THE MIDDLE VOICE IN LAI*

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates the middle voice in Lai, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Chin Hills of Burma. 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:

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1 More specifically, the language of my consultant is Haka Lai.
(1) nii-huu (khaa) ?a-dam
    Ni Hu TOP 3SG-heal 1
    ‘Ni Hu is fine.’

(2) nii-huu ni? tsew-maŋ (khaa) ?a-daʔm
    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. 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-tsanʔ ?an-suk
    rice 3PL-pound 2
    ‘They pounded the rice.’

(4) fa-tsanʔ ?an-suʔ moo
    rice 3PL-pound 1 Q
    ‘Do they pound rice?’

(5) ?aʔin ?a-thianʔ
    3SG-house 3SG-clean 1
    ‘His house is clean.’

(6) ?aʔin ?a-thian tsaʔa? ?a-njanʔa-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.

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**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’)

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*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.’
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 ?ii (sentences [16] and [17] exemplify both types). With plural person reflexives, the reflexive morpheme ?ii 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-ma?-le-key-ma?) kaa-thoom
myself (INDEP REFL) 1SG REFL-hit 1
‘I hit myself.’

2SG REFL

(11) (naw-ma?-le-naw-ma?) naa-thoom
yourself 2SG REFL-hit 1
‘You hit yourself.’

3SG REFL

(12) (?a-ma?-le-?a-ma?) ?aa-thoom
himself 3SG REFL-hit 1
‘He hit himself.’

1PL REFL

(13) (kan-ma?-le-kan-ma?) kan-?ii-thoom
ourselves 1PL-REFL-hit 1
‘We hit ourselves.’

2PL REFL

(14) (naw-ma?-le-naw-ma?) nan-?ii-thoom
yourselves 2PL-REFL-hit 1
‘You hit yourselves.’
3PL REFL

(15) (?an-ma?-le-?an-ma?) ?an-?ii-thoonj themselves 3PL-REFL-hit 1

‘They hit themselves.’

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

Ni Hu  ERG  mirror  LOC  3SG REFL-PERF-see 2

‘Ni Hu saw himself in the mirror.’

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 ?ii:

(18) nii-huu  lee  tsew-manj  ?an-rak-?ii-thoonj
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 ?ii, as in sentences (19) and (20):

(19) ?ii  ni?  hla?
REFL  laugh 2  NEG IMP

‘Don’t laugh at yourself.’

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:
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      Ni Hu  ERG  Ceu Mang  3SG-hit 2
      ‘Nii Hu hit Ceu Mang.’

(22)  nii-huu  ?aa-thoonŋ
      Ni Hu  3SG MM-hit 1
      ‘Ni Hu hit himself.’

(23)  *nii-huu  ?a-thoonŋ
      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.

      3SG-father  ERG  3SG-son  TOP  3SG-snot  3S-wipe 2-CAUS
      ‘The father_i had his son_j wipe his_j (i.e., son’s) nose.’

      3SG-father  ERG  3SG-son  TOP  3SG-snot  3SG REFL-wipe 2-CAUS
      ‘The father_i had his son_j wipe his_i/j (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-maʔ-leʔ?a-maʔ  ?a-hnoʔ-ter
himsel (INDEP REFL) 3SG REFL-wipe 2-CAUS
‘The father_i had his son_j wipe his_j (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-man nam-ton 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-man nam-ton khaa ?aa-hman
Van Hree ERG Ceu Mang sword TOP 3SG MM-use 2
‘Van Hree himself used Ceu Mang’s sword for himself (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 ?i 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 ?an-?ii-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 ?an-?ii-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 ?an-?ii-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 ?an-?ii-thua
Ni Hu and Ceu Mang 3PL-MM-fight 1
‘Ni Hu and Ceu 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 Hu’ 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 ni? tsew-maŋ ?a-thoʔŋ
Ni Hu ERG Ceu Mang 3SG-hit 2
‘Ni Hu hit Ceu Mang.’

(38) nii-huu lee tsew-maŋ ?an-?ii-thoonŋ
Ni Hu and Ceu Mang 3PL-MM-hit 1
‘Ni Hu and Ceu Mang hit each other.’
(39) *nii-huu  lee  tsew-man  ?an-?ii-tho?η  
    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 ?ii. 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) ma?-le-ma?  ?ii-sii  hla?  ?u?  
    each other  MM-fight 1  NEG  IMP  HORT  
    ‘Don’t quarrel with each other.’

