

Middle voice in Kannada: Markers in competition

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Structure of the talk

- Voice and Middle Voice
- Middle marker *ko/-*
- Markers in competition
- Data
 - Reflexive
 - Reciprocal
 - Self-benefactive
- Summary
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Voice

Zúñiga & Kittilä (2019: 4) treat voice as a category “whose values correspond to particular diatheses”, where “[d]iathesis refers to any specific mapping of semantic roles [...] onto grammatical roles [...]”.¹

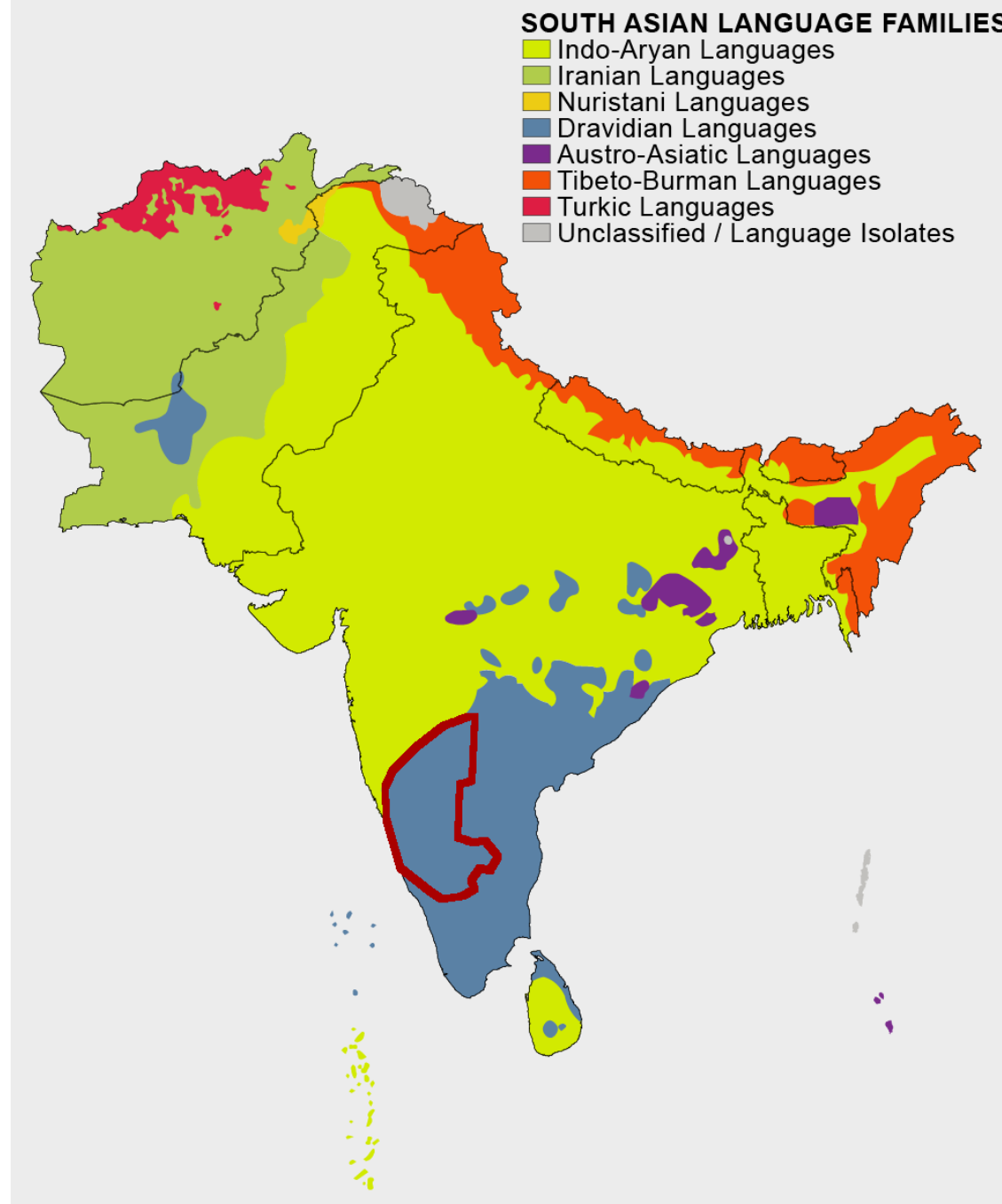
- **Middle voice** as an intermediate type between active and passive voice.
- Some authors consider the middle to involve *subject-affectedness* (e.g. Barber 1975: 18, Klaiman 1991: 92, Kemmer 1993: 4)
- Associated with valency changing functions, e.g., reflexive, anticausative, passive

