THE MIDDLE VOICE IN LAI*

Tomoko Yamashita Smith
University of California at Berkeley

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates the middle voice in Lai, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Chin Hills of Burma.[1] Lai has reflexive and middle markers that are identical. According to Kemmer (1993), identical marking for the reflexive and middle seems to be the most common arrangement among the various types of middle-marking languages, including Guuge Yimidhirr, Changana, Pangwa, German, and French.

In this paper, I will follow the classifications of Kemmer (1992, 1993) to show the semantic range of middle use in Lai. Although middle voice has a wide range of functions in languages, one semantic generalization is that "the action or state affects the subject of the verb or his interests" (Lyons 1969:373), and the uses of middle markers in Lai seem to fit with Lyons' generalization. This should be expected, since Lai's middle marking originates from the reflexive marker, and the function of the reflexive is to mark 'self'. In addition to the semantics of the middle voice in Lai, I examine its syntax, focusing on the following two points: (1) interaction between Lai's two verb stem forms and the middle marking; and (2) comparisons of middle sentences and their non-middle counterparts.

2. LAI CLAUSE STRUCTURE

Before examining the middle voice in Lai, we need some basic information on Lai clause structure. Lai is an ergative language, and, in general, the subjects of transitives are marked with *ni?*, the ergative marker, while the subjects of intransitives and the objects of transitives are unmarked, or followed with the topic marker *khaa*, as in the following examples:

(1) nii-huu   (khaa)   ?a-dam
     Ni Hu   TOP   3SG-heal 1
     'Ni Hu is fine.'

(2) nii-huu   ni?   tsew-maŋ   (khaa)   ?a-da?m
     Ni Hu   ERG   Ceu Mang   TOP   3SG-heal 2
     'Ni Hu healed Ceu Mang.'

As in the above examples, if a verb stem has a transitive-intransitive alternation, the intransitive clause takes verb Form 1, and the transitive clause takes verb Form 2.[2] Note that a satisfactory explanation for the interaction between verb forms, nominal marking and clause types involves a complex interplay of factors. For example, transitive clauses can be non-ergative, when the clause is a question and/or subordinate. Compare examples (3) and (4). Also, intransitive clauses, such as example (5), can take verb Form 2 when the clause is a question and/or subordinate, as in example (6).

(3) fa-tsaŋ   ?an-suk
     rice   3PL-pound 2
     'They pounded the rice.'

(4) fa-tsaŋ   ?an-suu   moo
     rice   3PL-pound 1 Q
     'Do they pound rice?'

(5) ?a-?in   ?a-thiaŋ
     3SG-house   3SG-clean 1
     'His house is clean.'

(6) ?an-?in   ?a-thian   tsa-?a?   ?an-ŋan-?a-dam
     3PL-house   3SG-clean 2 since   3PL-be healthy 1
     'Since their house is clean, they are healthy.'

To make the following discussions clearer, I will disregard these form alternations and treat only non-interrogative main clauses.

---

[2]   They are indicated by numerals in interlinear glosses (e.g., 'pound 1'); if the stem is invariant, this is indicated by "inv."

3. MIDDLE SITUATION TYPES

Kemmer (1992, 1993) has done a typological study of middle voice to show the relationships among different middle uses as well as the difference between middle uses and other related situation types, such as reflexives and passives. The following is her list of situation types in which middle markers may appear (Kemmer 1993). In these situation types, middle voice indicates that the subject is both the 'initiator' (controller or conceived source of action) and the 'endpoint' (affected participant) of the action. Based on this list, I have tried to find the semantic range of middle usage in Lai.

Middle Situation Types

1. *Reflexive situation*
2. *Emphatic domain* (e.g., 'I did it myself')
3. *Reciprocal domain*
   (a) *Prototypical reciprocal*
   (b) *Naturally reciprocal event* (e.g., 'wrestle', 'struggle', 'meet')
4. *(Middle) passive* (e.g., 'lights are lit')
5. *Impersonal* (e.g., 'They say that . . .', 'One doesn't do that')
6. *Facilitative* (e.g., 'This chapter reads easily')
7. *Body action middle*
   (a) *Grooming* (e.g., 'bathe', 'shave', 'wash')
   (b) *Nontranslational motion* (e.g., 'twist', 'turn', 'bend')
   (c) *Change in body posture* (e.g., 'sit down', 'stand up', 'lie down')
   (d) *Other body actions* (e.g., 'scratch', 'sneeze', 'cough')
   (e) *Translational motion: motion with reference to a path* (e.g., 'go', 'fly', 'swim')
   (f) *Positional:* (e.g., 'be lying', 'be sitting', 'be standing')
8. *Cognition middle: Mental event*
   (a) *Emotion middle* (e.g., 'be glad', 'love', 'hope')
   (b) *Cognition middle* (e.g., 'know', 'suppose', 'think')
   (c) *Perception middle* (e.g., 'see', 'hear', 'touch')
9. *Spontaneous event*
   (a) *Associated with animate beings* (e.g., 'be born', 'grow', 'die')
   (b) *Associated with inanimate beings* (e.g., 'erupt', 'burst', 'open')

Table 1. Types of middle use (Kemmer 1993).

All the Lai verbs of grooming that I have examined so far take middle marking when they are performed on oneself, as do many other verbs of body action. Among mental event verbs, some of the verbs of emotion take middle marking, while verbs of cognition and perception do not. However, in Lai, there are two other sets of mental event verbs that may be marked with the middle. I call one set 'emotive evaluation' verbs. They designate evaluations that involve the evaluator's emotion to a large degree. The other I call 'self-affecting mental/emotive action' verbs. They designate mental actions that affect the self and that can also be thought of as emotion verbs. As for 'spontaneous event' verbs, some take middle marking, but many do not. Note that Type 2 (Emphatic) does not require middle marking in Lai, and that Types 4 (Middle passive), 5 (Impersonal), and 6 (Facilitative) do not seem to exist in Lai.

My data also include cases of 'middle voice derivation', where middle marking creates a different meaning of a verb (e.g., 'compete' > 'try'). In addition, there is an interesting use of middle marking together with causative marking. Sentences with both markings mean either 'X let Y do something to X' or 'X actually does something to Y or pretends to do something to Y as a pretext in order to mislead somebody'. What seems to be common to all uses of Lai middle voice, however, is that the initiator and endpoint are the same or at least very hard to distinguish. In the following sections, the syntax and semantics of different middle situation types will be discussed.

4. REFLEXIVES

4.1. Direct reflexives

Lai verbs take the subject and object markers listed in Table 2 below in the order of *subject + object + V*, as the following examples indicate.

(7) ka-tho?ŋ
     1SG-hit 2
     'I hit him.'

(8) nan-kan-tho?ŋ
     2PL-1PL-hit 2
     'You guys hit us.'

(9) tsew-maŋ   ni?   thil   ?a-ba?
     Ceu Mang   ERG   clothes   3SG-hang 2
     'Ceu Mang has hung up his clothes.'

	Subject	Object	Reflexive
1SG	ka	ka	kaa / ka . . . ʔii
2SG	na	ʔin / n *with sg. subj.*	naa / na . . . ʔii
3SG	ʔa	Ø	ʔaa / ʔa . . . ʔii
1PL	kan	kan + hnaa	kan-ʔii
2PL	nan	ʔin / n *with sg. subj.* + hnaa	nan-ʔii
3PL	ʔan	Ø + hnaa	ʔan-ʔii

Table 2. Subject, object, and reflexive markers.

Reflexive markers use the subject markers as a base. With singular person reflexives, reflexive markers can be made by either lengthening vowels in the subject markers or by adding the reflexive morpheme *ʔii* (sentences [16] and [17] exemplify both types). With plural person reflexives, the reflexive morpheme *ʔii* attaches to the subject marker, as in Table 2 (unless other marking is involved; see example [18]). The following are typical reflexive uses of these markers. Note that the independent reflexive pronouns are optional here; they are used to emphasize who the subject is.

1SG REFL

    (10) (key-maʔ-le-key-maʔ)   kaa-thooŋ

           myself (INDEP REFL)   1SG REFL-hit 1

           'I hit myself.'

2SG REFL

    (11) (naŋ-maʔ-le-naŋ-maʔ)   naa-thooŋ

           yourself   2SG REFL-hit 1

           'You hit yourself.'

3SG REFL

    (12) (ʔa-maʔ-le-ʔa-maʔ)   ʔaa-thooŋ

           himself   3SG REFL-hit 1

           'He hit himself.'

1PL REFL

    (13) (kan-maʔ-le-kan-maʔ)   kan-ʔii-thooŋ

           ourselves   1PL-REFL-hit 1

           'We hit ourselves.'

2PL REFL

    (14) (nan-maʔ-le-nan-maʔ)   nan-ʔii-thooŋ

           yourselves   2PL-REFL-hit 1

           'You hit yourselves.'

3PL REFL

(15) (ʔan-maʔ-le-ʔan-maʔ)   ʔan-ʔii-thooŋ
     themselves   3PL-REFL-hit 1
     'They hit themselves.'

Alternative forms of the singular person reflexives, *ka-ʔii*, *na-ʔii*, and *ʔa-ʔii*, can only occur with the perfective aspectual marker, *rak*, which is inserted between the subject marker and *ʔii*.

(16) nii-huu   niʔ   thlaa-laaŋ   ʔaʔ   ʔaa-rak-hmuʔ
     Ni Hu   ERG   mirror   LOC   3SG REFL-PERF-see 2
     'Ni Hu saw himself in the mirror.'

(17) nii-huu   niʔ   thlaa-laaŋ   ʔaʔ   ʔa-rak-ʔii-hmuʔ
     Ni Hu   ERG   mirror   LOC   3SG-PERF-REFL-see 2
     'Ni Hu saw himself in the mirror.'

The perfective aspectual marker also comes between the plural subject marker and the reflexive morpheme *ʔii*:

(18) nii-huu   lee   tsew-maŋ   ʔan-rak-ʔii-thooŋ
     Ni Hu   and   Ceu Mang   3PL-PERF-REFL-hit 1
     'They hit themselves.'

In addition, when a reflexive is used in 'irrealis' sentences (imperative and purpose clauses), it always takes the form *ʔii*, as in sentences (19) and (20):

(19) ʔii   niʔ   hlaʔ
     REFL   laugh 2   NEG IMP
     'Don't laugh at yourself.'

(20) thlaa-laaŋ   ʔaʔ   ʔii-hmuʔ   diŋ   ʔin   kaa-zuam
     mirror   LOC   REFL-see 2   IRR   LOC   1SG MM-try (inv.)
     'I tried to see myself in the mirror.'

The verb form alternation (Form 1 vs. Form 2) with reflexives seems to be unpredictable. However, in my data, Form 1 outnumbers Form 2. For example, the verb 'hit' has to take Form 1 when used as a reflexive:

(21) nii-huu   ni?   tsew-maŋ   ?a-tho?ŋ
     Ni Hu   ERG   Ceu Mang   3SG-hit 2
     'Nii Hu hit Ceu Mang.'

(22) nii-huu   ?aa-thooŋ
     Ni Hu   3SG MM-hit 1
     'Ni Hu hit himself.'

(23) *nii-huu   ?a-thooŋ
     Ni Hu   3SG-hit1
     'Ni Hu hit himself.'

However, as in example (19), the verb 'laugh' takes Form 2 even if it is used with the reflexive marking.

Lastly, the following examples show the referent differences between complex sentences with and without the reflexive marker.

(24) ?a-paa   ni?   ?a-faa-paa khaa   ?a-hnap   ?a-hnɔ?-ter
     3SG-father   ERG   3SG-son TOP   3SG-snot   3S-wipe 2-CAUS
     'The father₁ had his son₂ wipe his₂ (i.e., son's) nose.'

(25) ?a-paa   ni?   ?a-faa-paa khaa   ?a-hnap   ?aa-hnɔ?-ter
     3SG-father   ERG   3SG-son   TOP   3SG-snot   3SG REFL-wipe 2-CAUS
     'The father₁ had his son₂ wipe his₂/₂ (his own / his son's) nose.'