• sual (inv.) ‘struggle’
  (41) ?aar-pii  lee  san-hŋar  tsuu  ?an-?ii-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 / pa?y ‘wrestle’ optionally takes ?ii. The reciprocal use in sentence (42) is more natural than the non-reciprocal use in (43).

• paay 1 / pa?y 2 ‘wrestle’
  (42) tsew-man  lee  nii-huu  ?an-?ii-paay  
    Ceu Mang  and  Ni Hu  3PL-MM-wrestle 1  
    ‘Ceu Mang and Ni Hu wrestled.’

  (43) tsew-man  nii?  nii-huu (khaa)  ?a-pa?y  
    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 niʔa-ka-zuam
       Ceu Mang ERG 3SG-1SG-compete (inv.)
       ‘Ceu Mang competed with me.’

  (45) tsew-maŋ lee nii-huu ?an-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-tonŋ
       1PL-MM-meet 1
       ‘We meet each other.’

  (47) tsew-maŋ niʔ nii-huu ?a-ton
       Ceu Mang ERG Ni Hu 3SG-meet 2
       ‘Ceu Mang met Ni Hu.’

• thii 1 / thiit 2 ‘get married’
  (48) kur-buŋ-bel lee ?an-fa-nuu tsuu ?an-ʔii-thii
       Kur Bung Bel and their daughter TOP 3PL-MM-marry 1
       ‘Kur Bung Bel and their daughter got married.’

  (49) kur-buŋ-bel niʔ ?an-fa-nuu khaa ?a-thiiit
       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 ?um 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’.

• ?um (inv.) ‘exist / live’ → ‘marry’
  (50) laay tlaŋ ?aʔaʔ an-ʔum
       Lai mountain LOC 3PL-COP (inv.)
       ‘They live in the Lai hills.’
(51) kur-buŋ-bel  le  ?an-fa-nuu  tsuu  ?an-ʔiiʔum
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  ?a-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  ?a?  ?an-ʔii-θhθluk
       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.’

       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’.
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- **kom 1 / ko?m 2** ‘be friends’
  
  (56) tsew-man \ 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-man \ leé \ 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 \ leé \ ?aar \ na-kha?2-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 \ leé \ ?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

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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 ?a-paa hee vok ?a-tsoo
   Ni Hu 3SG-father with pig 3SG-buy 2
   'Ni Hu bought a pig with his father.'

(63) nii-huu ?a-paa hee ?an-?ii-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 Hu' 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 ?a-paa hee ?a-law
   Ni Hu 3SG-father with 3SG-be similar 1

(65) *nii-huu ?a-paa hee ?aa-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:

    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 ?anʔii-paay
    Ceu Mang Ni Hu with 3PL-MM-wrestle 1
    ‘Ceu Mang wrestled with Ni Hu.’

(68) tsew-maŋ nii-huu hee ?aa-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 taʔm ‘beautify oneself’ requires middle marking:

* taʔm (inv.) ‘beautify’

(69) ti:a-tn-par tsuu ?aa-taʔm ngay-nay
    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) ?aa-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.

* hriot 1 / hria? 2 ‘comb’
(72) nii-huu ?a-sam ?aa-hriot
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’
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) ?aan-kii ?aa-hruk
shirt 3SG MM-put on (inv.)
'He put on a shirt.'
(79) ?aan-kii  ?a-hruk  
    shirt  3SG-put on (inv.)
    ‘He put a shirt on her.’

*fe?n (inv.) ‘put on something that goes below the waist, such as a sarong’
(80) nii-huu  hnii  ?aa-fe?n  
    Ni Hu  sarong  3SG MM-put on (inv.)
    ‘Ni Hu put on a sarong.’

(81) nii-huu  ni?  tsew-maŋ  hnii  ?a-fe?n  
    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 khaŋ ‘lie on/across’ in (83) takes middle marking when used as an intransitive.

* bil (inv.) ‘kneel’
(82) ?a-khuk  ?aa-bil  
    3SG-knee  3SG MM-kneel (inv.)
    ‘He knelt down.’

* khaŋ 1 ‘lie on / across’
(83) tsa-kay  lam  ?a?  kaa-khaŋ-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.

\textit{fuu 1 / fuut 2} ‘perch’

\begin{verbatim}
(84) thin-tee ?a? vaa ?aa-fuu
twig LOC bird 3SG MM-perch 1
‘A bird perched on a twig.’

