Unitarity of participant and event in the Bella Coola middle voice

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1 Bella Coola - m

One of the most puzzling of the verbal affixes in Bella Coola is the suffix -m. Because of the many and varied uses of this morpheme, some researchers have posited that -m represents two (Davis & Saunders 1984) or more (Nater 1984) separate morphemes, based on part in the varied effects it has on the transitivity of its base: in some cases -m renders a transitive verb intransitive and in others it apparently transitive but not intransitive (even nominal) stems. More recent work (Davis & Saunders 1989, 1997), however, has argued for -m as a single morpheme with a unified meaning, one that cuts across issues of syntactic transitivity. In the paper that follows I will argue for a single -m as well—specifically, for -m as a marker of three facets of Kemmer’s (1993) characterization of the middle voice as designating “relatively low elaboration of events”. These are illustrated in (1):

(1)

In its most frequently-attested use, -m marks the partial identification or non-unitariness of event participants (shown as circles)—in other words, -m appears in those clauses where the initiator (I) is understood to be approximately equivalent to some other event participant (X in the diagram above), most typically an endpoint (E); such situations hold, for example, when the initiator acts on a body part (I ⊃ E), when some part or property of the initiator acts on the initiator as a whole (I = E), or the initiator engages in some activity in which some part (again, typically a body part) serves as a midpoint (I ⊃ P), most frequently an instrument (I ⊃ P). In its second, and most cross-linguistically unusual use, -m appears in clauses which conflate the subcomponents of a complex interaction between participants, hence realizing non-unitariness of event. These clauses occur most frequently in situations in which the action of I on E is specified but its effect is not (applicatives). The third use of -m is with verbs denoting activities. This is a cross-linguistically very typical use of middle voice to mark the reduced saliency of a semantic endpoint, although it has a number of interesting features in Bella Coola. These constructions are consistently intransitive, while middles of the second type designating non-unitariness of event are transitive. Middles of the first type designating non-unitariness of participant are also syntactically transitive when they denote three-participant events, in spite of the fact that the stems to which -m attaches are in many cases underlyingly monovalent and intransitive. These transitivity alternations, it will be argued, stem not so much from the application of -m—which in itself serves only to mark a lower degree of semantic transitivity (Hopper & Thompson 1980)—as from the involvement in the event of a second, fully-individuable event-participant.

2 The middle voice

Traditional characterizations of the middle voice define it as a verb form which “serves to express that the subject is acting on himself/herself (reflexive) or for himself/herself” (Trank 1993: 171). Such definitions, however, do not entirely account for the full range of meanings ascribed with what is considered to be the middle morpheme in a great many languages. Based on extensive cross-linguistic comparison, Kemmer (1993) has put forward a new definition in terms of what Kemmer characterizes as the “relatively low elaboration of events.” According to Kemmer, an event can show low elaboration in one of two ways. The first and most typical is the failure of a clause to make a clear distinction between two event-participants, a characteristic she refers to as “low-participant distinguishability.” According to Kemmer, the middle voice lies, along with the reflexive, at an intermediate position on the scale of semantic transitivity (cf. Hopper & Thompson 1980) running between events that involve only one participant (prototypical intransitives) and those that involve two participants (prototypical transitives). The...
uses of -m to express partial identity of participants and activity meanings (Section 3) and their transitive counterparts (Section 4.1).

3 Canonical middle uses: -m in intransitive clauses

The relationship of the suffix -m in Bella Coola to the middle voice is recognized both by Nater (1984: 61, under the heading of "medium") and by Davis & Saunders (1989: 135), although middle is treated by these authors as only a subdomain of the full semantic range of -m. An examination of the various attested uses of -m, however, reveals that the majority of these represent fairly standard cross-linguistic uses of the middle voice in intransitive clauses as outlined by Kemmer (1993). These uses fall roughly into four categories: middles of body action, grooming, and speech (Section 3.1); middles of body posture, non-translational, and translational motion (Section 3.2); mediopassive/spontaneous-event middles (Section 3.3); and middles of activity (Section 3.4). As is typical of the middle voice across languages, the incidence of -m in Bella Coola is highest in intransitive clauses (184/348 instances of 72/131 stems in Bella Coola Texts), and in many cases -m serves as a detransitivizer of syntactically transitive stems. In what follows, I will draw on contextualized data in BCT, supplemented occasion­ally with examples from other works (most notably Davis & Saunders 1989 and Nater 1984, 1990), to support these claims and to try to sort out some of the intricacies of this highly lexicalized morpheme. In the absence of a larger corpus, no attempt has been made to sort out fossilized, idiomatic, or phraseologized forms from productive uses, except where the motivation for its appearance has been completely obscured. Thus, it may well be that many of the forms presented here represent fixed expressions whose use of -m is motivated only diachronically—nevertheless, in all of these cases the semantic contribution of the morpheme to the compositional meaning of the expression is recoverable and consistent with cross-linguistically attested uses of the middle voice.

