

THE MIDDLE VOICE IN BALINESE

Masayoshi Shibatani

Rice University

<mat.shibatani@gmail.com>

Ketut Artawa

Udayana University

<artawa56@yahoo.com>

1 Introduction

Through the examination of middle voice constructions in Balinese, we address two related issues raised in the recent literature dealing with this topic; namely, 1) the nature of the middle voice category (Kemmer 1993) and 2) the distribution of middle constructions (Haiman 1983). But first, a brief introduction to the Balinese structure and morphological middle forms is in order.

Balinese, like many other Indonesian and Philippine languages, has a fluid (or symmetrical) voice system, where there is no basic voice, and whereby either an agentive or patient nominal can be rather freely chosen as a primary grammatical relation (e.g., Subject, Topic, or Pivot). The following examples (1) and (2) illustrate the two relevant transitive constructions, actor-voice (AV) and undergoer-voice (UV) constructions (Arka 1998), which correspond to the Actor-Topic/Focus and Goal-Topic/Focus constructions in Philippine languages.

Transitive clauses

- (1) Actor-voice construction
Tiang nyepak cicing-e. [N-sepak] (N-verb form)
I AV.kick dog-DEF
'I kicked the dog.'
- (2) Undergoer-voice constructions
Cicing-e sepak tiang. [Ø-sepak] (Ø-verb form)
dog-DEF UV.kick I
'I kicked the dog.'

As for intransitive clauses, there are three formal classes: a) ones that have a N-verb form, b) ones that have a *ma*-verb form, and c) those that have a Ø-verb form.

Intransitive clauses

- (3) Cerik-cerik-e ngeling. [N-geling]
child-child-DEF cry
'The children cried.'

- (4) Cerik-cerik-e majujuk. [ma-jujuk]
 child-child-DEF stand up
 'The children stood up.'
- (5) Cerik-cerik-e ulung. [Ø-ulung]
 child-child-DEF fall
 'The children fell.'

Among these intransitive constructions, the *ma*-construction illustrated in (4) provides a point of departure to our inquiry of the middle voice forms in Balinese.

2 *Ma*- As a Middle Marker

In the Balinese grammatical treatments such as Artawa (1994), Clynes (1995), and Arka (1998), the *ma*-construction has generally been considered simply as an alternate or variant construction of the N-prefixed form such as (3). But there are a fair number of *ma*-forms that express those situation types that are coded by what are identified as middle voice constructions in other languages. Accordingly, it is reasonable to consider these forms as middle constructions.¹ The *ma*-prefix, in addition, has several other uses whose semantics are not straightforwardly characterizable in terms of the middle semantics. The following represent the middle and some other uses of the *ma*-prefix.

Morphological middles

- (6) *ma-suah* 'comb (hair)', *ma-suluh* 'look at oneself in the mirror'
ma-sugi 'wash (face)', *ma-ambuh* 'wash one's hair'
ma-baseh 'wash one's hands/feet'
ma-cukur 'shave' (Artawa's dialect) 'cut one's hair' (Arka's dialect)
ma-kurisi 'shave one's beard/moustache' (Arka's dialect)
ma-pupur 'powder oneself'
ma-sikat 'brush oneself (e.g., own teeth)'
ma-dengdeng 'dry oneself, sun-bake', *ma-payas* 'dress oneself'
ma-topong 'have a hat on', *ma-song* 'have a hole'
ma-umah 'have a place to stay'
ma-bapa 'has a father-relation with someone' 'call someone *bapa*/father'
ma-adi 'has a sibling relation with someone' 'call *adi*/younger sibling'
ma-linge 'lie face down', *ma-sila* 'sit down cross-legged'
ma-jujuk 'stand up' (straight, not bending), *ma-tangi* 'stand up'
m(a)-engkeb 'hide', *ma-jalan* 'walk', *ma-laib* 'run'
ma-kecog 'jump', *ma-lincer* 'spin', *ma-suryak* 'shout'
ma-takon 'ask', *ma-bangkes* 'sneeze', *ma-kecuh* 'spit'
ma-kenyir 'smile very briefly', *ma-keplug* 'explode (once)'
ma-krepet 'produce cracking sounds'
ma-kebyah 'flash (of light) once', *ma-kudus* 'produce smoke'

