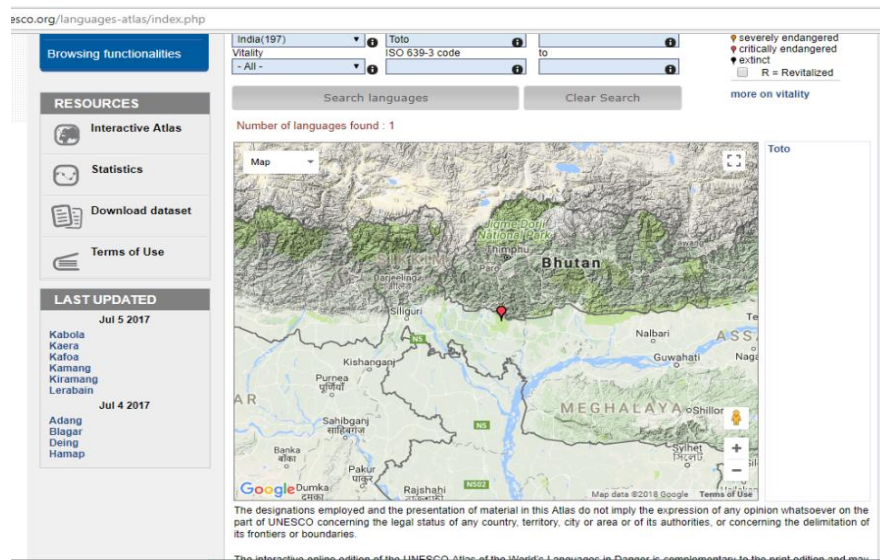


Figure 1. Toto speaking area

In this paper, my objective is to describe the reflexive and reciprocal constructions in Toto. The main research questions are as the following:

- 1) How are reflexivity and reciprocity expressed in the language? (Geniušienė, 1987) emphasizes on the following aspects of reflexivity e.g. a dedicated reflexive morphology for the language in question, number of morphemes to show reflexivization, relation of the reflexive marker with pronouns, Agreement with respect to the number and gender, Syntactic positioning with respect to the verb, transitive intransitive distinction, lexical or grammatical strategy, binding domain and the effect on valency.
- 2) How forms and functions of those two types of constructions (reflexivity and reciprocity) are related as classified in (Subbarao, 2012) for the anaphors of South Asian Languages i.e.
  - (i) A nominal anaphor (reflexive or reciprocal), or
  - (ii) A verbal anaphor (a verbal clitic for the reflexive or reciprocal), or
  - (iii) Both nominal and verbal anaphors.

## 2. Methodology

In order to elicit the data, I have used the Berlin - Utrecht Reciprocals questionnaire, survey & outline edited by (Dimitriadis, 2006). A field survey was conducted in 2016 at Totopara and the data was collected from two speakers and verified from a third Toto Speaker. For glossing the data, I have primarily followed the Leipzig Gloss rules (Conventions for interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses, 2015).

### 3. Reflexives

Reflexivity in Toto is expressed by the nominal reflexive *taʔi* followed by a pair of suffixes –*raŋ* and –*naŋ* shown in the examples (1-2).

1. ʃanti-ha    taʔi-raŋ    yacpa-diŋ-na    (Own data, 2016)

santi-AG    self –NS    hit- CONT-NFUT.R

‘Santi is hitting herself.’

2. ʃanti-ha    taʔi-naŋ    jeʒeŋ -mi

santi-AG    self-S    like/love- NFUT.IRR

‘Santi liked/loved herself.’

The suffixes –*raŋ* and –*naŋ* show a complementary distinction as the former show up in case of non-stative verbs and the later in case of stative ones. The distributions are shown below:

Table 1. Stative vs. non-stative

Non Stative verbs	Stative verbs
<i>Walk, Eat, Play</i>	<i>See, Like, Love</i>
Reflexive + <i>-raŋ</i>	Reflexive+ <i>-naŋ</i>

#### 3.1 Body Part/ Wash/ Subject Oriented Reflexives

In case of other types of reflexives, –*raŋ* shows up again in case of subject-oriented reflexives such as in (4-5).

4. ka ka-raŋ    niʔp-ro

I I-NS    wear-FUT

‘You will wear (clothes) by yourself’.

5. ka ka-raŋ    cəp-ro

I I-NS    eat-FUT

‘I will eat by myself’.

The suffix *-naŋ* shows up in case of stative predicates as shown in (6-7) below.

6. Ka ka-hiŋ-naŋ    jeʒeŋ-na

I I-ACC-S    like-NFUT.R

‘I like myself.’

7. Kabi    kabi-hiŋ-naŋ    jeʒeŋ-su-na

We    we-ACC-S    like-PL-NFUT.R

‘We like ourselves’.

Wash verbs also show reflexivity as shown in (8).

8. ka ka-raŋ      ʈi      up-ro  
     I I-NS      water      bath-FUT  
     ‘I will bath myself (with water).

### 3.2 Long Distance Binding

Toto reflexives show long-distance binding as shown in example (9).