3.1 Middles of body action, grooming, and speech

A relatively large group of middle-marked stems refer to actions of I’s body, representing a subcase of partial identity in which I is E. Typically, such verbs are built on transitive roots and involve one or more suffixes denoting an affected body part, as in (5) (-m is underlined here and in subsequent examples):3

(5) (a) tαk=ma-n, n-m, s-k'-ma-ch
rub=body=front-[md]-[qtv]-[dup]=[impf] that-one
'I must have rubbed his stomach'

(b) tυk·c=nuit=+-k'-su-č
uncover=body-[md]-[qtv]-[exp]-[perf] she
'she unundressed again'

In some languages such as Spanish, the affected body part in such constructions appears as a direct object whose relation to the subject (that is, that it belongs to the subject) is indicated by the use of a middle form se, as in

(6) el niño se lavó las manos
the boy [md] washed his hands

In Bella Coola, on the other hand, the affected body part surfaces as a lexical suffix. When -m appears in the same clauses, the expression becomes intransitive and the suffix is interpreted as referring to the affected body part of the subject, whereas when -m is absent the clause is transitive and the lexical suffix is taken to be a part of the transitive form cp 'wipe [sth]':

The presence of -m in (7a) serves as a mark of partial identity between I and E, indicating that the hand is I’s rather than E’s. Alternatively, the absence of -m in (7b) forces an interpretation of the event where I and E are separate; here the lexical suffix refers to the hand of the direct object rather than the hand of the syntactic subject and the verb takes transitive object-subject agreement. In BCT, the following forms with -m denoting body actions and grooming are found:

(8) Body action/grooming (15 instances of 10 stems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cp</th>
<th>ep</th>
<th>tμk</th>
<th>ep=ak-cinu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cp=ak-m-c</td>
<td>wipe=hand-[md]-ls</td>
<td>'I am wiping my hand'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Davis &amp; Saunders 1973: 238)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cp=ak-ciu</td>
<td>wipe=hand-2s-1s</td>
<td>'I am wiping your hand'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Davis &amp; Saunders 1973: 232)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that among these forms only muk "red" appears to be an intransitive root (a stative verb, there being no true adjectives in the language—Beck 1996); as this word occurs nowhere else in the data at hand, it is not possible to ascertain if muk "red" is used productively as a transitive verb meaning "to redden, to paint red", although this seems unlikely as it is glossed in Nater (1980: 75) only as a colour term.

A related use of -m in Bella Coola is in verbs of speaking which contain the suffix =uc "mouth":

(9) (b) s=x=aa-kuc=m
'speak [sth]' 'speak with (=ak)

muk=urs=m
'mask' 'paint face (=us)' red

Note that "muk" is used here productively as a transitive verb meaning "to redden, to paint red", although this seems unlikely as it is glossed in Nater (1980: 75) only as a colour term.

A related use of -m in Bella Coola is in verbs of speaking which contain the suffix =uc "mouth":

(10) (a) I=x=aa-kuc=m
'speak [sth]' 'speak with (=ak)

luul-č+ka=qan=slayx
'I'll go on to talk about the crane'

(BCT 38, line 108)

(b) s=x=aa-kuc=m-aw
'speak [sth]' 'speak with (=ak)

layx= s-ka-kuun=ad-aw
'speak to someone else' (BCT 222, line 164)

The data used in this paper are drawn primarily from Bella Coola Texts (Davis & Saunders 1984, henceforth BCT) a collection of eighteen traditional stories consisting of some 2,000 lines of text. Among these are some 348 instances of -m used with 131 stems, but 22 of occurrences (3 stems) of -m have been excluded at this stage of the game as they occur in conjunction with other morphemes relevant to related semantic domains such as reflexivity and object permutation, leaving a total of 5 instances of 4 separate roots which is to be fair game but do not fit into the analysis presented below.