With two participants, sentence (24) has only one interpretation, while sentence (25) is ambiguous: the reflexive marker can refer either to the external subject ('father') or the internal subject ('son') of the sentence. However, if the independent reflexive pronoun is used, as in (26), we can emphasize that the internal subject is the son, and the sentence is no longer ambiguous:

(26) ?a-paa   ni?   ?a-faa-paa   khaa   ?a-hnap
     3SG-father   ERG   3SG-son   TOP   3SG-snot

     ?a-ma?-le-?a-ma?   ?aa-hnɔ?-ter
     himself (INDEP REFL)   3SG REFL-wipe 2-CAUS
     'The father₁ had his son₂ wipe his₂ (son's) nose.'

4.2. Indirect reflexives

One of the middle uses is to add a self-benefactive argument to a verb. That is, the subject is also the beneficiary of the event described by the verb. This kind of use is called 'indirect reflexive' (Kemmer 1993), and exists in Lai. For example, sentence (27) merely means that 'Van Hree used Ceu Mang's sword', while the middle marker in sentence (28) adds the meaning that Van Hree is the beneficiary.

(27) van-hree   ni?   tsew-maŋ   nam-toŋ   khaa   ?a-hman
     Van Hree   ERG   Ceu Mang   sword   TOP   3SG-use 2
     'Van Hree used Ceu Mang's sword.'

(28) van-hree   ni?   tsew-maŋ   nam-toŋ   khaa   ?aa-hman
     Van Hree   ERG   Ceu Mang   sword   TOP   3SG MM-use 2
     'Van Hree_i used Ceu Mang's sword for himself_i (Van Hree).'

If the beneficiary is someone else, not the subject, then *piak*, the benefactive applicative marker, is used instead. Compare examples (29) and (30):

(29) van-hree   ni?   vok   ?aa-tsok
     Van Hree   ERG   pig   3SG MM-buy 2
     'Van Hree bought a pig for himself.'

(30) van-hree   ni?   vok   ?a-ka-tsok-piak
     Van Hree   ERG   pig   3SG-1SG-buy 2-BEN
     'Van Hree bought a pig for me.'

In sentences with *pii*, the comitative applicative particle, the object is the beneficiary and the focus of the sentence in (31), while in sentences with both *pii* and a middle marker, the subject is the beneficiary and the focus, as in (32).

(31) tii-vaa   (?a?)   ka-fa-nuu   ka-rak-kal-pii
     river   LOC   1SG-daughter   1SG-PERF-go (inv.)-COM
     'I accompanied my daughter to the river.'

(32) tii-vaa   (?a?)   ka-fa-nuu   ka-rak-?ii-kal-pii
     river   LOC   1SG-daughter   1SG-PERF-REFL-go (inv.)-COM
     'I took my daughter to the river with me.'

5. RECIPROCAL

5.1. *Prototypical reciprocal*

The middle marker ʔii is also used to mark reciprocality, as in the following examples. Note that, without a context, reciprocal clauses are ambiguous in that they may also be interpreted as reflexives. For example, sentence (33) could mean 'Ni Hu and Men Rii Hay love themselves'.

(33) nii-huu   lee   meen-rii-hay   ʔan-ʔii-doo
     Ni Hu   and   Men Rii Hay   3PL-MM-love 1
     'Ni Hu and Men Rii Hay love each other.'

(34) nii-huu   lee   tsew-maŋ   ʔan-ʔii-hmuu
     Ni Hu   and   Ceu Mang   3PL-MM-see 1
     'Ni Hu and Ceu Mang saw each other.'

(35) nii-huu   lee   tsew-maŋ   tsaa   ʔan-ʔii-kua
     Ni Hu   and   Ceu Mang   letter   3PL-MM-send 1
     'Ni Hu and Ceu Mang wrote letters to each other.'

(36) nii-huu   lee   tsew-maŋ   ʔan-ʔii-ṭhua
     Ni Hu   and   Ceu Mang   3PL-MM-fight 1
     'Ni Hu and Cew Mang fought with each other.'

According to my data, prototypical reciprocal clauses always take verb Form 1. Compare examples (37) and (38). In example (37), the two participants of the event of beating are clearly distinguished (i.e., 'Ni Huu' as the initiator and 'Ceu Mang' as the endpoint) and syntactically there are both an overt subject and object. Thus, Form 2, which is the transitive form, is used. On the other hand, in example (38), both participants are both initiator and endpoint, so they are rather indistinguishable. Incidentally, there is no overt object in the sentence, and thus Form 1, which is the intransitive form, is used. Lai does not allow verb Form 2 in reciprocal sentences like (39).

(37) nii-huu   niʔ   tsew-maŋ   ʔa-thoʔŋ
     Ni Hu   ERG   Ceu Mang   3SG-hit 2
     'Ni Hu hit Ceu Mang.'

(38) nii-huu   lee   tsew-maŋ   ʔan-ʔii-thooŋ
     Ni Hu   and   Ceu Mang   3PL-MM-hit 1
     'Ni Hu and Ceu Mang hit each other.'

(39) *nii-huu   lee   tsew-maŋ   ʔan-ʔii-thoʔŋ
     Ni Hu   and   Ceu Mang   3PL-MM-hit 2
     'Ni Hu and Ceu Mang hit each other.'

5.2. Naturally reciprocal events

In Lai, there are many verbs describing naturally reciprocal events, and they take the middle marker *ʔii*. Naturally reciprocal events are those which are necessarily or very frequently reciprocal in their meanings. Some of them require the middle marking: such verbs include *sii / siik* 'quarrel / fight' and *sual* (inv.) 'struggle'.

- *sii 1 / siik 2* 'quarrel'
  (40) maʔ-le-maʔ   ʔii-sii   hlaʔ   ʔuʔ
       each other   MM-fight 1   NEG IMP   HORT
       'Don't quarrel with each other.'

- *sual* (inv.) 'struggle'
  (41) ʔaar-pii   lee   san-hŋar   tsuu   ʔan-ʔii-sual
       hen   and   cat   TOP   3PL-MM-struggle (inv.)
       'The hen and cat struggled.'

Other verbs may be used either as a reciprocal, with Form 1, or non-reciprocal, with Form 2. For example, the verb *paay / paʔy* 'wrestle' optionally takes *ʔii*. The reciprocal use in sentence (42) is more natural than the non-reciprocal use in (43).

- *paay 1 / paʔy 2* 'wrestle'
  (42) tsew-maŋ   lee   nii-huu   ʔan-ʔii-paay
       Ceu Mang   and   Ni Hu   3PL-MM-wrestle 1
       'Ceu Mang and Ni Hu wrestled.'

  (43) tsew-maŋ   niʔ   nii-huu   (khaa)   ʔa-paʔy
       Ceu Mang   ERG   Ni Hu   TOP   3SG-wrestle 2
       'Ceu Mang wrestled Ni Hu.'

Another example is *zuam* 'compete'. Although this is an invariant verb, its non-reciprocal use takes ergative marking and exhibits transitivity, while its reciprocal use does not.

• *zuam* (inv.) 'compete'

    (44)   tsew-maŋ   niʔ   ʔa-ka-zuam

         Ceu Mang   ERG   3SG-1SG-compete (inv.)

         'Ceu Mang competed with me.'

    (45)   tsew-maŋ   lee   nii-huu   ʔan-ʔii-zuam

         Ceu Mang   and   Ni Hu   3PL-MM-compete (inv.)

         'Ceu Mang and Ni Hu competed.'

Other examples include 'meet' and 'get married'.

• *ton* 1 / *toŋ* 2 'meet'

    (46)   kan-ʔii-toŋ

         1PL-MM-meet 1

         'We meet each other.'

    (47)   tsew-maŋ   niʔ   nii-huu   ʔa-ton

         Ceu Mang   ERG   Ni Hu   3SG-meet 2

         'Ceu Mang met Ni Hu.'

• *ʈhii* 1 / *ʈhiit* 2 'get married'

    (48)   kur-buŋ-bel   lee   ʔan-fa-nuu   tsuu   ʔan-ʔii-ʈhii

         Kur Bung Bel   and   their daughter   TOP   3PL-MM-marry 1

         'Kur Bung Bel and their daughter got married.'

    (49)   kur-buŋ-bel   niʔ   ʔan-fa-nuu   khaa   ʔa-ʈhiit

         Kur Bung Bel   ERG   3PL-daughter   TOP   3SG-marry 2

         'Kur Bung Bel married their daughter.'

My data yield an interesting instance of middle voice derivation with reciprocal use. When the copula *ʔum* that also means 'exist, live' is used in a reciprocal clause, it comes to mean 'get married'. 'Get married' seems to be a good semantic extension for 'live with each other or together'.

• *ʔum* (inv.) 'exist / live' —> 'marry'

    (50)   laay   tlaaŋ   ʔaʔ   ʔan-ʔum

         Lai   mountain   LOC   3PL-COP (inv.)

         'They live in the Lai hills.'

(51) kur-buŋ-bel   lee   ʔan-fa-nuu   tsuu   ʔan-ʔii-ʔum
     Kur Bung Bel and 3PL-daughter TOP 3PL-MM-get married (inv.)
     'Kur Bung Bel and their daughter got married.'

As is the case with prototypical reciprocals, verbs of naturally reciprocal events take Form 1 when they express 'reciprocality'; however, there is one case where such a verb takes Form 2 instead of Form 1. The verb *rua?* 'think' together with *bia* 'word' means 'discuss' and optionally takes the middle marking, as in examples (52) and (53). Unlike the verbs in other examples, this verb is Form 2 even when it is used in a reciprocal clause.

• 'discuss'
   (52) bia   kan-ii-rua?
        word   1PL-MM-think 2
        'We discussed (it).'

   (53) bia   ʔa-ka-rua?
        word   3SG-1SG-think 2
        'He discussed something with me.'

This must be due to the fact that the verb is phrasal and take its own argument: *bia* 'word'. That is, since 'word' is an object, the verb needs to take Form 2.

In addition, I have found several stative verbs indicating naturally reciprocal events that take middle marking in Lai. The first example is *thluk* 'be equal to', which when used as an intransitive requires middle marking.

• *thluk* (inv.) 'be equal to'
   (54) maŋ-kio lee nii-huu tsuu thliik ʔa?   ʔan-ʔii-thluk
        Mang Kio and Ni Hu   TOP   run 2   LOC   3PL-MM-be equal to (inv.)
        'Mang Kio and Ni Hu are the same at running.'

   (55) tsaa ʔa? tsun maŋ-kio ni?   nii-huu   ʔa-thluk-law
        letter LOC TOP Mang Kio ERG   Ni Hu   3SG-be equal to (inv.)-NEG
        'As for learning, Mang Kio cannot compete with Ni Hu.'

An interesting case is *kom* 'stick together'. When it is used as an intransitive verb, it requires an animate subject and middle marking and comes to mean 'to be friends'.

• *kom* 1 / *ko?m* 2 'be friends'

(56) tsew-maŋ   ni?   fuŋ   pa-hni?   ?a-ko?m   hnaa

Ceu Mang   ERG   sticks   two   3SG-stick together 2   PL

'Ceu Mang stuck two sticks together.'

(57) tsew-maŋ   lee   nii-huu   ?an-?ii-kom

Ceu Mang   and   Ni Hu   3PL-MM-be friends 1

'Ceu Mang and Ni Hu are friends.'

When the numeral noun *khat* 'one' is used as a verb, it means 'be the same' and requires middle marking.[3]

• *khat* 1 / *kha?* 2 'be the same'

(58) hii   tsaa-uk   pa-hni?   hii   ?an-ii-khat

this   book   two   this   3PL-MM-same 1

'These two books are the same.'

Note that Form 2 of this verb cannot be used alone in transitive clauses, but must occur with the causative marker *ter*, as in example (59).

(59) ?uy-tsaw   lee   ?aar   na-kha?-ter

dog   and   chicken   2SG-same 2-CAUS

'You make dog and chicken the same.'

The last example is the verb *law* 1 / *lo?* 2. When it is used as a transitive, it means something like 'take after'; when it is used as an intransitive, it means 'be similar' or 'be the same', and the verb takes middle marking.

• *law* 1 / *lo?* 2 'be similar'

(60) nii-huu   ni?   ?a-paa   ?a-lo?

Ni Hu   ERG   3SG-father   3SG-take after 2

'Ni Hu takes after his father (he is similar to his father).'