(85) thin-tee ?a? vaa ?a-fuut-ter
twig LOC bird 3SG-perch 2-CAUS
‘He perched (let perch, caused to perch) a bird on a twig.’
\end{verbatim}

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.

\textit{?ook} (inv.) ‘swing’

\begin{verbatim}
(86) zooŋ pa-khat khaa pi-pen ?aa-?ook-?i
monkey one TOP swing 3SG MM-swing (inv.)-and
thin-kun ?a? ban-hlaa ?a-?ay-liaw
tree LOC banana 3SG-eat (inv.)-PROG
‘A monkey swinging on a swing in a tree was eating a banana.’
\end{verbatim}

\textit{puum 1 / pu?m 2} ‘go gathering’

\begin{verbatim}
(87) nii-huu ?aa-puum
Ni Hu 3SG MM-go gathering 1
‘Ni Hu went to the meeting.’
\end{verbatim}

Others take the middle marker when used as an intransitive. They are \textit{hlok} ‘jump’, \textit{thoon} ‘move’, \textit{tshook} ‘roam’, and \textit{liaw} ‘swim’.
The middle voice in Lai

• 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 / dangled 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) thïñ-kuññ tañ ?a? ?aa-diin  
       tree under LOC 3SG MM-rest 1
  
  ‘He rested under the tree.’

  (97) tsëw-mañ 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.’

       Ni Hu ERG bullock-cart left LOC 3SG-turn 1
  
  ‘Ni Hu turned the bullock-cart to the left.’

  (100) ?a-hñooŋ ?aa-me?r  
       3SG-neck 3SG MM-twist 2
  
  ‘She twisted (sprained) her neck.’
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(101) thlíi ni? thíŋ-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) níi-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) níi-huu ?aa-hniin
Ni Hu 3SG MM-shake 1
'Ni Hu is shaking / shivering.'

(105) níi-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) níi-huu ?aa-sa?m
Ni Hu 3SG MM-stretch (inv.)
'Ni Hu stretched.'

(107) níi-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-tsaj  ?an-suk  
         rice     3PL-pound 2  
         ‘They pounded (ground) the rice.’
         wall    LOC    3SG-head 3SG MM-bang 2  
         ‘He banged his head on the wall.’
  (110)  ?a-luu   ?a-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 *kheu*? ‘scratch’ and it takes middle marking when used as an intransitive.

• *kheu*? (inv.) ‘scratch’
  (111)  ka-keen  kaa-kheu?  
         1SG-back 1SG MM-scratch (inv.)  
         ‘I scratched my back.’
  (112)  ?a-keen  ka-kheu?  
         3SG-back 1SG-scratch (inv.)  
         ‘I scratched his back.’

The next example is *ka*? ‘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.

• kaʔ2 ‘play (with a top) or do a rock game’
  (113)  nii-huu  niʔ  tii  ?iʔ  ?a-kaʔ
         Ni Hu   ERG   water   with  3SG-1SG-shoot 1
       ‘Ni Hu shot me with water.’

  (114)  nii-huu  paʔ-y-kheʔʔ  ?aʔ-kaʔ
         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).

• tseʔl (inv.) ‘play’
  (115)  nii-huu  leen-tee  ?aʔ-tseʔl
         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  (niʔ)  rool  ?aʔ-ay  buʔ-ʔiʔ
         Ni Hu   ERG   food    3SG-eat (inv.)  while
       raʔ    ?aʔ-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  ?aʔ-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 tan ?a? ?aa-duup diam tsan̚
  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 / thu? 2 ‘hide’

  (119) puʌn-buŋ tshuŋ ?a? ?an?-ʔi-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 ni? ?in ?aa-hŋaʔw
  Ni Hu ERG house 3SG MM-lean against (inv.)
  ‘Ni Hu is leaning against the house.’

  (121) fuŋ ni? ?in ?aa-hŋaʔw
  stake ERG house 3SG MM-lean against (inv.)
  ‘The stake is leaning against the house.’
• *hjat-tshan* (inv.) ‘lean against’


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

‘Ni Hu is leaning against the house.’

(123) fuŋ ni? ?in ?aa-hjat-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) thiiŋ ka-khaaŋ

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? thiiŋ ?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. The first two examples below contain the word luŋ ‘heart’:

- 'be happy'
  (127) ?a-hoy-paa tsuu ?a-luŋ ?aa-loom ṇaay-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.'

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 / ŋaŋy 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-hruŋ 1 / phu-hrun 2 ‘be paranoid’
  (133) ?aa-phuhrunj
        3SG MM-be paranoid 1
        ‘He is paranoid.’