3The abbreviations used here are listed at the end of this paper.

4This stem is apparently rejected by consultants without the causative morpheme -tu(-a) or a lexical suffix (BCT: 300).

5-tu- seems to be a classificatory prefix, indicating that the subject is human and/or animate.

6The lexical suffix =uc means "mouth", giving this form a literal gloss of 'uncover body'.

7Kemmer (1993) defines a deponent as a middle-marked verb which has no corresponding unmarked form. In Bella Coola many of these are historically complex stems whose meanings are not predictable from the sum of their parts. Following the practice of BCT, these suffix is parceled into intransitive gloses; compositionally opaque suffixes will be enclosed in parentheses.

8For a related form of the lexical suffix =uc "mouth".

9The suffix -muc means "head", but has been extended here to mean "headgear" (cf. "put on headgear" in data set (8) above) just as the suffix -muc "foot" in the previous example has been extended to "boots".
3.2 Middles of body posture, non-translational, and translational motion

These stems present the action as one where the posture or state of motion denoted by the stem, but instead has a purely stative meaning, as illustrated in sentences such as that in (14):

\[
\text{Body posture/non-translational motion (20 instances of 7 stems)}
\]

(12) (a) \(\text{Xp=--k}^{a--} \cdot \text{c} \)
\(\text{ta=nunmm}^{x} \cdot \text{tk} \cdot \text{s-ka--i}^{---} \cdot \text{m} \cdot \text{s} \cdot \text{?a}^{+} \cdot \text{?k}^{a--} \cdot \text{m} \cdot \text{...}
\]
'the animal began to roll there ...' (BCT 196, line 36)

(12) (b) \(\text{?a}^{x} \cdot \text{c}^{x} \cdot \text{a--k}^{a--} \cdot \text{c} \)
\(\text{s-} \cdot \text{mu=--}^{x} \cdot \text{aw} \cdot \text{lying-down} \cdot [\text{-md}] \cdot [3-\text{-perf}] \cdot \text{np=tired-}^{x} \cdot [\text{-in}\text{]-}^{x} \cdot [\text{3-}] \cdot \text{p} \cdot \text{there}
\)
'they went to bed tired' (BCT 90, line 31)

Note that in (12a) the transitive verb \(\text{?ik}^{x} \cdot \text{spin} \cdot [\text{sth}] \) has been detransitivized. As in the previous types of middle, these stems present the action as one where \(x \) is \(y \) 's body. The notion of non-unitariness comes into play in that in these expressions \( \text{?ik} \)'s will is presented as acting on \(x \) as a whole (\( i \subset E \)) (Kemmer 1993). In total, there are seven stems attested in BCT that seem to fall into this class.

3.3 Medio-passive, spontaneous-event, and inchoative middles

Across languages, a common use of the middle voice is in the formation of mediopassive constructions, exemplified by Spanish expressions such as \(\text{aquí se venden libros} \), 'books are sold here'. According to Trask (1993), the mediopassive is defined as a construction in which a syntactically transitive verb is used intransitively and the affected semantic participant appears in subject position, with or without explicit mention of the agent. The main aspect of a mediopassive construction is that it is an intransitive construction in which the subject is the source of the action.

As with non-translational motion, the appearance of \(-m \) on motion verbs can be attributed to the fact that the initiator of the event is itself an endpoint, at least in the sense that \(x \) 's body is set in motion by \( i \) itself. While this may seem to justify the occurrence of the middle-marker in only a trivial sense—that is, such events can not be construed more than as a single participant—some support for this can be found in the Bella Coola data in that \(-m \) seems only to apply to the motion of animate (volitional) objects. In such situations, the motive force behind the event is the will of the moving entity, which is then conceived of as the mover's body or entire being becoming \( i \) (\( \subset E \)). Thus, the single participant in such an event is a non-unitary entity in precisely the same way that the initiator/endpoint of a body action or grooming event is—although in the former case it is the part affecting the whole, while in the latter the whole affects a part. Either way, a one-participant event can be construed as having both an initiator and an endpoint.