(61) nii-huu   lee   ?a-paa   ?an-?ii-law

Ni Hu   and   3SG-father   3PL-MM-be similar 1

'Ni Hu and his father are similar.'

We may make a further interesting observation regarding subject agreement, the use of the reciprocal middle and the word *hee* 'with'. Compare examples

---

3   The verb *khat* also means 'full', but the middle marking is not required for this meaning.

(62) and (63). Both of them have *hee*, but their subject agreement is different.
Sentence (62) has a non-reciprocal verb and its subject agreement is third
person singular. However, sentence (63) has a reciprocal middle verb and its
subject agreement is third person plural.

(62) nii-huu   ʔa-paa   hee   vok   ʔa-tsoo
     Ni Hu   3SG-father   with   pig   3SG-buy 2
     'Ni Hu bought a pig with his father.'

(63) nii-huu   ʔa-paa   hee   ʔan-ʔii-law
     Ni Hu   3SG-father   with   3PL MM-be similar 1
     'Ni Hu is similar to his father.'

Although sentence (63) has plural agreement, its subject is 'Ni Huu' only,
not 'Ni Hu and his father'. This means that subject agreement is not strictly
with the (surface) subject. Rather, agreement is determined by the semantics of
the whole sentence. Note that the following two sentences do not have the right
subject agreement and are ungrammatical:

(64) *nii-huu   ʔa-paa   hee   ʔa-law
      Ni Hu   3SG-father   with   3SG-be similar 1

(65) *nii-huu   ʔa-paa   hee   ʔaa-law
      Ni Hu   3SG-father   with   3SG MM-be similar 1

Here is another example in which the subject agreement does not match with
the actual subject:

(66) duʔ zaʔw   lee   huat   zaʔw   ʔaa-law
     love look   and   hate   look   3SG MM-be the same 1
     'Loving looks and looks of hatred are the same.'

The subject agreement in sentence (66) is the third person singular instead
of plural, even though the actual subject is plural (lit., 'love look and hate
look'). It is possible to have plural agreement here; however, it is quite natural
to have singular agreement, since we could interpret the sentence to mean that
there is only one type of look. Thus, subject agreement in Lai is more flexible
than that of many other languages. It may sometimes be determined by the
semantics of the whole sentence, not just by the syntax and semantics of the
surface subject. We may need to call this agreement 'participant agreement'

rather than subject/object agreement.

As for the other reciprocal verbs discussed above, plural subject marking seems to be more natural than singular marking, though both are acceptable to my consultant, as in examples (67) and (68). Further investigation on this matter is necessary.

(67) tsew-maŋ   nii-huu   hee   ʔan-ʔii-paay
     Ceu Mang   Ni Hu   with   3PL-MM-wrestle 1
     'Ceu Mang wrestled with Ni Hu.'

(68) tsew-maŋ   nii-huu   hee   ʔaa-paay
     Ceu Mang   Ni Hu   with   3SG MM-wrestle 1
     'Ceu Mang wrestled with Ni Hu.'

6. BODY ACTION MIDDLES

6.1. Grooming actions

In Lai, verbs of 'grooming' are productively marked as middle. They include 'beautify oneself', 'shave', 'wash', 'dress', and 'comb hair'. In Lai, one might be tempted to simply call this use 'reflexive', since the reflexive and middle markers are identical. However, note that in languages with a 'reflexive' system but without a middle system, these verbs are often unmarked intransitives, and in languages with middle systems whose middle markers are different from reflexive markers, they are marked as middles (e.g., Surselvan in Kemmer 1992:157). Thus, I treat this use as a kind of middle. The first example *ţaʔm* 'beautify oneself' requires middle marking:

• *ţaʔm* (inv.) 'beautify'
    (69) ţial-tin-paar   tsuu   ʔaa-ţaʔm   ŋay-ŋay
         Tial Tin Paar   TOP   3SG MM-beautify (inv.)   very much
         'Tial Tin Paar beautifies herself too much.'

The next example, *khoʔl* 'take a bath', takes middle marking when used as an intransitive. Compare examples (70) and (71):

• *khoʔl* (inv.) 'take a bath'
    (70) ʔaa-khoʔl
         3SG MM-bathe (inv.)
         'She took a bath.'

(71) ka-kho?l

  1SG-bathe (inv.)

  'I gave her a bath.'

Other verbs of 'grooming' take the middle marker only when the event described by the verb is performed on the subject's self.

• *hriat* 1 / *hria?* 2 'comb'

(72) nii-huu   ?a-sam   ?aa-hriat

  Ni Hu   3SG-hair   3SG MM-comb 1

  'Ni Hu combed his hair.'

(73) nii-huu   ni?   tsew-maŋ   ?a-sam   ?a-hria?

  Ni Hu   ERG   Ceu Mang   3SG-hair   3SG-comb 2

  'Ni Hu combed Ceu Mang's hair.'

• *meet* 1 / *me?* 2 'shave'

(74) ka-hmul   kaa-rak-me?

  1SG-hair   1SG MM-PERF-shave 2

  'I shaved.'

(75) ?a-hmul   ka-rak-me?

  3SG-hair   1SG-PERF-shave 2

  'I shaved his hair.'

• *pho?y* (inv.) 'remove / unloose / take off'

(76) tlaŋ-vaal-paa   ni?   ?a-taay-soom   khaa   ?aa-pho?y

        youth   ERG   3SG-belt   TOP   3SG MM-remove (inv.)

  'The youth took off his belt.'

(77) ka-pho?y

  1SG-take off (inv.)

  'I took it off.'

• *hruk* (inv.) 'put on something that goes above the waist'

(78) ?aaŋ-kii   ?aa-hruk

        shirt   3SG MM-put on (inv.)

  'He put on a shirt.'

(79) ʔaaŋ-kii   ʔa-hruk

     shirt   3SG-put on (inv.)

     'He put a shirt on her.'

• *feʔn* (inv.) 'put on something that goes below the waist, such as a sarong'

   (80) nii-huu   hnii   ʔaa-feʔn

       Ni Hu   sarong   3SG MM-put on (inv.)

       'Ni Hu put on a sarong.'

   (81) nii-huu   niʔ   tsew-maŋ   hnii   ʔa-feʔn

       Ni Hu   ERG   Ceu Mang   sarong   3SG-put on (inv.)

       'Ni Hu put a sarong on Ceu Mang.'

As the above examples show, middle marking does not determine the choice of verb form. Rather, if the verb is transitive and takes an object it is always Form 2 whether or not it is marked as middle. For example, the verb for 'shave' is always transitive and takes an object, such as 'hair', and, with or without middle marking, the verb takes Form 2, as in examples (74) and (75).

6.2. Change-in-body-posture middles

The change-in-body-posture situation type is often marked with the middle marker in many languages. Kemmer points out that like 'grooming' verbs, this type is similar to reflexives in that 'a volitional entity acts on its own body' (1993:55). However, in Lai this type is not productively marked as middle. For example, neither 'stand' nor 'sit' takes the middle marking. My data yield only two verbs of change-in-body-posture involving humans that take middle marking. The verb *bil* 'kneel' always takes the middle, as in (82), and the verb *khaaŋ* 'lie on/across' in (83) takes middle marking when used as an intransitive.

• *bil* (inv.) 'kneel'

   (82) ʔa-khuk   ʔaa-bil

       3SG-knee   3SG MM-kneel (inv.)

       'He knelt down.'

• *khaaŋ* 1 'lie on / across'

   (83) tsa-kay   lam   ʔaʔ   kaa-khaaŋ-laay

       tiger   road   LOC   1SG MM-lie across 1-FUT

       'I'll lie across the tiger's path.'

In addition, I found one verb of this type involving animate entities rather than humans. The verb is 'perch', and it is always intransitive and requires middle marking. Note that Form 2 occurs only together with the causative marker *ter*.

• *fuu* 1 / *fuut* 2 'perch'

(84) thiŋ-ţee   ʔaʔ   vaa   ʔaa-fuu

twig   LOC   bird   3SG MM-perch 1

'A bird perched on a twig.'

(85) thiŋ-ţee   ʔaʔ   vaa   ʔa-fuut-ter

twig   LOC   bird   3SG-perch 2-CAUS

'He perched (let perch, caused to perch) a bird on a twig.'

6.3. Translational motion, nontranslational motion, and other body actions

There are many other verbs of body action that take middle marking. Kemmer argues that actions done by human/animate entities on or through their bodies tend to be understood as single processes. This is why verbs of this type are often marked with the middle.

6.3.1. Translational motion middles

Translational motion types are actions that involve motion of an entity along a path. In Lai, verbs of this type sometimes take middle marking. Among those that do are 'swing' and 'go gathering', which are always intransitive.

• *ʔook* (inv.) 'swing'

(86) zooŋ   pa-khat   khaa   pi-pen   ʔaa-ʔook-ʔii

monkey   one   TOP   swing   3SG MM-swing (inv.)-and

thiŋ-kuŋ   ʔaʔ   ban-hlaa   ʔa-ʔay-liaw

tree   LOC   banana   3SG-eat (inv.)-PROG

'A monkey swinging on a swing in a tree was eating a banana.'

• *puum* 1 / *puʔm* 2 'go gathering'

(87) nii-huu   ʔaa-puum

Ni Hu   3SG MM-go gathering 1

'Ni Hu went to the meeting.'

Others take the middle marker when used as an intransitive. They are *hlok* 'jump', *thoon* 'move', *tshook* 'roam', and *liaw* 'swim'.

• *hlok* 1 / *hlo?* 2 'jump'

  (88) tsew-maŋ   ?aa-hlok

        Ceu Mang   3SG MM-jump 1

        'Ceu Mang jumped.'

  (89) tsew-maŋ   ni?   ?a-ka-hlo?

        Ceu Mang   ERG   3SG-1SG-toss up in the air 2

        'Ceu Mang tossed me up in the air / dandled me.'

• *thoon* (inv.) 'move'

  (90) nii-huu   ?aa-thoon

        Ni Hu   3SG MM-move (inv.)

        'Ni Hu moved.'

  (91) nii-huu   ni?   ban-hlaa   ?a-thoon

        Ni Hu   ERG   banana   3SG-move (inv.)

        'Ni Hu moved the banana.'

• *tshook* 1 / *tsho?* 2 'roam'

  (92) law   ?a?   nii-huu   ?aa-tshook

        field   LOC   Ni Hu   3SG MM-roam 1

        'Ni Hu roamed through the field.'

Note that Form 2 of 'roam' occurs only with the causative marker *ter*.

  (93) tsew-maŋ   ni?   law   ?a?   nii-huu   ?a-tsho?-ter

        Ceu Mang   ERG   field   LOC   Ni Hu   3SG-roam 2-CAUS

        'Ceu Mang let Ni Hu roam through the field.'

As for the verb 'swim', it means simply 'swim' when used as an intransitive verb with middle marking, while it means more than just swimming, something like 'crossing or challenging water by swimming in it', when used as a transitive: i.e., 'water' is the object of sentence (95).

• *liaw* 1 / *liaw?* 2 'swim'

  (94) tii   ?aa-liaw

        water   3SG MM-swim 1

        'He is swimming.'

  (95) tii   ?a-liaw?

        water   3SG-swim 2

        'He is crossing the water by swimming.'

The verb *diin / di?n* 'rest' expresses a kind of negative motion and is treated as a translational motion verb. It takes the middle marking when used as an intransitive, and Form 2 occurs only together with the causative marker *ter.*

• *diin* 1 / *di?n* 2 'rest'

   (96) thiŋ-kuuŋ   taŋ   ?a?   ?aa-diin

        tree   under   LOC   3SG MM-rest 1

        'He rested under the tree.'

   (97) tsew-maŋ   ni?   nii-huu   khaa   ?a-di?n-ter

        Ceu Mang   ERG   Ni Hu   TOP   3SG-rest 2-CAUS

        'Ceu Mang let Ni Hu rest.'

Note that Lai's basic/default translational motion verbs such as 'go', 'climb', and 'descend' do not take the middle marking. This suggests that the verbs in the above examples include more of a semantic component of self movement than the basic translational verbs, thus requiring middle marking.