¹As Inglese (2021: 498, fn. 1) notes, this definition of voice and consequently diathesis resorts to innovations from the Leningrad-St. Petersburg Typology group founded by A. A. Xolodovič, see also Geniušienė (1986: 52-53) and Kulikov (2010: 370, fn. 1).

Middle voice working definition

Following Inglese (2021: 494, emphasis mine), a middle-voice-system (MVS) needs to meet the following criteria:

- i. “it [a middle marker] occurs with bivalent (or more) verbs to encode one or more of the following valency changing operations: **passive, anticausative, reflexive, reciprocal, antipassive;**”
→ “optionals”, i.e. the respective verbs can occur with and without middle marker
- ii. “the same construction is also obligatory with some (at least monovalent) verbs that cannot occur without MM [middle marker];”
→ “non-optionals”, i.e. *media tantum* or middle-only verbs
- iii. “the semantics of (at least some of) the verbs in (i) does not match that of those in (ii) or vice versa.”



Middle marker *ko/-*

- *ko/* “to seize, receive, buy, acquire” etc. (Tamil form) is **an auxiliary** with **reflexive meaning** in multiple Dravidian languages (Burrow & Emeneau 1984, entry 2151)
- This applies to Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Tulu, Telugu and Kuvi

South Dravidian group (South I)

South-Central Dravidian group (South II)

Standard Kannada:

(from a book cover)

- 1) *pustaka-ga/-annu* ***koll***-iri
book-PL-ACC **buy**-IMP.2HON
‘Buy books!’

(from a children’s comic book)

- 2) [...] *eṁdu* ***komḍ***-a
say.PST **MM.PST**-3SG.M.NPST
‘... he said to himself.’

Middle marker *ko/-*

- *ko/-* encodes valency changing operations (criterion (i))
 - in Kannada, *ko//u* is used as a reflexive, reciprocal, self-benefactive, anticausative and passive marker
 - in Telugu, *kon(n)* is used as a reflexive, reciprocal, self-benefactive and anticausative marker (cf. e.g. Krishnamurti & Gwynn 1985: 206-210)
- *ko/-* also demonstrates advanced stages of grammaticalization with certain verbs, depending on the individual language (criterion (ii))
 - in Kannada, it occurs obligatorily in *is(a)ko//u* ‘to take’ (Bucher 1899: 55)
 - in Spoken Tamil, *kattu*¹ ‘to learn’ occurs only with the middle marker or with *iru* ‘to be’ (Schiffman 1999: 101-102)
- in Kannada, *ko//u* occurs with a multitude of verbs and nouns (ca. 75 unique match ups in our corpus of more than 22,000 words)

¹*kal* in Literary Tamil

Middle marker *ko/-*

For Kannada:

- Inglese (2021, Appendix):

ko//u can function as anticausative, reflexive and self-benefactive marker (Inglese cites Schiffman 1983: 86-88)

- Kemmer (1993: 199):

ko//u “appears in grooming, change in body posture, and indirect reflexive situation types”

She states that *ko//u* in Spoken Kannada may be derived from a self-benefactive source (Kemmer also cites Schiffman 1983: 86)