3.4 Inchoative middles

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Mediopassive (2 instances of 2 stems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stem</th>
<th>suffix</th>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>smsma</td>
<td>-m</td>
<td>'be told'</td>
<td>'tell story'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tlac</em></td>
<td>-m</td>
<td>'be bruised'</td>
<td>'crush, bruise [sth]'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that the class of mediopassives in Bella Coola is small is not altogether surprising, as the definition depends on the inherent syntactic transitivity of the verbal root, whereas a great many roots in Bella Coola are inherently stative and/or intransitive. The remainder of sentences glossed as mediopassive in BCT fall into a range of syntactic classes, including the "anti-causative" (Comrie 1989: 168) or "decausative" (Mel'čuk 1997), as in:

(18) (a) | *ps-ic | ti+stn+tx | 'I'm bending the stick' |
(b) | ps-m-o | ti+stn+tx | 'the stick is bending' |

This form, however, is not attested in BCT. Nater (1984: 61) lists three forms which seem to fall into this group:

(19) | *sup | plik |?
| insert [sth] | ‘sink in mud’ | ‘capsize’ |
| sx | ti+stn+tx | ‘be burning’ |

Of these three, however, *sup ‘sink in mud’* has a highly idiomatic meaning while *plik ‘capsize’* appears in both its instances in BCT in sentences such as (20):

(20) | kan-nix-tu-fx | ka-plik-qp-4 | 'you will cause us to capsise'
| meet-[l.o.c.]-[caus]-1p-2s | [ir]-ti+stn+tx-[md]-1p |

Both *plik* and *sup* are intransitive forms which show a non-middle-marked form in BCT, but the fact that the unmarked form has an essentially stative reading, while the marked form takes on an event reading, reflecting a spontaneous or agentless change of state, as in the following examples formed on the intransitive stem on 'broken':

(22) (a) | *xm-o | broken-3s | 'it’s broken' |
(b) | *xm-m-o | broken-[md]-3s | 'it broke/it’s breaking' |

Such forms, which have an essentially inchoative meaning, suggest an alternate analysis of spontaneous event middles: what might be at stake is not the partial identification of *i* as a whole with some inherent property or characteristic, so much as the non-unitariness of the event—that is, the fact that the grammatical subject is not the same at the beginning and at the end of the described event may result in its being construed as a non-unitary entity. This construal of the single-event--participant as a temporally non-unitary entity also seems to explain the event reading conferred on these stems by *m*, in that the distinction between *i* at time (t₁) and at time (t₂) allows the event to have both an initiator and an endpoint, avoiding the stative reading that seems to come with having a single, unitary participant in the clause. Inchoative-type middles are given in (23):

(23) Inchoative middles (28 instances of 9 stems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stem</th>
<th>suffix</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>si</td>
<td>-us-m</td>
<td>'be bright'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuin</td>
<td>-mn</td>
<td>'shine'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci</td>
<td>-m</td>
<td>'be cold'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>th+i-lp-m</td>
<td>(deponent)</td>
<td>'be confusing'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>xq</em></td>
<td>-m</td>
<td>'be snowing'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these middle-forms denote a spontaneous or agentless change in a temporally non-unitary participant. This interpretation of spontaneous-event middles seems potentially applicable to other forms in this class presented above as well, and has the advantage of allowing a single interpretation of *m* in all forms of this type.

In addition to the instances of inchoative middles found in BCT, Nater (1984: 61) offers the following example, all of which appear to be derived from nouns:

(24) | *kay | -m | tup | -m |
| 'snow' | 'be snowing' | 'foam' | 'be bubbling' |

17The gloss of the root is based on Nater (1990: 97).
18Cf. BCT *kup ‘put in hole’. 
In nouns. The latter category is illustrated in (25):

\[
\text{(a) } \text{ap-aw } \text{ka-sax} "-a-g-aw \quad \text{at-k-w} \\
\text{go-3p np-[irr]-dipnet-[md]-3p P-then} \\
\text{they went dragging then}
\]

(BCT 62, line 36)

\[
\text{(b) suk-t-n-ul-g-a-k'-l-} \\
\text{(blow-[inst]-building)-[md]-3p-[qtv]-[perf]} \\
\text{they had put up their tents}
\]