6.3.2. Nontranslational motion middles

In contrast with translational motion verbs, nontranslational motion types include 'twist', 'turn', and 'nod', and refer to contained body actions denoting change in configuration of the body or a part of the body.

The first example is *mer* 1 / *me?r* 2 'turn' or 'twist'. My data suggest that Form 1 *mer* means 'turn' and Form 2 *me?r* means 'twist'. Both forms take middle marking when they are used in one-participant events:

• *mer* 1 / *me?r* 2 'turn / twist'

   (98) nii-huu   kay-ma-lay   ?a?   ?aa-mer

        Ni Hu   1SG-toward   LOC   3SG MM-turn 1

        'Ni Hu turned toward me.'

   (99) nii-huu   ni?   tsoo-leeŋ   ke?-lay   ?a?   ?a-mer

        Ni Hu   ERG   bullock-cart   left   LOC   3SG-turn 1

        'Ni Hu turned the bullock-cart to the left.'

  (100) ?a-hŋooŋ   ?aa-me?r

        3SG-neck   3SG MM-twist 2

        'She twisted (sprained) her neck.'

(101) thlii   ni?   thiŋ-kuŋ   ?a-me?r
      wind   ERG   tree   3SG-twist 2
      'The wind twisted the tree.'

Another verb meaning 'turn' also takes middle marking when used intransitively:

• *her* 1 / *he?r* 2 'turn'
  (102) pa?y-khe?r   ?aa-her
         top   3SG MM-turn 1
         'The top is spinning.'

  (103) nii-huu   ni?   pa?y-khe?r   ?a-he?r
         Ni Hu   ERG   top   3SG-turn 2
         'Ni Hu spun the top.'

The next example, a verb that expresses a 'shaking'-type movement and can mean 'shake', 'shiver', or 'rock', takes middle marking when used intransitively.

• *hniin* 1 / *hni?n* 2 'shake / shiver / rock'
  (104) nii-huu   ?aa-hniin
         Ni Hu   3SG MM-shake 1
         'Ni Hu is shaking / shivering.'

  (105) nii-huu   ni?   palaaŋ   ?a-hni?n
         Ni Hu   ERG   bottle   3SG-shake 2
         'Ni Hu shook the bottle.'

Note that this verb also takes inanimate beings as its subject (see Section 8.2).
    Another example is *sa?m* (inv.) 'stretch', and this also takes middle marking when used intransitively.

• *sa?m* (inv.) 'stretch'
  (106) nii-huu   ?aa-sa?m
         Ni Hu   3SG MM-stretch (inv.)
         'Ni Hu stretched.'

  (107) nii-huu   ni?   ?a-sa?m
         Ni Hu   ERG   3SG-stretch (inv.)
         'Ni Hu stretched it.'

Lastly, when the verb *suk* 'bang/pound' is used with the body part 'head',
it has to take the middle marker; compare examples (108) and (109).   In
addition, *suk* can also be used to mean 'nod', and in this case, the verb does not
take the middle marker, as in (110).   Although, 'bang' and 'nod' involve
similar head motions, the subject of 'bang' is affected by the action 'banging'
(e.g., experiencing pain), while the subject of 'nod' is not affected by the action
of 'nodding'.

• *suk* 2 'bang / pound'
    (108)   fa-tsaŋ   ʔan-suk

                rice   3PL-pound 2

                'They pounded (ground) the rice.'

    (109)   vaan-paŋ   ʔaʔ   ʔa-luu   ʔaa-suk

                wall   LOC   3SG-head   3SG MM-bang 2

                'He banged his head on the wall.'

    (110)   ʔa-luu   ʔa-suk

                3SG-head   3SG-nod 2

                'He nodded.'

6.3.3.   Other body-action middles

The last set of body action types is comprised of verbs that do not quite fit
with the other two types discussed above.   They involve situations where a
volitional animate entity performs some kind of action with its body or part of
its body.   The verbs of this type in Lai that take middle marking include
'scratch', 'play', 'pick up speed', and 'ride'.   The first example is *kheuʔ*
'scratch' and it takes middle marking when used as an intransitive.

• *kheuʔ* (inv.) 'scratch'
    (111)   ka-keeŋ   kaa-kheuʔ

                1SG-back   1SG MM-scratch (inv.)

                'I scratched my back.'

    (112)   ʔa-keeŋ   ka-kheuʔ

                3SG-back   1SG-scratch (inv.)

                'I scratched his back.'

The next example is *kaʔ* 'play'.   Together with the middle marking, Form 2
of 'shoot' means 'play (with a top) or do a rock game'.   In the course of such
games, the player performs some shooting-like actions.   With the original

meaning 'shoot', the verb does not require the middle marking; with the
meaning 'play' it does. 'Playing' seems more self-focused than 'shooting' and
is moreover self-benefitting; therefore, only 'play' takes middle marking.

• *ka?* 2 'play (with a top) or do a rock game'

    (113)   nii-huu   ni?   tii   ?in   ?a-ka-ka?

                Ni Hu   ERG   water   with   3SG-1SG-shoot 1

                'Ni Hu shot me with water.'

    (114)   nii-huu   pa?y-khe?r   ?aa-ka?

                Ni Hu   top   3SG MM-play 2

                'Ni Hu is playing with the top.'

There is another verb meaning 'play', and this is used for games or sports.
It is always used as an intransitive and takes the middle marking, as in example
(115).

• *tse?l* (inv.) 'play'

    (115)   nii-huu   leen-tee   ?aa-tse?l

                Ni Hu   game   3SG MM-play (inv.)

                'Ni Hu is playing a game.'

Also, the verb *tsit* 'ride' always takes middle marking in intransitive and
transitive sentences. This verb is used for 'horse', 'car', 'plane' and so on—
any kind of entity that humans can ride in or on.

• *tsit* (inv.) 'ride'

    (116)   nii-huu   (ni?)   rool   ?a-ay   bu-?in

                Ni Hu   ERG   food   3SG-eat (inv.)   while

                ra?   ?aa-tsit

                horse   3SG MM-ride (inv.)

                'As he is eating, Ni Hu rides a horse.'

The next example is *tsir* 'pick up speed'. This verb expresses the action of
stepping in order to acquire speed; it is always intransitive with middle marking.

• *tsir* (inv.) 'pick up speed / speed up'

    (117)   nii-huu   ?aa-tsir

                Ni Hu   3SG MM-pick up speed (inv.)

                'Ni Hu picked up speed.'

The verb *duup* 'hide' is always intransitive and requires middle marking:

• *duup* (inv.) 'hide'

(118) luŋ   taŋ   ʔaʔ   ʔaa-duup   diam   tsaŋ
       rock   under   LOC   3SG MM-hide (inv.)   already   COMPL
       'He has already hidden under the rock.'

Another verb meaning 'hide', *thup*, has an intransitive/transitive alternation. When used as an intransitive, it takes middle marking.

• *thup* 1 / *thuʔ* 2 'hide'

(119) puan-buu   tshuŋ   ʔaʔ   ʔan-ʔii-thup
       blanket   inside   LOC   3PL-MM-hide 1
       'They hide themselves in the blanket.'

As with many other body action verbs, the verbs discussed in this section denote actions that strongly involve or affect the 'self'.

6.4. Positionals

Related to verbs of body action middles are the 'positionals.' They "express configuration of the body or—by extension—an object with relation to another, often supporting, object" (Kemmer 1993:269). They are basically similar to the 'change in body posture' middle verbs, such as 'lie down' and 'stand up'. We can say that positional verbs presuppose some kind of change in body posture: e.g., in order for something to be lying down, it first needs the action 'lay down' or 'be laid down'.

I have found three positional verbs that take middle marking. As with 'change in body posture' verbs, verbs of this kind are not productively marked as middle in Lai. The first two verbs mean 'lean against', and can have both animate and inanimate entities as subjects. Note that although, due to the limitations of English, the translations for the following examples are intransitive, the verbs in questions are always transitive. The object of the verb here is the location that Ni Hu or the stake is leaning against.

• *hŋaʔw* (inv.) 'lean against'

(120) nii-huu   niʔ   ʔin   ʔaa-hŋaʔw
       Ni Hu   ERG   house   3SG MM-lean against (inv.)
       'Ni Hu is leaning against the house.'

(121) fuŋ   niʔ   ʔin   ʔaa-hŋaʔw
       stake   ERG   house   3SG MM-lean against (inv.)
       'The stake is leaning against the house.'

• *hŋat-tshan* (inv.) 'lean against'

(122)   nii-huu   ni?   ?in   ?aa-hŋat-tshan

       Ni Hu   ERG   house   3SG MM-lean against (inv.)

       'Ni Hu is leaning against the house.'

(123)   fuŋ   ni?   ?in   ?aa-hŋat-tshan

       stake   ERG   house   3SG MM-lean against (inv.)

       'The stake is leaning against the house.'

The intransitive use of the Form 1 verb *khaa?* 'lie on' takes middle marking. This too can have both animate and inanimate subjects.

• *khaaŋ* 1 'lay down' or 'lie on'

(124)   thiŋ   ka-khaan

       wood   1SG-lay down 2

       'I laid down the wood.'

(125)   khaa   lam   ?a?   khan   nii-huu   ?aa-khaaŋ

       that   road   LOC   TOP   Ni Hu   3SG MM-lie over 1

       'Ni Hu is lying on the road.'

(126)   khaa   lam   ?a?   thiŋ   ?aa-khaaŋ

       that   road   LOC   wood   3SG MM-lie over 1

       'The wood is lying on the road.'

7. COGNITION MIDDLES

Like other middle situation types, the cognition/mental event type expresses the affectedness of the initiator, and therefore often takes the middle marking. This type may be divided into three sub-types: 'emotion' verbs (e.g., 'be happy', 'hate', 'lament'), 'cognition' verbs (e.g., 'know', 'think', 'forget'), and 'perception' verbs (e.g., 'hear', 'see', 'touch'). Note that cognition verbs designate pure processes of 'thinking'. Typologically, many more emotion verbs are marked with the middle than are cognition verbs, and perception verbs are less likely to be marked with middle than either emotion or cognition verbs (Kemmer, 1993:135). In emotional events, emotion strongly affects the experiencer in many ways, including obvious physical effects (e.g., having a fast heartbeat). We usually do not find this type of highly affected experiencer in events described by cognition or perception verbs. This is why emotion verbs are more likely to have middle marking in many languages.

The above observation holds for Lai. Among the mental event verbs, there are many verbs of emotion that take middle marking, but my data suggest that Lai does not generally use middle marking for either perception or cognition verbs. However, there is a subclass of cognition verbs that directly affect the self and may involve emotion, and these do take middle marking.

7.1. Emotion middle

7.1.1. Simple emotion middle

There are many verbs of emotion that take middle marking in Lai. They should be divided into at least three sub-types. One type contains verbs that simply designate various types of emotions, such as 'be happy', 'enjoy', and 'pity'. In Lai, some verbs of this type appear in psycho-collocations, which abound in Lai as in many other Southeast Asian languages.[4] The first two examples below contain the word *luŋ* 'heart':

- 'be happy'
  (127)   ?a-hoy-paa   tsuu   ?a-luŋ   ?aa-loom   ŋaay-ŋaay
          3SG-friend-male   TOP   3SG-heart   3SG MM-be happy 1   very
          'His friend was very happy.' (lit., 'His heart was very happy.')

- 'be anxious'
  (128)   ka-luŋ   kaa-do?m
          1SG-heart   1SG MM-support with hands (inv.)
          'I am anxious / waiting worriedly.' (lit., 'I am supporting my heart with my hands.')

Note, however, that in Lai there are many more verbs in psycho-collocations that do not require middle marking than ones that do, as in examples (129) with the verb 'be sad' and (130) with 'be calm'.

(129)   ?a-hmay   ?a-tshia
        3SG-face   3SG-gone bad 1
        'He is sad.'

(130)   ka-luŋ   ?a-daay
        1SG-heart   3SG-still / peaceful 1
        'I am calm / peaceful.'

---

4   See Van-Bik, this issue, for a detailed treatment of Lai psycho-collocations.

Similar to the above expressions is the following idiom. The verb 'listen/hear' together with *tshi?* 'forcefully and continuously' comes to mean 'repent'.

• *ŋaay* 1 / *ŋa?y* 2 'listen / hear'

   (131)   ?aa-ŋaay   tshi?