  (134) ?a     ka    phuhrunj-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.’

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\(^5\) 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-phuhrunj. [KVB] (The presence or absence of a hyphen in phuhrunj 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?’

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. 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. 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-tsaar ?a-har
     1SG-study 3SG-be difficult 1
     ‘My study is difficult.’

  (139) ka-tsaar kaa-ha'r
     1SG-study 3SG MM-find difficult 2
     ‘I find my study difficult.’

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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 *zaa* 1 / *zaat* 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).

- *zaa* 1 / *zaat* 2 ‘(find) enough’
  
  (140) ma? ʔaŋ-kii hii kaa-zaa-law  
  this shirt this 1SG MM-enough 1-NEG  
  ‘I found this shirt not to be big enough for me.’

  (141) mii-nuŋ kanʔii-zaa-law  
  people 1PL-MM-enough 1-NEG  
  ‘We don’t have enough people.’

  (142) rool niʔ a-ka-zaat  
  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.

- *thaā* 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-man niʔ a-ka-neek  
  Ceu Mang ERG 3SG-1SG-disrespect (inv.)  
  ‘Ceu Mang disrespects me.’
(146) ma? rian tuan 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 faʔ 2 means ‘be painful’ and sak 2 means ‘build’; together they mean ‘take it bitterly’.

• ‘take it bitterly’

(147) na-ka-tii mii kaa-faʔ-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, doʔ ‘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

• doʔ (inv.) ‘be beautiful’

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

(149) manʔ-kio niʔ nii-huu kee ?a-doʔ
    Mang Kio ERG Ni Hu leg 3SG-drag (inv.)
    ‘Mang Kio dragged Ni Hu by the leg.’

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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-zaʔw 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-hloat 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.

\[ tlaa \ 1 \ / \ tlaak \ 2 \ ‘fall’ \to \ ‘match’ \]

(154) na-mit-hmaan naa-tlaak naay
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
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‘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-manj ni? hii-vok khaa tsook-din?-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.]
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-tsaa-n-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?  thaan
          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-man?  ni?  nii-huu  ?a-zuam
          Ceu Mang  ERG  Ni Hu  3SG-try (inv.)
          ‘Ceu Mang is competing with Ni Hu.’

          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.
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 *hñi?l* ‘fall asleep’ is such a verb and requires middle marking.

• *hñi?l* (inv.) ‘fall asleep’

(170) nii-huu khaa zaan-tim tiañ ?aa-rak-hñi?l ri? law

Ni Hu TOP midnight until 3SG MM-fall asleep (inv.) still NEG

‘Ni Hu did not fall asleep until midnight.’

(171) ?a-bia ka-ña?y pa?-?in kaa-rak-hñi?l

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) ʔaʔit
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:

• thaj 1 / thajη 2 ‘wake up’
  (173)  suy-mii-lam  pa-ruk  ʔaʔ  nii-huu  ʔaʔ-thaj
        o’clock   six    LOC   Ni Hu     3SG MM-wake up 1
‘Ni Hu wakes up at 6 o’clock.’

  (174)  nii-huu  niʔ  ʔaʔ-kaʔ-thaj
       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)  ʔaʔ-kaʔ  ʔaʔ-tsiip
       3SG-mouth  3SG-close (inv.)
‘He closed his mouth.’

  (176)  ʔaʔ-kaʔ  ʔaʔ-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.

• hmuʔ2 ‘see’ —> ‘find’ (in the sense of windfall)
  (177)  khoy-kaʔ-ʔaʔ-daʔ  na-hmuʔ
       where       2SG-find 2
‘Where did you see it?’
(178) khoy-kaa?-a?-da? naa-hmu?
      where 2SG MM-find 2
      ‘Where did you find it?’

(179) kay-ma? ni? kaa-hmu? hma-saa
      I ERG 1SG MM-find 2 first
      ‘I found it first (so it’s mine).’

Lastly, the verb zi:r (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.

• zi:r (inv.) ‘molt’
(180) ruul ?aa-zi:r
      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 / ka?2 ‘shoot / erupt’
(181) ti?i ?a-kaap
      water 3SG MM-erupt 1
      ‘The water erupted.’

      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 / *hniʔn* 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 / *hniʔn* 2 ‘shake / shiver / rock’
  
  (183) nii-huu niʔ palaanʔ ?a-hniʔn
  
  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:

- *ʔon* 1 / *ʔon* 2 ‘open’
  
  (186) ?in-kaa ?aa-ʔon
  
  door 3SG MM-open 1
  
  ‘The door is open.’