(BCT 239, line 83)

In (25a) the addition of the middle marker to the noun saxac "dipnet" derives a typical activity for which dipnets are used, "dragseining"; similarly, affixing the middle-marker to inherently transitive stems, with the following exceptions:

\[
\text{The second category of activity middles contains forms based on verbs which in BCT are, for the most part,} \\
\text{drving transitive verbs of activity:}
\]

\[
\text{(29a) } \text{wn-c-m-a-k-} \\
\text{kill-[md]-3p-[qtv]-[perf]} \\
\text{P-then} \\
\text{they killed some then}
\]

(BCT 223, line 181)

\[
\text{(29b) } \text{ci-x-g-o-e-k'-} \\
\text{ta-tum-maww-st-} \\
\text{dig hole-[md]-3p-[qtv]} \\
\text{D+human-one+D} \\
\text{one person was digging clams}
\]

(BCT 192, line 8)

Sentence (29a) shows an intransitive middle form of the verb \text{wn-c} "kill [sth]" in a clause which has no overt object and no specific endpoint; similarly, (29b) shows a middle form based on ci-x' dig [sth] up' which undergoes an additional semantic shift to denote a typical (culturally important) digging activity with an unrealized endpoint.

\[
\text{(30a) } \text{wn-c-it-3-} \\
\text{kill-3s-3p-[qtv]-[perf]} \\
\text{they killed it then}
\]

(BCT 47, line 46)

\[
\text{(30b) } ... \text{ka-si-x'-k'-alnu-} \\
\text{np-[irr]-dig hole-3s-3p-[qtv]-[att]-[perf]} \\
\text{D+res-come-[loc.-c]-3s+D} \\
\text{... trying to dig up what he had caught}
\]

(BCT 189, line 36)

In total, there are nineteen detransitivized stems with -m in BCT:

\[
\text{(31) Detransitivized forms (41 instances of 19 stems)}
\]

\[
\text{kuuk} "x > \text{kuuk} "\text{uc}-m \\
\text{fix, prepare [sth]} \\
\text{ks > ks-uc-m}
\]

\[
\text{kuuk "x > \text{kuuk} "\text{uc}-m} \\
\text{fix food}^{20} \\
\text{ks > ks-uc-m}
\]

\[
\text{kn > kn-m} \\
\text{practice} \\
\text{ks > ks-m}
\]

\[
\text{nu?un > nu?un-ak-m} \\
\text{support oneself by holding on'} \\
\text{ks > nu?un-ak-m}
\]

\[
\text{nu?un > nu?un-ak-m} \\
\text{support oneself by holding on'} \\
\text{ks > nu?un-ak-m}
\]

\[
\text{sil > sil-m} \\
\text{to rat} \\
\text{ac > ac-m}
\]

\[
\text{sil > sil-m} \\
\text{to rat} \\
\text{ac > ac-m}
\]

In general, these denominal forms denote culturally important activities.

The second category of activity middles contains forms based on verbs which in BCT are, for the most part, inherently transitive stems, with the following exceptions:

\[
\text{(28) Activities formed on intransitive stems (6 instances of 3 stems)}
\]

\[
\text{haw > haw-m} \\
\text{put [sth] into hole} \\
\text{large tooth} \\
\text{28}
\]

\[
\text{haw > haw-m} \\
\text{put [sth] into hole} \\
\text{large tooth} \\
\text{28}
\]

Nater (1984: 61) gives six more forms of this type, several of which he claims add the notion of continuous activity or 'be busy doing/occupied with' the activity denoted by the verb stem:

\[
\text{Here and in the previous form the suffix -uc "mouth, opening" means "food".}
\]

\[
\text{Note that one of the two instances of this form appears with what appears to be a (clause-final) direct object, although the verb itself is not marked for transitive agreement. The additional morphology is continuative reduplication, -aaX "distributed" and -alX "tooth".}
\]

\[
\text{The transitive form of this verb does not appear in BCT, but is provided in Nater (1984: 61).}
\]