Singaraja dialect (Clynes 1995: 264)

- me-kecuh* 'spit', *me-solah* 'dance.HI', *me-tangi* 'wake up'
me-suryak 'cheer', *me-suat* 'answer', *me-gending* 'sing'

me-gendi ‘leave’, *me-keber* ‘fly’, *me-sedédég* ‘lean against’
me-bading ‘turn around’, *me-cuab* ‘sprout out (e.g., blood)’ etc.

Reciprocal *ma-...(-an)*²

- (7) Manuk-e ma-palu.
 roosters-DEF fight.each other
 ‘The roosters are fighting (each other).’
- (8) Wayan lan Made ma-jagur-an.
 Wayan and Made fight.each.other
 ‘Wayan and Made are fighting.’

Resultative *ma-*

- (9) Jajan-e suba ma-gugut.
 cake-DEF already ma-bite
 ‘The cake is already bitten.’

Antipassive *ma-*

- (10) a. Nasi-ne daar tiang.
 rice-DEF eat 1SG
 ‘I ate the rice.’
 b. Tiang ma-daar. (Antipassive)
 1SG ma-eat
 ‘I ate.’
- (11) a. Ia ngeneh-ang tiang.
 3SG think-APPL 1SG
 ‘He is thinking about me.’
 b. Ia ma-keneh **teken** tiang. (Antipassive)
 3SG ma-think to 1SG
 ‘S/he has some feeling (love) for me.’

Inchoative *ma-*

ma-medih ‘become angry’ < *depid* ‘angry’
ma-meseh ‘become swollen’ < *beseh* ‘swollen’
ma-manes ‘become troublesome/ become angry/ start to cause problems’ < *panes*
 ‘hot/angry’

“Pretend” *ma-*

ma-mongol ‘pretend to be deaf’ < *bongol* ‘deaf’
ma-mules ‘pretend to sleep’ < *pules* ‘sleep’

3 On the Nature of the Middle Category

3.1 Reflexives and Middles

The first issue we wish to deal with has to do with the nature of the middle voice category; namely, a topic extensively studied by Kemmer (1993). On the basis of the observation that there are both those languages that do not formally distinguish between reflexive and middle constructions and those that do, Kemmer recognizes two types of languages, which she identifies as “one-form languages” and “two-form languages,” respectively.

Spanish (one-form language)

- (12) a. María **se** vio. (Reflexive)
 MID see
 ‘Maria saw herself.’
 b. María **se** peinó. (Middle)
 MID comb
 ‘Maria combed (herself).’

Swedish (two-form language)

- (13) a. Hon såg **sig själv**. (Reflexive)
 she saw herself
 ‘She saw herself.’
 b. Hon kammade **sig**. (Middle)
 she comb MID
 ‘She combed (her hair).’

Kemmer (1993:28) then goes on to say that: “[t]he marking patterns described above...tell us two things. One is that since reflexive and middle markers often show synchronic and/or diachronic formal relations, we can conclude that there is a semantic relation between the categories that these markers express. On the other hand, the fact that languages often do make a formal distinction between reflexive and middle marking also suggests that there is a semantic distinction between the functional correlates of these formal markers which is susceptible to linguistic coding. It is the two-form languages in which this difference is most clearly manifested.”

On the basis of the considerations expressed above, Kemmer distinguishes reflexive situation types and middle situation types in the following manner. Those constructions that express reflexive situation types are then identified as reflexive constructions, and those that express middle situation types are treated as middle constructions.

Reflexive situation types

- Direct reflexive (*John hit/kicked/killed himself.*)
- Indirect reflexive (*John built a house for himself.*)
- Logophoric reflexive (*She feels herself (to be) abused.*)

Middle situation types

- Body action middles
 - Grooming actions (wash, shave, bathe, dress, adorn...)
 - Change in body posture actions (sit down, kneel down, lie down...)