          3SG MM-listen 1   forcefully and continuously

          'He repents / recants.'

   (132)   ?a-bia   ka-ŋaay

          3SG-word   1SG-listen 1

          'I am listening to him.'

My data yield two more examples of non-idiomatic verbs that express emotions: 'be paranoid'[5] and 'enjoy'. The first of these is always intransitive and requires middle marking. Form 2 occurs only with the causative marker *ter*.

• *phu-hru?ŋ* 1 / *phu-hrun* 2 'be paranoid'

   (133)   ?aa-phuhruŋ

          3SG MM-be paranoid 1

          'He is paranoid.'

   (134)   ?a   ka   phuhrun-ter

          3SG-SUBJ   1SG-OBJ   be paranoid 2-CAUS

          'He causes me to be paranoid.'

The last example is 'enjoy'; it must take middle marking when used as an intransitive. Note that Form 2 occurs only with the causative marker *ter* (136).

• *nuam* 1 / *no?m* 2 'enjoy / have a good time / be pleased'

   (135)   pwe   ?a?   nii-huu   ?aa-nuam

          picnic   LOC   Ni Hu   3SG MM-enjoy 1

          'Ni Hu had a good time at the picnic.'

   (136)   nii-huu   ni?   ?a-ka-no?m-ter

          Ni Hu   ERG   3SG-1SG-enjoy 2-CAUS

          'Ni Hu made me happy.'

---

5   Although being "paranoid" can be negatively evaluated in Lai, it does not have to be. It can be used to express concern in a self-conscious and apologetic way; if someone is late, he or she might say *kaa-phuhruŋ*. [KVB] (The presence or absence of a hyphen in *phuhru?ŋ* is not significant [Ed.].)

In addition, inanimate entities can be the subject with Form 1. In this case, the verb means something like 'be pleasing'. Interestingly, middle marking is not used here. The subject is the initiator but not the affected entity: inanimate subjects cannot be affected here as animate subjects with emotion verbs can be.

(137)   ka-n-hme?   mii   ?a-nuam   moo

       1SG-2SG-massage   NOM   3SG-please 1   Q

       'Was my massage pleasing?'[6]

7.1.2.   Emotive evaluation middles

There is a set of verbs that designate evaluations, such as '(find) difficult' and '(find) enough', which sometimes take middle marking in Lai.[7] Verbs of this type usually correspond to adjectives in other languages, and the situation type of these verbs is not included in Kemmer's list. However, this is one of the most interesting middle situation types in Lai, and I call them 'emotive evaluation' middles.[8] Verbs of this type are emotive in that some feeling on the part of the evaluator is usually included in their semantics. For example, if something is 'difficult' for us, we feel bad and/or sad. It is clear that the evaluator in such a situation is an affected entity.

With these verbs, the two participants in the evaluating event, 'evaluator' and 'evaluatee', are both present, and the evaluator is coded as the subject. The first example is 'difficult'. When it is used as an intransitive it means 'be difficult', as in example (138), and does not take middle marking. However, when the verb is used as a transitive, it means something like 'find difficult' and requires middle marking, as in example (139).

• *har* 1 / *ha?r* 2 'find difficult'

(138)   ka-tsaa   ?a-har

       1SG-study   3SG-be difficult 1

       'My study is difficult.'

(139)   ka-tsaa   kaa-ha?r

       1SG-study   3SG MM-find difficult 2

       'I find my study difficult.'

---

[6]   The verb *hme?* refers to the action of exerting pressure by closing the fingers, as in a massage or in crushing an egg held in the hand. [KVB]

[7]   The consultant was not satisfied with 'find', but I was unable to suggest a better alternative.

[8]   The closest type Kemmer mentions are perception verbs such as 'smell' in 'I smell coffee' or 'this coffee smells nice'. However, as Kemmer suggests, there may be cases of general cognitive extensions beyond pure perception, and the term 'evaluation' seems to capture all the examples here.

The verb *ɀaa* 1 / *ɀaat* 2 '(find) enough' has the opposite pattern. The intransitive clause takes the evaluator as the subject, and it takes middle marking, as in examples (140) and (141). The transitive clause takes the evaluatee as the subject and does not take middle marking, as in (142).

• *ɀaa* 1 / *ɀaat* 2 '(find) enough'

   (140)   maʔ   ʔaŋ-kii   hii   kaa-ɀaa-law

              this   shirt   this   1SG MM-enough 1-NEG

              'I found this shirt not to be big enough for me.'

   (141)   mii-nuŋ   kan-ʔii-ɀaa-law

              people   1PL-MM-enough 1-NEG

              'We don't have enough people.'

   (142)   rool   niʔ   ʔa-ka-ɀaat

              food   ERG   3SG-1SG-enough 2

              'The food is enough for me' or 'The food sates me.'

Another verb that means '(find) enough' is always intransitive and takes middle marking. Form 2 is used only in subordinate clauses.

• *thaa* 1 / *thaat* 2 '(find) enough'

   (143)   ka-rool   kaa-thaa-law

              1SG-food   1SG MM-find enough 1-NEG

              'I find that the food is not enough for me.'

   (144)   nii-huu   khaa   kaa-thaa-law

              Ni Hu   TOP   1SG MM-find enough 1-NEG

              'I find that Ni Hu is not as strong as I am.'

When the verb *neek* is used transitively, it means 'disrespect'; when used intransitively, it means 'be accustomed to something' or 'something no longer has an effect on the subject'. This intransitive use always takes middle marking.

• *neek* (inv.) 'be very familiar', i.e., 'disrespect / be accustomed to something'

   (145)   tsew-maŋ   niʔ   ʔa-ka-neek

              Ceu Mang   ERG   3SG-1SG-disrespect (inv.)

              'Ceu Mang disrespects me.'

(146)   ma?   rian   ʈuan   hii   tsuu   kaa-neek
        this   job   work   this TOP   2SG MM-be accustomed to (inv.)
        'I got used to working at this job.'

The following is a compound verb. The verb *fa?* 2 means 'be painful' and *sak* 2 means 'build'; together they mean 'take it bitterly'.

• 'take it bitterly'
    (147)   na-ka-tii   mii   kaa-fa?-sak
            2SG-1SG-say   REL   1SG MM-be painful 2-build 2
            'What you said to me, I take bitterly.'

7.1.3.   Other middles related to evaluation

There are other verbs of evaluation that take middle marking in Lai, such as 'be cocky' and 'be beautiful'. However, with these, the evaluator is not present in the sentence, and the middle marking should not be due to the semantics of the evaluator's emotion, but to something else. Verbs of this type are not productively marked as middle, and there are only five examples. More data is necessary to clarify the functions of the middle use of these verbs; however, it may simply be the case that the evaluatee is conceptualized as both an initiator and an affected entity in this event type. In other words, the evaluatee gives an impression to the evaluator and then the evaluator gives his judgement to the evaluatee. Thus, the focus here is on the evaluatee not on the evaluator.

The first example, *do?* 'be beautiful', is always intransitive and takes middle marking. 'X is beautiful to Y' is conceptualized as (a) X presents her beauty to Y and (b) Y gives his evaluation to X. With this verb, we could also say that if something is beautiful, it is not only an initiator (i.e., it attracts people), but also an affected entity (i.e., it receives attention from people). It should be noted that 'be beautiful' might derive from the homophonous verb 'drag'. If one is beautiful, she attracts others and "drags" them towards her.[9]

• *do?* (inv.)   'be beautiful'
    (148)   ka-faa-nuu   tsuu   ?aa-do?   pa?   vee   kaw
            my-daughter   TOP   3SG MM-be beautiful (inv.)   a little   also   AFFM
            'My daughter is also quite pretty.'

    (149)   maŋ-kio   ni?   nii-huu   kee   ?a-do?
            Mang Kio   ERG   Ni Hu   leg   3SG-drag (inv.)
            'Mang Kio dragged Ni Hu by the leg.'

---

9   The English verb *attract* derives from the Latin *traho* (part participle *tractus*) 'drag'. [Ed.]

In addition, *do?* ('be beautiful') together with *tlaak* comes to mean 'be appropriate', as in example (150):

• *do?-tlaak* 'be appropriate / be worthy'
    (150)   ŋaak   nuu   na-za?w   niŋ   ?aa-do?-tlaak-law

            single   women   2SG-look   way   3SG MM-be appropriate-NEG

            'The way you look at single women is not appropriate.'

Unfortunately, the meaning of *tlaak* itself is unclear in this expression. However, beauty could be a prerequisite of being appropriate (e.g., we can say that a vase is beautiful and appropriate for the room), and this semantic extension is very plausible.

There is another idiomatic verb meaning 'be appropriate': the verb *reel* 'count/read' used in the future tense with middle marking. Although the semantic connection between the two meanings is unclear, 'being able to count/read' and 'being appropriate' are both positive. With this verb, the evaluatee gives a nice impression to the evaluator, and the evaluator gives his evaluation 'being appropriate' to the evaluatee. Moreover, this evaluation is often a part of a selection process, and in such a case the evaluatee is chosen by the evaluator for something. In that sense, the degree of affectedness of the evaluatee is very significant.

• *reel* (inv.) 'count / read' —> 'be appropriate'
    (151)   ?a-reel   laay   law

            3SG-count / read (inv.)   FUT   NEG

            'He will not count / read.'

    (152)   ?aa-reel   laay   law

            3SG MM-appropriate (inv.)   FUT   NEG

            'It will not be appropriate.'

The verb *poor-hloo* 'be cocky' is always intransitive with middle marking (with Form 2 only in subordinate clauses). Someone who is cocky gives people not only the impression of cockiness but bad feelings, and in return receives the bad evaluation of 'being cocky'. However, this verb could be better translated as 'brag' and treated as an 'emotive action' middle. 'Bragging' is a very self-oriented activity, and emotion is an important part of 'bragging'.

• *poor-hloo* 1 / *poor-hloot* 2 'be cocky'
    (153)   ?aa-poor-hloo

            3SG MM-be cocky 1

            'He is cocky.'

The following example is an instance of middle voice derivation. Form 2 of the verb 'fall' comes to mean something like 'look good with' when it takes middle marking. Thus, in example (154), the subject 'you' initiates the event by wearing glasses and is affected by receiving a compliment.

- *tlaa* 1 / *tlaak* 2 'fall' —> 'match'
  (154)   na-mit-hmaan   naa-tlaak   ŋaay

          2SG-glasses   2SG MM-match 2   very

          'You look good with your glasses.'

7.1.4. Self-affecting mental/emotive action middles

There is a set of verbs designating mental actions that affect the self that can also be thought of as emotion verbs because of the fact that emotion typically co-occurs with their use.   Such verbs include 'swear', 'decide', 'refrain', 'abstain', 'refuse', 'attempt', 'try', 'be careful', and 'comfort oneself'.   These verbs I will call 'self-affecting mental/emotive action' verbs, and I suggest that the category they comprise is a potential candidate for middle marking in languages in general, as they are in Lai.

Kemmer (1993) discusses 'emotive speech actions', such as 'complain', 'lament' and 'blame'.   She relates 'refuse' to this type as a speech action because it has "emotional overtones".   She also discusses a subtype of mental event verbs, 'complex mental action' verbs, which includes mental functions such as 'think' plus an additional proposition, e.g., 'that he X'.   Kemmer places 'swear' in this subtype.   However, although 'refuse' and 'swear' in Lai could be interpreted as belonging to these two separate categories, they seem to fit more coherently into the proposed single category.   They, as well as the other Lai terms listed above, may or may not involve speech or complex mental actions, but do always involve both some kind of mental activity that affects the self and some "emotional overtones".   For example, although speech may be involved in 'deciding', the process of 'deciding' necessarily involves mental activities, such as getting information, comparing choices, and committing oneself to a particular course of action, which inevitably will have an effect on the self.   'Refrain', 'abstain' and 'refuse' also involve decisions that affect the self.   'Attempt' and 'try' involve the mental activity of committing oneself to achieving an action, either mental or physical.   'Be careful' involves directing mental attention to the manner in which one performs an action, in such a way as to prevent a negative outcome for the self and ensure a positive one.   'Comfort one's self' involves mental activity directed at one's self in order to positively affect one's own mental state.   Finally, since all of the above involve producing some kind of desired effect on the self, at least the emotion of

'desire', and probably others, are involved. Thus, we need an additional middle situation type for Lai: 'self-affecting mental/emotive action verbs'.