---

22 Cf. Davis & Saunders (1989) who interpret this aspect of -m as an increase in a participant's PERIPHERALITY.

23 Nater (1990: 62) glosses it as 'sook dried berries', which is consistent with its use in the texts.

24 The form yank 'pole a boat' is from Nater (1990: 168); the suffix -uyx is a lack of control morpheme.
compared with the languages, as in this middle form from Lushootseed, based on the intransitive stem

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Here, as in (35), the clause denotes a semantically transitive event with a defocused endpoint, expressed as a PP in a syntactically intransitive construction. The principal function of the morpheme -m in Lushootseed is to increase the valency of the verb root by one and to shift the semantic role of the grammatical subject from that of affected participant to that of causative agent. This function has been related to that of the middle voice (Hess 1993, Beck 1996) in that in this use the verb also serves to express the action of the initiator/subject in its own self-interest, thereby conforming to traditional characterizations of the middle as that offered by Trask (1993).31

Definitions of the middle in terms of subject-interest are also noted by Kemmer (1993), who argues that such uses conform to her definition of the middle-interest can be interpreted as an identification of the initiator/subject with the endpoint of the event. This point becomes a bit clearer when the middle use in (34) is compared with the "indirect reflexive" construction such as he bought himself a hat, shown in (36):

This construction makes use of the reflexive pronoun himself to indicate that the E of the event is equated with I (hence, the alternation gloss: in (38b), however, I and E are treated as only partially equivalent; E being a subpart of I) and -m appears marking their partial identification. In addition, Davis & Saunders (1989) argue that the presence of -m in the example in (38b) in some way distances the subject/agent from the event, which in some cases leads them to provide "translocutive" (i.e., going to go out and X) glosses of transitive verbs with -m. The translocutive glosses perform this effect, and the concomitant sense of the event as an activity rather than a temporally bounded event, just as do expressions like go shopping, go fishing/birding, or (à la (38b)) go hand-cutting.

Another fairly obvious use of -m to express action for/to the initiator’s interests is found in a limited number of expressions where, as in the examples in (25) – (28) above, -m is affixed to nouns and intransitive verbs, although in these cases the result is a syntactically transitive clause:

30Nater glosses this as an intransitive activity verb; in BCT it appears as a stative, meaning simply 'dry'.
31Mel’čuk (1997) notes that the middle, as a voice, does not usually serve to increase the valency of a stem—thus, we might want to reserve this meaning to the middle a semantic component of causativity, which in Salishan languages is the typical motivation for the increase of the valency of a stem. A proposal along these lines is put forward in Beck (1996).
The addition of -m to a nominal root in (39b) yields a typical event or activity associated with the meaning of the root, although in this case the involvement of another, highly individuated participant results in a syntactically transitive clause, whereas a change in some E as it does a change in attitude on the part of I itself—toward the object where the event is evaluated with reference to I and its interests or needs. This type of middle use is attested for only five stems in BCT.20

To this list we might also add talawas 'be married' > talawesm 'marry [s.o.]' (Davis & Saunders 1989). While there are certainly traces of the self-interest reading of -m to link it, at least diachronically, to middle transitives in other Salish languages like Lushootseed, it remains unclear to what extent the self-interest reading persists synchronically in Bella Coola outside of the contexts cited here in examples (37) through (40). Even in its absence, however, the activity use of -m conforms to the most abstract characterization of the middle voice in that the defocusing of an object involves the reduced elaboration of participants of an event. Whether this is sufficient to classify the morpheme used to form activity-middles as the same morpheme as that used to express meanings based on partial identification, or whether it is different enough to require analysis of the two as a separate -m's is a matter to be taken up in the conclusion to this paper.

4. -m and transitivity

One of the principal characteristics of the semantically transitive event across languages is the presence of two highly individuated participants, and such events are typically realized syntactically as transitive clauses, whereas clauses which do not clearly distinguish two participants tend to be realized as syntactically intransitive (Hopper & Thompson 1980). Because of this, in many languages the middle marker—which serves to mark the reduced individuation of event-participants—functions as a detransitivizer, forming intransitive verbs from transitive bases (Kemmer 1993). While most of the Bella Coola data considered up to now seem to conform to this pattern, there are relatively large number of instances in the data (based on a proportionally small set of stems) where middle forms appear in syntactically transitive clauses, in some cases apparently triggering the detransitivization of an otherwise intransitive stem. This fact has led some writers (including Davis & Saunders at the time of BCT) to posit separate meanings for the two types of -m—a mediopassive meaning for -m in its uses as discussed above, and a transitiveizing meaning for those uses to be discussed in the section that follows. One reason to doubt that the meanings of -m can be divided neatly along the lines of syntactic transitivity is the fact that in some cases the presence or absence of -m appears to have no direct effect on the clause's transitivity: with a few stems -m seems to allow the formation of both syntactically transitive and intransitive clauses:

