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*Middle verb morphology in Hungarian and in
a cross-linguistic view*

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Middle verb morphology in Hungarian and in a cross-linguistic view

Poster presented at CIL 19 Geneva by

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The main goal of this work is to propose the mapping of form and meaning in the domain of middle voice by using a set of semantic and morphosyntactic features. Based on recent typological literature, this analysis investigates Hungarian data in a crosslinguistic perspective.

Crosslinguistic approach implies that some generalizations have been made on the basis of a large number of languages, (cf. Kemmer 1993). These generalizations have been tested in Hungarian data. The interest in Hungarian results from its rich inventory of middle morphemes.

Questions:

1. Is it possible to map Hungarian middle markers into the semantic subclasses proposed by Kemmer (1993)?
2. Do the data from Hungarian confirm the typological generalization proposed in the literature (Kemmer 1993, Kazenin 2001) according to which verbs of change of body posture, as well as translational and non-translational motion verbs pattern with grooming verbs?
3. Can middle forms be systematically derived from reflexive verbs (cf. Maldonado 2009)?

Methodology:

1. Grouping Hungarian middle verbs according to the type of suffixes they combine with.
2. Structuring the middle domain on the basis of selected criteria that allows to establish a **continuum** between active and passive.

Table I shows middle markers & semantic subclasses of verbs in Hungarian as follows:

- Middle morphemes
- Examples
- Semantic properties of the Subject: ±human; ± animate; ± volitional; ± control.
- Thematic role of the subject;
- Semantic subclasses of middle verbs.

Reflexive	Middle domain						Medio-passive
	Reciprocal				Anti-causative		
<i>maga+</i> ACC/DAT	<i>egymás+INF</i> L/ or <i>-kozik*/</i> <i>-kodik</i>	<i>-kozik/</i> <i>-kodik;</i>	Ø	Ø	<i>-kozik/</i> <i>-kodik;</i> <i>-ódik</i>	Ø <i>-ul, -ad</i> <i>-odik</i>	<i>-ódik</i>
<i>nézi magát</i> 'to look at himself' <i>vesz magának vmit</i> 'to buy sth for himself'	<i>verik egymást= verekednek</i> 'to hit each other'	<i>borotválkozok</i> 'to shave'	<i>leül</i> 'to sit down' <i>fut</i> 'to run'	<i>lélegzik</i> 'breath' <i>köhög</i> 'to cough'	<i>csodálkozok, meglepődök</i> 'to be surprised <i>dicsékedik</i> 'to boast'	<i>fordul</i> 'to turn' <i>dagad</i> 'to swell' <i>fiatalodik</i> 'become young'	<i>folytatódik</i> 'to go on' <i>elfelejtődik</i> 'to be forgotten'
+animate +volitional + controlled	+ anim + vol + contr	+ anim + vol + contr	+anim +vol + contr	+anim - vol - contr	+hum -vol ± contr	± anim - vol -contr	- anim - volit - contr
Agent	Agent	Agent	Agent	Exp	Exp	Exp/Pat?	Pat
direct & indirect reflexive	natural reciprocal event	grooming	change of body posture motion	other body actions	emotion cognition speech	change of state; of shape; physical-chemical change	change of state

* Each morpheme has several allomorphs (involving either short or long vowel) according to rules of vowel harmony

Observations:

➔ **Remarks on semantics:** There is a continuum between active and passive: reflexive, reciprocal and middle-like events in which the action is carried out volitionally by animates are expressed by verbs closer to the active voice, while anticausatives and mediopassives are closer to passive.

➔ **Remarks on the forms:**

Several middle-type events are expressed by unmarked intransitive verbs (Ø in the Table).

In most instances, complex morphemes are diachronically related to iterative or inchoative + intransitive marker: *-ik*.

No one-to-one correspondence between form and meaning.

Anticausative events are marked by specific morphemes; one of the anticausative morphemes becomes mediopassive; in other middle functions we observe alternation between \emptyset and middle marker.

Results:

1. There is no one-to-one mapping between middle markers and semantic subgroups of verbs, with exception to anticausatives expressing change of (physical or chemical) state. In contrast to the other groups, not all middle verbs are derived morphologically: some of them form a functional pair with their transitive-causative counterpart, e. g. *fordul* ‘to turn intr.’ ~ *fordít* ‘to turn trans.’

2. In Hungarian middle verbs may have different morphological realizations. For instance, grooming verbs are marked by one of the middle suffixes. On the other hand, motion verbs (change of body position, translational and non-translational motion) show unmarked intransitive morphology. In this respect, the Hungarian data do not follow the typological generalization proposed by Kemmer (1993).

3. Since reflexives are only anaphoric, therefore middle verbs cannot be considered to be derived from these forms. Consequently, the Hungarian data fall within the scope of analysis proposed by Maldonado (2009). In this language, reflexive pronouns are inflected for case (direct reflexive: accusative, indirect reflexive: dative), thus, the two participants are morphosyntactically distinguished, even in the case of coreference strategy.

Conclusions and perspectives:

This research shows that the following parameters may be extremely relevant to the analysis of the middle domain:

- Alternation between middle marking and unmarked intransitive morphology;
- The semantic properties of the subject.

Further research needs to be done: i) increase of number of languages with several middle markers and to establish the origin of these markers, ii) reorganizing event subclassifications taking into account the semantic properties of Subject.

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