Kannada: Markers in competition

- Inglese (2022) outlines two major scenarios:
 1. Complementary distribution of markers:
 - “[...] some valency-reducing functions are expressed by a MM [middle marker] while the others are expressed by one or more alternative constructions, so that there is no overlap between the two.” (*ibid.*: 247)
 2. Competition:
 - “[C]ompetition takes place when a MM [middle marker] may alternate with one (or more) other construction(s) in the encoding of a given valency-related function.” (*ibid.*: 251)
- In all relevant functions, *koḷḷu* competes with other alternative markers

Kannada: Markers in competition

- Detailed information on contemporary and older usages is scarce, typological studies are usually limited in this regard (cf. e.g. Inglese 2021: 495 fn. 6, 506, 518)
 - Currently, my approach is chiefly descriptive and explorative
 - There are several middle-related functions but here I will only provide data on reflexive, reciprocal and self-benefactive constructions.
1. Which alternative markers encode valency-related middle functions?
 2. Do alternative markers and the middle marker express different semantics?
 3. Are alternative markers functionally restricted or polyfunctional?

Data

- Annotated corpus in FLEx (SIL), example from a non-fiction book:

1.6	Word	idu	bhārata	dēḥada		dakṣiṇa	bhāgadalli		ide	
	Morphemes	idu	bhārata	dēḥa	-da	dakṣiṇa	bhāga	-da	-lli	ide
	Lex. Entries	idu	bhārata	dēḥa	-a ₁	dakṣiṇa	bhāga	-a ₁	-lli	ide
	Lex. Gloss	3SG.PROX	India	country	GEN	south	part	GEN	LOC	COP.PRS.3SG.INAN
	Lex. Gram. Info.	pro	propn	n	n:Any	n	n	n:Any	suffix	v

Free 'It is in the southern part of the country of India.'

Lit.

- Modern Kannada: more than 22,000 words from texts from various genera, viz. non-fiction, novels, short-stories and comics
- Middle Kannada: more than 3,000 words in prose from the Shaiva devotional (*bhakti*) movement (ca. 12th century)
- Data from interviews with native speakers (in India and in Germany) via elicitation techniques
 - e.g. questionnaire-based & translation tasks

Reflexive

Reflexive-possessive construction in (3):

3a) *avanu* *kaṇṇ-annu* *ujj-i-komḍ-anu*
3SG.M eye-ACC rub-LNK-MM.PST-3SG.M.NPRS
'He rubbed his eyes.' [Mysore]

3b) *avanu* *tanna* *kaṇṇ-annu* *ujj-id-anu*
3SG.M SELF.GEN eye-ACC rub-PST-3SG.M.NPRS
'He rubbed his eyes.' [Mysore]

4) *Ra:ṇi* *kannaḍi-y-alli* *avaḷ-ann=e* *no:ḍ-i-komḍ-aḷu*
Rani mirror-EUPH-LOC 3SG.F-ACC=FOC see-LNK-MM.PST-3SG.F.NPRS
'Rani saw herself in the mirror.' [Mysore]

Reciprocal

5) *na:vu ca:ko:le:t-annu haṁc-i-komḍ-evu*

1PL chocolate-ACC share-LNK-MM.PST-1PL.NPRS

‘We shared the chocolate among ourselves.’

[Mysore]

6) *bas mattu ka:ru dikki hoḍe-du-komḍ-avu*

bus and car collision hit-LNK-MM.PST-3PL.N.NPRS

‘The bus and the car collided.’

[Bangalore]

7) *avaru obba-r-ann’ obba-ru pri:tis-utt-a:re*

3PL.HUM one.HUM-HON-ACC one.HUM-HON love-NPST-3PL.HUM.NPST

‘They love each other.’