(41) (a) tay-is snac ti-pucu-4tx pound-3s-3s Snac D-hellebore+D 'Snac pounded hellebore'
(b) tay-m-is ti-pucu-4tx pound-[md]-3s-3s D-hellebore+D 'he went to pound the hellebore'
(c) tay-m-o pound-[md]-3s 'he went routinely to pound [sth]'
(d) *tay-a pound-3s

(Davis & Saunders 1989: 120 – 121)

The sentence in (41a) is an ordinary transitive clause, marked by the transitive object–subject agreement paradigm, as is the m-form in (b). The sentence in (41c), on the other hand, shows intransitive subject agreement and this sentence is clearly an instance of the activity reading seen in the detransitivized clauses illustrated in (29) above.

According to Davis & Saunders (1989), the semantic distinction between (41a) and (b) is a defocusing of the endpoint/object (in their terms, "the Experiencer") and a lessening of its affectiveness; Davis & Saunders go on to note that sentences (41b) and (c) also seem to have a reduced sense of performance and immediacy, which, as discussed in Section 3.4, may indicate that we are not dealing here so much with a literal locative meaning as an activity reading—a "going-pounding". If this is indeed the case, then the function of -m in (41b) is also clearly related to the detransitivizing use of the morpheme, the crucial difference between (b) and (c) being the presence in the clause of a completely individuated second participant—an important feature of semantic transitivity, according to Hopper & Thompson (1980)—rather than the presence or absence of a particular -m (although the presence of -m is not completely irrelevant to syntactic transitivity, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (d)).

Some further evidence for the relative independence of morphosyntactic transitivity from the presence/absence of -m can be seen when verbs that obligatorily appear in middle form turn up in transitive clauses, as in (42):
In addition to its transitivity-neutral uses, -m shows up in a number of other instances where it seems to trigger transitivization of an otherwise intransitive stem, as in the forms in (39) and (40) above, and (43):

(43) (a) puítica' tiš'ímilk-tx \*7-ul4+nas?ul4+tx
come D+man+D P+d+thief+D
'the man came to/at the thief'

(b) puítam-is tiš'ímilk-xtx tiš'ins?ul4+tx
come-[md]-3s-3s D+man+D D+thief+D
'the man attacked the thief'

(Davis & Saunders 1989: 124)

According to Davis & Saunders (1989), the appearance of -m in transitivized clauses such as those in (43b) and (39) above represents oblique-object or adjunct promotion, the presence of -m allowing the incorporation of an element which is usually peripheral to the event into the "nucleus" of the "proposition"—that is, the syntactic advancement of a participant in a less-salient thematic role to subject or object position. In effect, -m in such uses is said to serve as the mark of the semantic peripherality of an element occupying a syntactic position normally held by a participant in a more salient role. Conversely, in detransitivized uses such as those discussed in the previous section, -m is used to mark the syntactic ("propositional") peripherality of a semantically "central" or salient role ordinarily realized as subject or direct object, but which in detransitivized forms is omitted from the clause altogether. Thus, for Davis & Saunders, -m indicates a marked situation with respect to the ordinary mapping of semantic roles to syntactic positions and so appears in clauses that depart from the expected pairings of semantically salient roles to syntactically nuclear positions.