First, some Lai psycho-collocational verbs that designate emotive speech action take middle marking. 'Cutting one's heart' means 'decide'. Although English 'deciding' may not always imply emotion, the gloss strongly suggests that it does in Lai. Usually decision making requires a process of thinking, long or short depending on the situation; when a decision is reached the process is terminated, and this is seen as 'cutting the process of the heart'.[10]

• 'decide'

(155) tsew-maŋ   ni?   hii-vok   khaa   tsook-diŋ-?in
       Ceu Mang   ERG   this-pig   TOP   buy 2-IRR-ADV

       ?a-luŋ   ?aa-khia?
       3SG-heart 3SG MM-break 2
       'Ceu Mang decided to buy this pig.'

As in many other languages, the 'liver' is one of the central seats of the emotions in Lai. The expression 'building one's liver', i.e., 'comforting oneself',[11] is used strictly with respect to the self; a different verb expresses 'to comfort another'.

• 'comfort oneself'

(156) ?a-luŋ   ?aa-sak
       3SG-liver 3SG MM-build 2
       'He is comforting himself.'

The literal meaning of the following example, 'be careful', is 'his enemy is reserved'. This verb involves mental and often physical activities. However, there is not a clear connection between the literal meaning and the real meaning.

• 'be careful'

(157) ?a-raal   ?aa-riŋ
       3SG-enemy 3SG MM-reserve
       'He is careful.'

My data also yield two examples of ordinary verbs (not psycho-collocational) in the emotive action/event category. The verb *khap* 'refrain'

---

[10] The connection between 'cutting' and 'deciding' is widespread in the world's languages. See Matisoff 1985 and Van-Bik, this issue. [Ed.]
[11] Cf. Jaisser 1990.

always takes middle marking in both intransitive and transitive forms, as in example (158). Its semantics include 'mixed feelings', such as both wanting and not wanting to smoke.

• *khap* (inv.) 'refrain'
   (158)   nii-huu   (ni?)   kuak   ?aa-khap
           Ni Hu   (ERG)   smoke   3SG MM-refrain (inv.)
           'Ni Hu refrained from smoking.'

'Attempt' is emotive in that its meanings include 'desiring to achieve something'. Its Form 1 always takes middle marking.

• *tiim* 1 / *ti?m* 2 'attempt'
   (159)   meen-rii-hay   tsaw   ?aa-tiim
           Men Rii Hay   win   3SG MM-attempt 1
           'He attempts to win Men Rii Hay.'

In addition, there are cases of middle voice derivation for this type of verb. The first example is the verb *suum* 'pick up', which when used with middle marking comes to mean 'abstain'. Here, the semantic connection is not too clear synchronically. Perhaps 'want' in Lai involves an idea similar to that expressed in the English idiom 'to let one's desires run wild', and 'to pick up' means to contain or restrain them, as one picks up a misbehaving pet or child.

• *suum* (inv.) 'pick up' —> 'abstain'
   (160)   nii-huu   ni?   fa-tsaŋ-muu   ?a-suum
           Ni Hu   ERG   rice   3SG-pick up (inv.)
           'Ni Hu picked up the grain of rice with his fingers.'

   (161)   nii-huu   ni?   ban-hlaa   ?ay   ?a-du?
           Ni Hu   ERG   banana   eat   3SG-want (inv.)

           naan   ?aa-suum
           however   3SG MM-abstain (inv.)
           'Ni Hu wanted to eat bananas but he abstained from it.'

Another case of derivation is that of 'cut off' becoming 'refuse' or 'deny' when used with the middle marker.

• *phe?* 'cut off' —> 'refuse / deny'

   (162)   ?a-phe?

           3SG-cut off (inv.)

           'He cut off something.'

The connection seems obvious. A request is metaphorically seen as an appendage coming from the 'requester' to the subject for the desired action, and, thus, refusing the request is understood as 'the subject cutting the appendage off of himself.'

   (163)   ?aa-phe?

           3SG MM-refuse (inv.)

           'He refused.'

   (164)   bia   ?a-tshim   tsia   mii   ?aa-phe?   ţhaan

           word   3SG-say 1   already   NOM   3SG MM-deny (inv.)   again

           'He again denied that he said so.'

The verb *zuam* 'compete' comes to mean 'try' when used with a middle marker. Here, we could have an implication that when one tries one competes with oneself. In other words, one has to beat the part of oneself that desires inaction.

• *zuam* (inv.) 'compete' —> 'try'

   (165)   tsew-maŋ   ni?   nii-huu   ?a-zuam

           Ceu Mang   ERG   Ni Hu   3SG-try (inv.)

           'Ceu Mang is competing with Ni Hu.'

   (166)   tsew-maŋ   ni?   paar-do?   khaa   hna?m   ?aa-zuam

           Ceu Mang   ERG   Par Do   TOP   kiss 2   3SG MM-try (inv.)

           'Ceu Mang tries to kiss Par Do.'

The last example is *kam*. Its meaning 'promise' becomes 'swear' with a middle marker. We could say that 'swear' is simply the reflexive of 'promise', a 'promise to oneself'; however, according to the consultant, the best translation of *bia ?aa-kam* is 'he swears.' There may be more semantic differences between examples (167) and (168) than just that of non-reflexive vs. reflexive. It is true that in some languages (such as Japanese) 'promise to oneself' is not normally used, and that there are different verbs to express such a meaning. Note that in sentence (169) 'he resolved to stop smoking' has to be translated into Lai as *?aa kam*.

• 'promise' —> 'swear' (in some cases 'resolve')

(167) bia   ʔa-ka-kam
      word   3SG-1SG-promise 1
      'He promised me.'

(168) bia   ʔaa-kam
      word   3SG MM-swear 1
      'He swears (to it).'

(169) kuak   zuuk   ti-law   diŋ   ʔin   bia   ʔaa-kam
      cigar smoke 2 no longer IRR   LOC   word 3SG MM-swear 1
      'He resolved to stop smoking.'

8. SPONTANEOUS EVENTS

Spontaneous events are different from other middle situation types in that the affected entity does not volitionally initiate the event. Spontaneous events typically lack a volitional agent, or, if there is an agent, then it is a different entity from the affected entity and is often uncoded in a sentence. Thus, the event is understood as if it started from the affected entity. In other words, the affected entity is conceptualized as an initiator as well. Since 'spontaneous' events typically involve purely affected entities, these entities are often inanimate. In my data, about half of the verbs of this type involve animate entities, and the other half involve inanimates.

8.1. *Spontaneous event associated with animate beings*

A common use of middle marking across languages is in situations that describe changes of state of an entity without direct initiation by a human agent. The verb *hŋiʔl* 'fall asleep' is such a verb and requires middle marking.

• *hŋiʔl* (inv.) 'fall asleep'

(170) nii-huu khaa zaan-tim tiaŋ   ʔaa-rak-hŋiʔl   riʔ   law
      Ni Hu   TOP   midnight until   3SG MM-fall asleep (inv.) still NEG
      'Ni Hu did not fall asleep until midnight.'

(171) ʔa-bia   ka-ŋaʔy   paʔ-ʔin   kaa-rak-hŋiʔl
      3SG-word   1SG-listen together with   1SG MM-PERF-fall asleep (inv.)
      'I fell asleep listening to him talk.'

Note that since the verb 'sleep' does not designate a change of state, it does not require middle marking.

(172)   ʔa-ʔit

 3SG-sleep 1

 'He is sleeping.'

Similarly the verb 'wake up' takes the middle marking when used as an intransitive, as the following examples indicate:

• *thaŋ* 1 / *thaʔŋ* 2 'wake up'

(173)   suy-mii-laam   pa-ruk   ʔaʔ   nii-huu   ʔaa-ṭhaŋ

o'clock   six   LOC   Ni Hu   3SG MM-wake up 1

'Ni Hu wakes up at 6 o'clock.'

(174)   nii-huu   niʔ   ʔa-ka-ṭhaʔŋ

Ni Hu   ERG   3SG-1SG-wake up 2

'Ni Hu woke me up.'

An interesting case is *tsiip* 'close', which designates situations where a person closes his mouth or legs. When it is used as a non-middle, as in sentence (175), it means that the person closes his mouth voluntarily. On the other hand, when it is used as a middle, as in sentence (176), it means the person closes his or her mouth involuntarily.

• *tsiip* (inv.) 'close'

(175)   ʔa-kaa   ʔa-tsiip

3SG-mouth   3SG-close (inv.)

'He closed his mouth.'

(176)   ʔa-kaa   ʔaa-tsiip

3SG-mouth   3SG MM-close (inv.)

'He closed his mouth.'

Another interesting case is that of 'see' becoming 'find' in the sense of a windfall: one accidentally finds something and possesses it. Thus, the subject is the initiator and affected entity (here, beneficiary) of the event.

• *hmuʔ* 2 'see' —> 'find' (in the sense of windfall)

(177)   khoy-kaa-ʔaʔ-daʔ   na-hmuʔ

where   2SG-find 2

'Where did you see it?'

(178)   khoy-kaa-ʔaʔ-daʔ   naa-hmuʔ

       where   2SG MM-find 2

       'Where did you find it?'

(179)   kay-maʔ   niʔ   kaa-hmuʔ   hma-saa

       I   ERG   1SG MM-find 2   first

       'I found it first (so it's mine).'

Lastly, the verb *ziʔr* (inv.) 'molt' should be treated as a spontaneous event verb. It is used specifically for non-human entities, such as snakes, but the verb designates a change of physical properties without direct initiation by the agent. This verb is always intransitive and requires the middle marking.

• *ziʔr* (inv.) 'molt'

   (180)   ruul   ʔaa-ziʔr

       snake   3SG MM-molt (inv.)

       'The snake molted.'

As we have seen, my data yield five spontaneous event verbs associated with animate beings. Obviously, this semantic situation type is not productively marked with the middle. Many of the words I tested, such as 'drown', 'be born', and 'die', do not take middle marking. The choice of middle marking seems idiosyncratic. Further investigation is necessary to elucidate the semantics of this situation type.

8.2.   Spontaneous events associated with inanimate beings

As mentioned above, spontaneous events typically involve purely affected entities, which are often inanimate beings. This semantic situation type is also not productively marked with the middle. Most verbs of this type do not take middle marking. More investigation is required for this situation type also.

The first two cases do not have a volitional agent. The verb *kaap* means 'erupt' when used as an intransitive, and 'shoot' when used as a transitive.

• *kaap* 1 / *kaʔ* 2 'shoot / erupt'

   (181)   tii   ʔaa-kaap

       water   3SG MM-erupt 1

       'The water erupted.'

   (182)   nii-huu   niʔ   tii   ʔin   ʔa-ka-kaʔ

       Ni Hu   ERG   water   with   3SG-1SG-shoot 2

       'Ni Hu shot me with water.'

As mentioned earlier, the verb 'shake' has two forms, *hniin* 1 / *hni?n* 2, and the transitive use takes Form 2, as in (183). The intransitive use requires the middle marker and Form 1, as in (184), and the subject can be either animate or inanimate (see sentence [104] above for an example with an animate subject).

- *hniin* 1 / *hni?n* 2 'shake / shiver / rock'
  - (183) nii-huu   ni?   palaaŋ   ?a-hni?n
          Ni Hu   ERG   bottle   3SG-shake 2
          'Ni Hu shook the bottle.'

  - (184) ?in   ?aa-hniin
          house   3SG MM-shake 1
          'The house is shaking (from the earthquake).'

There is an idiomatic expression with *hniin*. The literal meaning of sentence (185) is 'the bow is shaking', but it actually means 'the earth is quaking'.

  - (185) lii   ?aa-hniin
          bow   3SG MM-shake 1
          'The earth is quaking.'

In the following examples, a volitional agent may exist in a sentence, but it is a different entity from the affected entity and the agent is not coded. All require middle marking when used intransitively. The non-middle transitive counterparts are also given for comparison:

- *?oŋ* 1 / *?on* 2 'open'
  - (186) ?in-kaa   ?aa-?oŋ
          door   3SG MM-open 1
          'The door is open.'