[Mysore]

Self-benefactive

8a) *na:nu* *id-annu* *ma:d-i-kom̩d-e*
1SG 3SG.PROX-ACC make-LNK-**MM.PST**-1SG.NPRS
'I did this for myself.' (self-benefactive) [Bangalore]
'I did this to myself.' (reflexive)
'I myself did this.' (emphasis)

8b) *na:nu* *id-annu* *nanag-a:gi* *ma:d-id-e*
1SG 3SG.PROX-ACC 1SG.DAT-ADVLZR make-PST-1SG.NPRS
'I did this for myself.' [Bangalore]

Summary

- Multiple alternative markers to express middle related functions
- Alternative markers are more functionally restricted compared to the MM
- **Reflexive:** reflexive and logophoric pronoun *ta:nu* and regular pronouns, e.g., *ava/u*
 - in the illustrated examples, the alternative markers and the MM may cooccur
- **Reciprocal:** the case-marked numeral of ‘one’ followed by the repetition of the unmarked numeral, e.g., *obba-r-ig’ obba-ru*
 - according to some speakers, not allowed with ‘to share with each other’
- **Self-benefactive:** dative marked personal pronouns followed by the adverbializer or the postposition *o:skara* ‘for the sake of, on account of’ (Učida et al. 2018: 178)
- Other functions, e.g., anticausative have alternative **verbal markers**
 - for example, *a:gu* ‘to become’ which can also be used as passive marker

Outlook

- Other possible alternative markers
 - their distribution: specific to verbs, register or dialects?, blocking of MM and vice versa
 - possible differing semantics that they express compared to the MM
- Non-valency-related functions must be identified and studied
- Currently lack of data on Spoken Kannada, since corpus data contains mainly Standard Kannada and interviews did not involve natural speech
 - Degree of grammaticalization is higher in Spoken Kannada (cf. Schiffman 1983: 88), resulting in more non-oppositionals
- Investigation of neighboring Dravidian languages, e.g. Telugu and Tamil
- Diachronic analysis with data from Middle Kannada (ca. 12th century)
- Reconciling findings with existing typological observations
 - How does it contribute to a better understanding of the middle cross-linguistically?

Thank you!

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Anticausative

9a) *ba:gilu ta:n-a:gi-y-e:*
door self-ADV LZ-EUPH-FOC
'The door closed itself.'

mucc-i-komd-itu
close-LNK-**MM.PST**-3SG.N.PST

9b) *ba:gilu mucc-i-komd-itu*
door close-LNK-**MM.PST**-3SG.N.PST
'The door closed itself.'

9c) *ba:gilu mucc-itu*
door close-3SG.N.PST
'The door closed.' (implicit agent)

Passive

10a) *hosa* *mane-ga|u* *nirma:ŋa-gomd-avu*
new house-PL construction-MM.PST-3PL.N.NPRS
'The houses were built (by someone).'

10b) *hosa* *mane-ga|u* *nirma:ŋa-v-a:-y-itu*
new house-PL construction-EUPH-become-EUPH-3SG.N.PST
'The houses were built (by someone).'

"passive-like"

10c) *hosa* *mane-ga|-annu* *nirmis-al-a:-y-itu*
new house-PL-ACC construct-INF-become-EUPH-3SG.N.PST
'The houses were built (by someone).'

non-valency-related functions (?)

posture verbs (11-12)

11) *na:nu* *ku:tu-komq-e*

1sg sit.PST-**MM.PST**-1SG.NPRS

‘I sat down/I seated myself.’

12) *malag-i-kollu* [sleep-LNK-MM] → *mala-kollu* [sleep-MM] → *mo-kollu* [sleep-MM]

all three forms mean ‘to sleep/to lie down’

13) *i:ga* *nanna* *java:buda:ri-y-annu* *na:n=e: no:d-i-koll-a* *be:ku*

now 1SG.GEN responsibility-EUPH-ACC 1SG-FOC see-LNK-**MM**-INF want

‘Now I have to take care of my responsibilities myself.’

non-valency-related functions (?)

“naturally reciprocal event” (Kemmer 1993: 18)

14) *ava**lu* *avan-ige* *tabb-i-komd-a**lu*
3SG.F 3SG.M-DAT hug-LNK-MM.PST-3SG.F.NPRS
'She hugged him.'