The Undergoer Focus *ma-* in Kavalan

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In previous studies, Kavalan is identified to have three major focus markings: agent, patient, and instrument, respectively marked by affixes *m-*/*-em-*, *-an*, and *te-* (Chang 1996, Lee 1997).[1] In spite of the classification made by Chang (1996) and Lee (1997), we found another affix *ma-* that seems to mark a kind of sentential voice. Some tokens are illustrated from (1) to (3) which feature two aspects. First, the affix *ma-* occupies the syntactic position originally saved for AF marking. Second, though the verbs attached by *ma-* are intrinsically transitive, the semantic agent does not appear, and the semantic patient stands as the grammatical subject.[2]

       (1) **ma-belung** peRasku ʻnay, _

            MA-break   bottle   that

            ʻThe bottle breaks,…'

       (2) **ma-qawit=ti** ta-butuq-an __

            MA-stuck=PFV LOC-bottle-LOC

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[1] In other Formosan languages, the affix *–an* is generally used for locative focus, but is used for NAF in Kavalan. We suspect that the two focuses in Kavalan might be merged as one. In fact, we find Kavalan frequently uses locative case as accusative arguments, as in the example:

    (i) pa-q-azin=iku   ta-qanyau-an / qanyauan

        CAU-IRR-tell=1S.NOM LOC-3P-LOC / 3P.ACC

        ʻI recognized them.' (Q-29)

    (ii) pa-q-azin=iku   **ti utay** / **ti-utay-an**

        CAU-IRR-tell-1S.NOM NCM PN/ LOC-PN-LOC

        ʻI recognized Utay.'

[2] Example (1) to (3) are extracted from NTU Austronesian Corpus.

'(The dog's head) is stuck inside the bottle.'

    (3) ma-ta-tapun-ti

         MA-RED-together-PFV

         '(All things are) mixed up.'

In Lee (1997), *ma-* is classified as a "realis agent-focus marker", and the agent is supposed to be realized as the grammatical subject. However, fieldnotes collected from informants provide examples wherein the semantic patient is promoted as the subject, as in (4a), regardless of the presence of the agent *–na*. In this case, it is difficult to associate *ma-* with AF. Instead, the *ma*-marked verb is interchangeable with NAF-marked verb. Nevertheless, in sentences marked by *ma-*, the more common form is without the agent *–na*, as in (4b), but *–na* has to be obligatorily realized in NAF-marked sentences.

    (4a) ma-ziut-na/zuit-an*(-na)   ya   taquq   'nay

         MA-hang-3S.GEN/hang-NAF-3S.GEN NOM chicken that

         ta-paRing-an

         LOC-tree-LOC

         'He hung a chicken on the tree.' (Q-111)

    (4b) ma-ziut ya   taquq   'nay ta-paRing-an

         MA-hang NOM chicken that LOC-tree-LOC

         'A chicken hung on the tree.' (Q-111)

Our analysis is based upon a middle semantic questionnaire particularly developed for this study,[3] and it is based upon the checklist provided by Kemmer (1993). This questionnaire is designed for cross-linguistic study of middle semantics, and it comprises various kinds of atypical force-dynamic relations such as inchoatives, middle passives, reflexives, etc. Based on the questionnaire, we attempt to answer two questions:

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[3] "Middle" in this paper is used as a cover term for inchoative, reciprocal, middle passive, reflexive, etc., along the lines of Kemmer (1993).

1. How is the marker *ma-* syntactically manifested? Does it behave like an independent focus marking parallel to AF and NAF markers?

2. Middle markers are agreed to be a multi-functional linguistic device with the meaning of reflexive, reciprocal, passive, anti-causatives and so on (Kemmer 1993; Kazenin 2001). Which of the functions does *ma-* have?

The result shows that the syntactic behavior of Kavalan prefix *ma-* is identical to AF. However, its semantic function is very much like NAF. It can be used in two scenarios: 1) when the patient is the focus and the agent is conceived as insignificant, as in inchoative events, and 2) when the grammatical subject plays a dual role as agent/patient simultaneously, as in reciprocal events. In modern Kavalan, *ma-* can even be used exchangeably with NAF. Preliminary comparison shows that the Kavalan *ma-* examined in this paper is the same as the "anticausative" construction of Puyuma *mu-*, Bunun *mu-*, and Paiwan *ma-*, as discussed in Ross (2005).