  - (187) nii-huu   ni?   ?in-kaa   ?a-?on
          Ni Hu   ERG   door   3SG-open 2
          'Ni Hu opened the door.'

- *kaar* (inv.) 'close'
  - (188) ?in-kaa   ?aa-khaar
          door   3SG MM-close (inv.)
          'The door is closed.'

(189) nii-huu   niʔ   ʔin-kaa   ʔa-khaar
      Ni Hu   ERG   door   3SG-close (inv.)
      'Ni Hu closed the door.'

• *phoŋ* 1 / *phoʔŋ* 2 'get loosened'
   (190) ʔa-tshiin   ʔaa-phoŋ
        3SG-cap   3SG MM-get loosened 1
        'The cap got loosened.'

   (191) nii-huu   niʔ   ʔa-tshiin   ʔaa-phoʔŋ
        Ni Hu   ERG   3SG-cap   3SG MM-loosen 2
        'Ni Hu loosened the cap.'

• *thleŋ* 1 / *thlen* 2 'change'
   (192) ʔa-zia   ʔaa-thleŋ
        3SG-habit   3SG MM-change 1
        'His habit changed.'

   (193) nii-huu   niʔ   ʔa-zia   ʔa-thlen
        Ni Hu   ERG   3SG-habit   3SG-change 2
        'Ni Hu changed his habit.'

9. OTHERS

The following verbs also require middle marking, but do not match any single Kemmer (A) situation type. They designate rather complex processes or situations involving both physical and mental activity. However, middle voice indicates the subject's affectedness; these verbs all seem to express very self-focused/affected events. The first three verbs designate situations that could involve either physical or mental activity. For example, the first verb 'be free' could mean 'need not cultivate the field' (physical) or 'need not study' (mental).

• *maʔn* (inv.) 'be free'
   (194) naa-maʔn   tsaŋ   moo
        2SG MM-be free (inv.)   COMP   Q
        'Are you free yet?'

• *hnoʔ* (inv.) 'hurry'
   (195) ka-paa   khaa   ʔaa-hnoʔ   ŋaay-ŋaay
        1SG-father   TOP   3SG MM-hurry (inv.)   very

```
tsa-?a?        ?a-kal-tso?l
because        3SG-go (inv.)-immediately
'My father was in a hurry, so he left right away.'
```

• *re?l* (inv.) 'be ready'
    (196)   naa-re?l   tsaŋ   moo
            2SG MM-be ready (inv.)   COMP   Q
            'Are you ready?'

The following are verbs of 'preparation'. The most similar middle type would be verbs of 'grooming'. However, 'preparation' is more abstract and complex than 'grooming' in that it usually requires complex activities, not just simple body actions, and moreover may require some kind of mental activity as well. When *se?r* and *re?m* are used as intransitives, they take middle marking.

• *se?r* (inv.) 'prepare'
    (197)   nii-huu   ?aa-se?r
            Ni Hu   3SG MM-prepare (inv.)
            'Ni Hu prepared himself.'

• *re?m* (inv.) 'prepare / get ready'
    (198)   nii-huu   ?aa-re?m
            Ni Hu   3SG MM-get ready (inv.)
            'Ni Hu is getting ready.'

The next example is an instance of middle voice derivation. First, the base verb 'heal' is used as follows:

• *dam* 1 / *da?m* 2 'heal'
    (199)   nii-huu   ?a-dam
            Ni Hu   3SG-heal 1
            'Ni Hu is fine.'

    (200)   nii-huu   ni?   ?a-ka-da?m
            Ni Hu   ERG   3SG-1SG-heal 2
            'Ni Hu healed me.'

    (201)   nii-huu   ni?   ?aa-da?m
            Ni Hu   ERG   3SG REFL-heal 2
            'Ni Hu healed himself.'

Together with middle marking, the Form 2, *daʔm*, can also mean 'prepare', or more specifically 'collect something for a purpose', as exemplified in (202):

(202) nii-huu   niʔ   ʔin   sak   diŋ   ʔaʔ   thil
       Ni Hu   ERG   house build PURP   LOC   things

ʔaa-daʔm
3SG MM-prepare 2
'Ni Hu collected things for building a house.'

Note that *ʔaa-daʔm* in example (201) is ambiguous without context: it could be the regular reflexive, with the sense of 'heal', or the middle, 'prepare'.

In the following example, middle marking adds additional semantics to the base verb. With middle marking, the verb 'spy, watch' comes to mean 'aim at'. 'Aiming' is a complex of activities and perception: turning the body toward the target, moving the arms, watching the target carefully, etc. In this case, the act of perception is already included in the basic meaning of the verb, so that the middle marking adds a component of physical activity.

• *ŋia* 1 / *ŋiat* 2   'spy / watch'   —> 'aim at'
  (203) nii-huu   niʔ   vaa   ʔaa-fuu   mii   ʔa-ŋiat
         Ni Hu   ERG   bird   3SG MM-perch   REL   3SG-spy 2
         'Ni Hu spied / watched the bird that is perching.'

  (204) nii-huu   niʔ   vaa   ʔaa-fuu   mii   ʔaa-ŋiat
         Ni Hu   ERG   bird   3SG MM-perch   REL   3SG MM-aim at 2
         'Ni Hu aimed at the bird that is perching.'

The following verb alternates in meaning between 'participate' and 'include'. Form 1 of the verb, *tel*, means 'participate' and takes middle marking; Form 2, *teʔl*, means 'include' and does not take middle marking.

• *tel* 1 / *teʔl* 2   'participate' or 'include'
  (205) tsew-maŋ   khaa   ʔaa-tel   vee
         Ceu Mang   TOP   3SG MM-take part 1 also
         'Ceu Mang also participated.'

  (206) nii-huu-tee   niʔ   tsew-maŋ   khaa   ʔan-teʔl   vee
         Ni Hu-party/group ERG   Ceu Mang   TOP   3PL-include 2 also
         'Ni Hu's party also included Ceu Mang.'

Although 'participating' does not fit with any situation type discussed above, it is easy to see in such a situation that the participant is both an initiator (i.e., taking part) and an affected entity (i.e., being part of the group). Also, it is possible to see that middle marking here indicates reflexivity: 'the subject included *himself*'. Lai uses middle marking with the verb 'borrow', which designates that the subject (initiator) caused someone to lend a book to him (affected entity). On the other hand the causative version of this verb, *hla?n*, which means 'lend', does not take middle marking, as we would expect.

- *hlaaŋ* 1 / *hlaan* 2a 'borrow'
  - (207) ka-tsaa-uk   ?aa-hlaan
    - 1SG-book   3SG MM-borrow 2a
    - 'He borrows my book.'

- *hla?n* 'lend' 2b
  - (208) ka-tsaa-uk   kaa-hla?n
    - 1SG-book   1SG MM-lend 2b
    - 'I lend my book to him.'

The following example is an instance of middle voice derivation. The base verb is 'rise, get up' and it cannot take middle marking. Recall that verbs of change in body posture usually do not take middle marking in Lai; sentence (210) is ungrammatical.

- *thaw* 1 / *tho?* 2 'rise, get up'
  - (209) nii-huu   ?a-thaw
    - Ni Hu   3SG-rise 1
    - 'Ni Hu got up.'

  - (210) *nii-huu   ?aa-thaw
    - Ni Hu   3SG MM-rise 1

  - (211) tsew-maŋ   ni?   nii-huu   khaa   ?a-tho?
    - Ceu Mang   ERG   Ni Hu   TOP   3SG-rise 2
    - 'Ceu Mang helped Ni Hu stand up.'

Form 2 of this verb with middle marking means either 'begin, set off' or 'say'.

- 'begin'
  - (212) kho   daŋ   tloon   diŋ   ?a?   tsun   ?aa-tho?
    - village   other   visit 2   PURP   LOC   TOP   3SG MM-begin 2
    - 'He went off to visit the other village.'

• 'say'

(213) ʔan-ʔii-thoʔ-ʔii   rua?   ʔa-suur   tia?   ʔan-tii
       3PL-MM-say 2-and   rain   3SG-rain   QUOT   3PL-say (inv.)
       'They say that it's raining.'

The meaning 'begin' is often used for a trip or some kind of translational event: it is necessary to stand up first in order to begin to go somewhere. However, the semantic connection with the meaning 'say' is not obvious.

A final example is *tsuak / tshua?* 'become'. One interesting observation is that this verb takes the middle only when used as a transitive. Note that when a verb has a Form 1-2 alternation, usually we find that only Form 1 takes middle marking, or in some cases that both Forms 1 and 2 take middle marking. In example (214), we have an outside narrator who simply reports that Ni Hu has become a good person for some reason. However, in example (215), with middle marking, we interpret Ni Hu to have become a good person because of his own effort. Thus, it may be closer to translate it as 'Ni Hu made himself a good person', or 'Ni Hu turned himself into a good person'. I call this the 'emphatic' use of 'become'.

• *tshuak* 1 / *tshua?* 2 'become'

(214) nii-huu   mii   ʈhaa   ʔa?   ʔa-tshuak
       Ni Hu   person   good   LOC   3SG-become 1
       'Ni Hu became a good person.'

(215) nii-huu   mii   ʈhaa   ʔa?   ʔaa-tshua?
       Ni Hu   person   good   LOC   3SG MM-become 2
       'Ni Hu became a good person.'

10. DIRECTIONAL MARKER AND MIDDLE MARKING

It should be mentioned that in addition to the subject markers, there is a directional marker that becomes a middle marker. We can lengthen the vowel of the directional marker *va* to *vaa*, and *vaa* not only marks 'directionality' but also 'reflexivity' or 'middle'. When a verb requires the middle, and there are both a directional marker and a subject marker in the sentence, the directional marker always takes middle marking. However, the subject *may* also take middle marking, as in (218).

(216) tii-vaa   ʔa?   ʔa-va-khoʔl
       river   LOC   3SG-DIR-bathe (inv.)
       'He went to the river and gave her a bath.'

(217) tii-vaa   ʔaʔ   ʔa-vaa-khoʔl[12]
      river   LOC   3SG-DIR MM-bathe (inv.)
      'He went to the river and took a bath.'

(218) tii-vaa   ʔaʔ   ʔaa-vaa-khoʔl
      river   LOC   3SG MM-DIR MM-bathe (inv.)
      'He went to the river and took a bath.'

Moreover, *vaa* can refer to distance instead of direction. In the following example, *vaa* expresses a distance between the speaker and 'that woman', not direction.

(219) tsuu   nuu   tsuu   ʔaa-vaa-doʔ
      DEM   woman   TOP   3SG-DIR MM-beautiful (inv.)

      law   per-pur   vee
      NEG   IDEO   EXC
      'That woman is really ugly!' (lit., 'That woman is not beautiful')

11. MIDDLE WITH THE CAUSATIVE MARKER *TER*

There is an interesting use of middle marking together with the causative marker. Sentences with both a middle and causative marker are ambiguous without a context. They can mean either 'X let Y do something to X' or 'X really does something to Y, or pretends to do something to Y, as a pretext in order to mislead somebody'.

(220) tsew-maŋ   niʔ   nii-huu   khaa   ʔaa-veʔl-ter
      Ceu Mang   ERG   Ni Hu   TOP   3SG MM-beat up 2-CAUS

    (a)   'Ceu Mang let himself be beaten by Ni Hu.'[13]
   (b)   'Ceu Mang beat, or pretended to beat, Ni Hu as a pretext.'

One interpretation of sentence (220) is 'Ceu Mang let himself be beaten by Ni

---

[12] In examples (215) and (216), either *ʔaa* or *ʔa* may be used, since the sentence contains *vaa* (a DIRECTIONAL marker, 'over there', that may or may not be REFLEXIVE, depending on the verb). [KVB]
[13] In order for this to have yet a third meaning, 'Ceu Mang let Ni Hu pretend to beat himself (Ni Hu)' (in order, for example, to incriminate a third party), we need to add *ʔa-ma-le-ʔa-ma* 'himself' to (220), as shown in example (220c):

    (220c) tsew-maŋ   niʔ   nii-huu   khaa   ʔa-ma-le-ʔa-ma   ʔa-veʔl-ter
          Ceu Mang   ERG   Ni Hu   TOP   himself   3SG MM-beat up 2-CAUS
          'Ceu Mang let Ni Hu pretend to beat himself (Ni Hu).'