9. ʒɔn      ʒaŋ-mi      aku-ha      ʈaʈi-naŋ      ʒeʒeŋ-mi      (Wide scope)  
     John      say-IRR.NFUT      he-AG      self-S      like –NFUT.IRR  
     ‘John<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>j</sub> likes himself<sub>i/j</sub>’.

In (9), the reflexive pronoun *ʈaʈi-naŋ* refers to either the local antecedent he or the long-distance matrix subject John.

10. ʒɔn      ʒaŋ-mi      aku-ha      aku-hiŋ-naŋ      ʒeʒeŋ-mi      (Narrow scope)  
     John      say-IRR.NFUT      he-AG      he-ACC-S      like-NFUT.IRR  
     ‘John<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>j</sub> likes himself<sub>j</sub>’.

In (10), on the other hand, the reflexive pronoun *aku-hiŋ-naŋ* can only refer to the local subject he and it cannot refer back to the long-distance antecedent. We now turn to the reciprocal constructions in the language in the following section.

## 4. Reciprocals

The reciprocal construction shows a nominal strategy as in (12).

12. ebiha      ebe ebe-ʈa      ga-diŋ-na  
     they      one one-LOC      sit-CONT-NFUT.R  
     ‘They are sitting one after another’.

However, a regional variation can be noticed as in one of the Toto speakers used *ebe ebe* and the other used *eco eco* for each other.

13. ebiha      eco eco-hiŋ      ʒeʒeŋ-na  
     they      one one-ACC      like-NFUT.R  
     ‘They like each other’.

Another morphological variant can also be noticed in the following examples:

14. i      deabi      ʈaibilərai-hiŋ      tæ-ʈiŋ-na  
     these      people      each other-ACC      touch-CONT-NFUT.R

‘They are touching each other.’

15. i deabi ʔaibilərai-ko (Note 1) wæ-taŋ-na  
 these people each other -ACC hug-CONT-NFUT.R

‘They are hugging each other’.

In the above examples instead of a combinatory nominal reciprocal, a lexical reciprocal *ʔaibilərai* is used.

In Toto, when a pluractional suffix shows up in a reciprocal construction, it shows the multiplicity of events as shown in (16). The predicate yields a distributive reading.

16. ʔutʃo deabi ʔaibilərai-hiŋ wæ-taŋ-su-na  
 six people each other -ACC hug-CONT-PL-NFUT.R

‘six people are hugging each other.’

*4.1 Ambiguity in LDB Reciprocals* Toto reciprocals also allow the long-distance binding of the reciprocal constructions as shown in (17).

17. ʒon so meri no-mi u-bi-ha eco eco nɔ-ɖiŋ-na  
 john and Mary think- NFUT.IRR they-AG one one fight-CONT-NFUT.R

‘John and Mary<sub>i/j</sub> think that they<sub>i/j</sub> are fighting with each other<sub>i/j</sub>.’

In (17), there are two possible readings. On one reading the fight can take place between some people but not John and Mary and in that sense, it is a narrow scope reading while the second possibility is that the fighting can take place only between John and Mary.

## 5. Conclusion

The facts I have inferred from Toto and raised in terms of the research questions in 1)-2) are summarized as below:

Table 1. Morpho syntactic properties of Anaphors

Identifying reflexivity	Reflexives	Reciprocals
<i>dedicated reflexive morphology</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>number of morphemes to show reflexivization</i>	Single	More than one
<i>relation of the reflexive marker with pronouns</i>	It can be used a pronoun	It can be used a pronoun
<i>Agreement with respect to the number and gender</i>	No	No
<i>Syntactic positioning with respect to the verb</i>	Preverbal; SOV	Preverbal; SOV
<i>transitive intransitive distinction</i>	No	No
<i>lexical or grammatical strategy</i>	Grammatical	Both lexical and

		grammatical
<i>the binding domain</i>	Both local and non-local	Both local and non-local
<i>the effect on the valency</i>	No change	No change
<b>Form function</b>		
<i>i)A nominal anaphor (reflexive or reciprocal), or</i>	Only Nominal	Only nominal
<i>ii)A verbal anaphor (a verbal clitic for the reflexive or reciprocal), or (iii) Both nominal and verbal anaphors</i>		

I argue that Toto uses a nominal strategy for both reflexives and reciprocals. The reflexive marker *-ṭaṭi* shows up with two different suffixes *-naŋ* & *-raŋ* to mark the distinction between stative and non-stative events. In reciprocal constructions, both compositional (*eco eco, ebe ebe*) and lexical strategies (*ṭaibilərai*) are used. Both the reflexives and the reciprocals in Toto show long-distance binding.

As a consequence of language contact, Toto has shifted to compositional strategy which is found in both Bangla and Nepali in the region. The lexical reciprocal marker *ṭaibilərai* has become a frozen expression in the language and the use of the compositional reciprocal marker is more frequent.

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List of abbreviations

ACC Accusative

AG Agentive

CONT Continuous

FUT Future

IRR Irrealis

LOC Locative

NFUT Non Future

NS Nonstative

PL Pluractional

R Realis

S Stative

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## Note

Note 1. -ko is the accusative case marker in Nepali, in this case the case marker has been borrowed in Toto.

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