  (187) nii-huu niʔ ?in-kaa ?a-ʔon
  
  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 ni? ?in-kaa ?a-khaar
Ni Hu ERG door 3SG-close (inv.)
‘Ni Hu closed the door.’

• phon 1 / phoŋ 2 ‘get loosened’
   (190) ?a-tshiin ?aa-phon
3SG-cap 3SG MM-get loosened 1
‘The cap got loosened.’

(191) nii-huu ni? ?a-tshiin ?aa-phoŋ
Ni Hu ERG 3SG-cap 3SG MM-loosen 2
‘Ni Hu loosened the cap.’

• thlen 1 / thlen 2 ‘change’
   (192) ?a-zia ?aa-thlen
3SG-habit 3SG MM-change 1
‘His habit changed.’

(193) nii-huu ni? ?a-zia ?a-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 tsanj moo
2SG MM-be free (inv.) COMP Q
‘Are you free yet?’

• hnoʔ (inv.) ‘hurry’
   (195) ka-paa khaa ?aa-hnoʔ ṇaay-ʔaay
1SG-father TOP 3SG MM-hurry (inv.) very
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tsa-ʔa? ʔa-kal-tsoʔl
because 3SG-go (inv.)-immediately
‘My father was in a hurry, so he left right away.’

• reʔl (inv.) ‘be ready’
  (196)  naa-reʔl 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 seʔr and reʔm are used as intransitives, they take middle marking.

• seʔr (inv.) ‘prepare’
  (197)  nii-huu ʔaa-seʔr
          Ni Hu 3SG MM-prepare (inv.)
‘Ni Hu prepared himself.’

• reʔm (inv.) ‘prepare / get ready’
  (198)  nii-huu ʔaa-reʔm
          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 / daʔm 2 ‘heal’
  (199)  nii-huu ʔa-dam
          Ni Hu 3SG-heal 1
‘Ni Hu is fine.’

(200)  nii-huu ʔa-ka-daʔm
          Ni Hu ERG 3SG-1SG-heal 2
‘Ni Hu healed me.’

(201)  nii-huu ʔa-daʔm
          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 ?in sak dij ?aʔ 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.

- nja 1 / njiat 2 ‘spy / watch’ —> ‘aim at’
(203) nii-huu niʔ vaa ʔaa-fuu mii ʔaʔnjiat
      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 ʔaʔnjiat
      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-manj khaa ʔaa-tel vee
      Ceu Mang TOP 3SG MM-take part 1 also
      ‘Ceu Mang also participated.’
(206) nii-huu-tee niʔ tsew-manj 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, hlaʔn, which means ‘lend’, does not take middle marking, as we would expect.

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

* hlaʔn ‘lend’ 2b
  (208) ka-tsaa-uk kaa-hlaʔn
    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 / thoʔ 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 niʔ nii-huu khaa ?a-thoʔ
    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 ?aʔ tsun ?a-thoʔ
    village other visit 2 PURP LOC TOP 3SG MM-begin 2
    ‘He went off to visit the other village.’
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’.

• tsuak 1 / tshua? 2 ‘become’

(214) nii-huu mii thaa ?a? ?a-tsuak
Ni Hu person good LOC 3SG-become 1
‘Ni Hu became a good person.’

(215) nii-huu mii thaa ?a? ?aa-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).

river LOC 3SG-DIR-bathe (inv.)
‘He went to the river and gave her a bath.’
river  LOC  3SG-DIR MM-bathe (inv.)
‘He went to the river and took a bath.’

(218)  tii-vaa  ?a?  ?aa-vaa-kho?
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  ?aa-vaa-do?
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’.

Ceu Mang  ERG  Ni Hu  TOP  3SG MM-beat up 2-CAUS

(a)  ‘Ceu Mang let himself be beaten by Ni Hu.’

(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 Hu.”

12 In examples (215) and (216), either ?aa or ?a 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 ?a-ma-le-?a-ma ‘himself’ to (220), as shown in example (220c):

(220c)  tsew-manj  ni?  nii-huu  khaa  ?a-ma-le-?a-ma  ?aa-ve?l-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:

![Diagram showing reflexive causative and middle use]

**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-th?-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 orpretends 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.
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 psycholocclusion.
- “Non-middle meaning”: the non-middle meaning appears to be the primary sense. When marked as middle, the meaning changes.

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