Hu'. Another is that 'Ceu Mang beat, or pretended to beat, Ni Hu' as a pretext, in order, for example, to get special attention for Ni Hu from his girlfriend. The semantics of examples (220a) and (220b) are represented schematically in Figure 1:
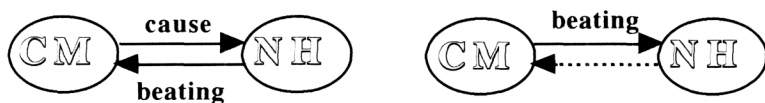
Reflexive causative (220a)   *Middle use (220b)*
Figure 1.

Example (220a) is a simple use of the reflexive together with a causative, in which Ceu Mang is the causer and affectee, while example (220b) is some kind of middle, where the subject carries out the action in such a way that the result of the action indirectly affects himself (e.g., he wants people to think his primary action is 'beating'). Thus Ceu Mang can be seen as both the initiator and endpoint of the action.

Note that, if intransitive verbs or verbs of one-participant events are used with a middle and causative marker, then the sentence only means 'X does or pretends to do something as a pretext'.

(221)   ?an-?ii-thi?-ter
         3PL-MM-die 2-CAUS
         'They pretended to be dead.'

(222)   ?aa-?i?-ter
         3SG MM-sleep 2-CAUS
         'He slept or pretended to sleep in order to mislead someone.'

12. CONCLUSION

The data given above clearly show that the "reflexive" markers in Lai do not merely function as reflexives, but are extended to mark various middle situation types. First, their productive marking applies to both direct and indirect reflexives. The markers are also used productively as reciprocals with any suitable verb, and some verbs expressing inherently reciprocal events such as 'marry' and 'fight' ordinarily take middle marking. Second, various body action verbs, among them many verbs of grooming (e.g., 'bathe' and 'comb'), take middle marking. Other body action types, such as translational motion (e.g., 'swim' and 'roam') and nontranslational motion (e.g., 'turn' and

'stretch') take the marking. Third, some verbs of cognition or mental event take middle marking. The situation types are simple emotion middle (e.g., 'be happy'), self-affecting mental/emotive action middle (e.g., 'refuse'), and emotive evaluation middle (e.g., 'find difficult'). Recall that Lai has many verbs of evaluation, where the subject is both the evaluator and the affected entity in such events. This last middle use seems to be rare cross-linguistically, perhaps because such verbs are more commonly manifested as adjectives in the world's languages. Fourth, middle marking is also found to mark verbs of spontaneous events, such as 'fall asleep' and 'close'. Lastly, I have found cases of middle voice derivation and a special use of middle marking with the causative marker to mean 'the subject does or pretends to do something as a pretext'. Many of the verbs designate one-participant events, where the subject is clearly both the initiator and the affected entity. Others designate two-participant events; however, the subject is nonetheless conceptualized as the affected entity. Thus, the common semantic feature of the middle in Lai is that it marks events where the initiator and the endpoint are the same entity or there is high indistinguishability between the initiator and end point. This should be expected, since Lai's middle marking is extended from the reflexive marking.

Based on my data, certain syntactic generalizations are possible. First, regular reciprocal middles always take Form 1, which means that all verbs in reciprocal constructions are treated as intransitives. All the participants in reciprocal events are both initiator and endpoint. Thus, it is hard to distinguish them, and they are conceptually understood as a single unit, rather than two separate entities. Second, the verbs of naturally reciprocal events also take Form 1, when the verb is not phrasal. As for the other middles in Lai, the choice of verb form is dependent on the semantics of each verb. Some are always transitive and thus take Form 2 (e.g., 'shave'), while others are always intransitive and take Form 1 (e.g., 'perch'). However, I found that if the verb has a transitive-intransitive alternation, then it often takes middle marking only with Form 1, as in the case of 'shake'. There are two exceptions to this. One is that some verbs invariably take middle marking whether transitive or intransitive, as in the case of 'ride'. The other is that there are two verbs that take middle marking only in transitive form. One of them is 'find difficult' (see sentences [138] and [139]); however, in this case, when transitive it takes the evaluator as the subject and when intransitive it takes the evaluatee as the subject. An explanation for this is that it is far more likely for the evaluator than for the evaluated object to be affected by the described event. The other example is the emphatic use of 'become' (see sentences [214] and [215]). Although the intransitive counterpart of a transitive sentence using this verb has the same subject as the transitive sentence, only transitive subjects take middle

marking. Although this seems to be unexpected, it can be quite natural to have middle marking to emphasize 'self', and there may be more examples like this in Lai. Thus, the correlation between the verb stem forms and middle marking is idiosyncratic except with reciprocal marking. I conclude that the middle voice is basically a semantic phenomenon, not a syntactic phenomenon in Lai.

APPENDIX: LIST OF MIDDLE VERBS IN LAI

In the table below, I list the verbs that appear as examples of the middle in this paper. The verbs are listed alphabetically by English gloss. The following are explanations of the expressions used in the table.

- "Always middle": the verb always requires middle marking.
- "Intransitive": the verb takes the middle marker, when used as an intransitive.
- "Transitive": the verb takes the middle marker, when used as a transitive.
- "Self": the verb takes the middle marker when the event described by the verb is performed on the subject's self. Here, transitivity/intransitivity does not determine middle marking.
- "Phrasal": verb having more than one part, such as verbs of psycho-collocation.
- "Non-middle meaning": the non-middle meaning appears to be the primary sense. When marked as middle, the meaning changes.

English gloss of middle use	Verb	Always middle	Restrictions in use	Non-middle meaning, if any	Example number(s)
'abstain'	suum (inv.)			'pick up'	160-161
'accustomed'	neek (inv.)		intransitive	'disrespect'	145-146
'aim at'	ŋiat 2			'spy/watch'	203-204
'anxious'	luŋ...doʔm	√	phrasal		128
'appropriate'	reel (inv.)		fut. tense	'count/read'	151-152
'appropriate'	doʔ-tlaak	√	phrasal		150
'attempt'	tiim 1		intransitive		159
'bang'	suk 2		w/ head	'nod'	108-110
'bathe'	khoʔl (inv.)		intransitive		70-71
'beautiful'	doʔ (inv.)	√		('drag'?)	148-149
'beautify'	ṭaʔm (inv.)	√			69
'become'	tshuaʔ 2		transitive		214-215
'begin/say'	thoʔ 2			'rise/get up'	209-213
'borrow'	hlaan 2a		w/ Form 2a	*hlaʔn* 2b'lend'	207-208
'careful'	raal . . . riŋ	√	phrasal		157
'change'	thleŋ 1		intransitive		192-193
'close'	kaar (inv.)		intransitive		188-189
'close sthg involuntarily'	tsiip (inv.)			'close sthg voluntarily'	175-176
'cocky'	poor-hloo 1/ poor-hloot 2	√			153
'comb'	hriat 1		self		72-73

English gloss of middle use	Verb	Always middle	Restrictions in use	Non-middle meaning, if any	Example number(s)
'comfort oneself'	luŋ-sak	√	phrasal		156
'compete'	zuam (inv.)		intransitive		44-45
'decide'	luŋ-khiaʔ	√	phrasal		155
'discuss'	bia...ruaʔ		phrasal		52-53
'enjoy'	nuam 1		intrans. w/ anim. subj.		135-136
'equal to'	thluk (inv.)		intransitive		54-55
'erupt'	kaap 1		intransitive	kaʔ 2 'shoot'	181-182
'fall asleep'	hŋiʔl (inv.)	√			170-171
'find' (windfall)	hmuʔ 2			'see'	177-179
'find difficult'	haʔr 2		transitive		138-139
'find enough'	zaa 1		intransitive		140-142
'find enough'	thaa 1 / thaat 2	√			143-144
'free'	maʔn (inv.)	√?			194
'friendly'	kom 1		intransitive	komʔ 2 'stick sthg together'	56-57
'gather'	puum 1 / puʔm 2	√			87
'happy'	luŋ...loom	√	phrasal		127
'hide'	duup (inv.)	√			118
'hide'	thup 1		intransitive		119
'hurry'	hnoʔ (inv.)	√			195
'jump'	hlok 1		intransitive		88-89
'kneel'	bil (inv.)	√			82
'lean against'	hŋaʔw (inv.)	√			120-121
'lean against'	hŋat-tshan (inv.)	√			122-123
'lie across'	khaaŋ 1		intransitive		83
'loosen'	phoŋ 1		intransitive		190-191
'lying on'	khaaŋ 1		intransitive		124-126
'marry'	ʈhii 1		intransitive		48-49
'marry'	ʔum (inv.)			'exist, live'	50-51
'match'	tlaak 2			'fall'	154
'meet'	ton 1		intransitive		46-47
'molt'	ziʔr (inv.)	√			180
'move'	thoon (inv.)		intransitive		90-91
'open'	ʔoŋ 1		intransitive		186-187
'paranoid'	phu-hruŋ 1 / phu-hrun 2	√			133-134
'participate'	tel 1		intransitive	teʔl 2 'include'	205-206

English gloss of middle use	Verb	Always middle	Restrictions in use	Non-middle meaning, if any	Example number(s)
'perch'	fuu 1/fuut 2	√			84-85
'play'	tse?l (inv.)	√			115
'play w/ a top'	ka? 2			'shoot'	113-114
'prepare'	se?r (inv.)		intransitive		197
'prepare'	re?m (inv.)		intransitive		198
'prepare' (collect sthg)	da?m 2			'heal'	199-202
'put on'	hruk (inv.)		self		78-79
'put on'	fe?n (inv.)		self		80-81
'quarrel'	sii 1 / siik 2	√			40
'ready'	re?l (inv.)	√			196
'refrain'	khap (inv.)	√			158
'refuse, deny'	phe? (inv.)			'cut off'	162-164
'repent'	ŋaay...tshi?	√	phrasal	'listen/hear'	131-132
'rest'	diin 1		intransitive		96-97
'ride'	tsit (inv.)	√			116
'roam'	tshook 1		intransitive		92-93
'same'	khat 1/kha? 2	√			58-59
'scratch'	kheu? (inv.)		self		111-112
'shake', etc.	hniin 1		intransitive		104-105, 183-185
'shave'	me? 2		self		74-75
'similar'	law 1		intransitive		60-61
'speed up'	tsir (inv.)	√			117
'stretch'	sa?m (inv.)		intransitive		106-107
'struggle'	sual (inv.)	√			41
'swear'	kam 1			'promise'	167-169
'swim'	liaw 1		intransitive		94-95
'swing'	?ook (inv.)	√			86
'take bitterly'	fa?-sak	√	phrasal		147
'take off'	pho?y (inv.)		self		76-77
'try'	zuam (inv.)			'compete'	165-166
'turn'	her 1		intransitive		102-103
'turn, twist'	mer 1/me?r 2		self		98-101
'wake up'	ʈhaŋ 1		intransitive		173-174
'wrestle'	paay 1		intransitive		42-43

REFERENCES

CROFT, William, Hava Bat-Zeev Schyldkrot, and Suzanne Kemmer. 1987. "Diachronic semantic processes in the middle voice." *Papers from the 7th International Conference on Historical Linguistics*, ed. by Anna Giacalone Ramat, Onofrio Carruba, and Giuliano Bernini, 179-92. (Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, Series 4, Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, 48.) Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

JAISSER, Annie. 1990. "DeLIVERing an introduction to psycho-collocations with SIAB in Hmong." *LTBA* 13.1:159-178.

KEMMER, Suzanne. 1992. "Grammatical prototypes and competing motivations in a theory of linguistic change." *Explanation in Historical Linguistics*, ed. by Garry W. Davis and Gregory K. Iverson, 145-66. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

_____. 1993. *The Middle Voice*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

LYONS, John. 1969. *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MATISOFF, James A. 1985. "Hearts and minds in Southeast Asian languages and English: an essay in the comparative lexical semantics of psycho-collocations." *Cahiers de Linguistique Asie Orientale* 15.1:5-57.

VAN-BIK, Kenneth. 1997. "Lai psycho-collocations." This issue.