

# A stylistic approach to English reciprocal pronouns: conveying specific meanings

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## Abstract:

This paper focuses on the way native English speakers use reciprocal pronouns and how they choose between *each other* and *one another*.

From the analysis of utterances drawn from contemporary American and British short stories and novels, the paper provides a precise distribution of the use of both pronouns according to semantic criteria.

A corpus-based analysis reveals the semantic values attached to each linguistic marker and points out which meaning(s) speakers want to convey when they choose one reciprocal pronoun instead of the other. In order to take into account a variety of conversational environments, the research corpus combines narratives and instances of dialogue.

This paper aims to highlight specific trends that help to justify the selection between *each other* and *one another*, such as the notions of proximity vs. distance, the factual vs. the emotional, the affirmation of narrative strategies and narratorial stances, some pragmatic considerations, and also an oscillation between different speech registers.

Investigating the distribution of the linguistic markers used by writers to express reciprocity in their pieces of fiction sheds renewed light on the close connections existing between linguistics and stylistics.

**Keywords:** reciprocal pronouns, corpus stylistics, semantics, narratology, pragmatics

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