As ingenious as this analysis is, it is unsatisfying from a cognitive or functional/typological perspective on a number of counts. The first of these is that, in effect, reduces the status of -m to that of a syntactic process morpheme—that is, it attributes to -m no semantic content of its own, but instead posits it as a marker of a particular process in the syntactic machinery which in itself does not seem to have any clear meaning. By maintaining that -m is a mark of the continued semantic peripherality of an event-participant that has been syntactically promoted to a nuclear position (or vice versa), Davis & Saunders seem to argue against the position common in the cognitive literature that syntactic promotion of an event-participant is in itself a mark of increased semantic saliency. If -m is the mark of unchanged saliency, then the semantic effect of object promotion in (43), and—if -m itself has no effect on object-saliency—on what basis can we attribute -m the apparent change in meaning of the sentence? A more serious objection, however, is that any such analysis of -m overlooks the fact that, at least in the intransitive and detransitivized uses (which account for the bulk of the forms in the data), the meanings of the Bella Coola -m correspond to the meanings of the middle marker recognized in language after language. This in itself seems to be a matter for further investigation, and in the next section I will examine the instances of -m in syntactically transitivized clauses and try to show that these, too, can be classified as middle uses in the same way as other -m forms in the language, by making use of the notion of "relational elaboration" and the principle of non-unitariness of events and of event-participants.

4.1 The non-unitariness of participants

In a number of cases (62 instances of 17 stems), the use of -m in transitivized constructions corresponds in some obvious way to one of the uses of -m discussed above. One of the less frequent of these expressions of 1 directly affect or pertain to 1's body or person, as in (44), which shows two examples of middle-marked verbs bearing affixes from the transitve object-subject paradigm:

(44) (a) 7ácamam-m-is-kwá-2
blan ket-[md]-3s-3s-[qtv]-[perf]
she D+animal+D
'she had put on the hide of an animal'

(b) nú-7átmrk-m-is-kwá
[agl]-pole-canoe-[md]-3s-3s-[qtv]
'he was poling his canoe'

(BCT 137, line 90)

(BCT 68, line 90)

The form in (44a) expresses an action akin to dressing in which 1 is 1's body and the direct object is more of an instrument than a patient; the relation to the body action and grooming forms in (5) is obvious, as is the potential historical relation to the self-interest uses of the middle marker in Lushootseed. In the case of (44b), the use of -m seems to be related to intransitive middles of translational motion, and the appearance of -m in this construction is a good parallel to its uses in expressions such as those illustrated in (15) above. The direct object (the canoe) represents another case of an object that is not, in fact, an endpoint of the event, the canoe serving as a means to an end (the motion of the initiator) and so taking up a role as a midpoint in the event (cf. the diagram in (36) above).

In total there are three stems that make use of -m in transitive clauses as an indicator of 1 or 1's body as 1 of the event in question (I = 2); these are given in (45):

(45) Transitive body actions/translational motion (5 instances, 3 stems)

\[\begin{array}{lll}
\text{?ácamam} & \rightarrow & \text{?ácamam-m} \\
\text{?álmk} & \rightarrow & \text{?álmk-m} \\
\end{array}\]

A similar alternation qàllu 'take a drink' > qàllu-m 'drink [sth]' can be found in Nater (1984: 62). Here again, as in Spanish expressions like como 'eat [sth] up', the actual 1 of the event can be construed as I's body, or I's interests, giving us a prototypical middle meaning marking the partial identification of E and I. Each of these stems correspond to one of the sets of intransitive middles discussed in Section 3 above, the difference being the presence in the event expressed by the stem, a second, fully-individuated event participant.

Thus this infrequent use of -m is closely related to another middle use that I will refer to as an "instrumental middle." In this highly productive construction, a (usually intransitive) verb is affixed with both -m and a lexical suffix representing a part of 1's body used an instrument. Thus, adding -m and a lexical suffix to an intransitive stem such as qàllu 'be no more' in (46a) causativizes it and yields transitive forms as in (46b) and (c):

(46) (a) \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]
    \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]

(b) \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]
    \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]

(c) \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]
    \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]

(BCT 114, line 179)

(BCT 149, line 206)

In such clauses, the middle seems to be performing its familiar function of marking partial identity of two event-participants, although here—rather than marking partial identity of I and E—it marks partial identity of initiator and midpoint, in this case an instrument which is part of I's body (I = ?). This can also be seen in the contrast between the sentences in (47), where syntactic transitivity seems to be the result purely of the presence of the event in the second, fully-individuated participant:

(47) (a) \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]
    \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]

(b) \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]
    \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]

(c) \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]
    \[\text{?álmk-m} \rightarrow\]

(Davis & Saunders 1975: 361)

(Davis & Saunders 1973: 238)

(Davis & Saunders 1975: 358)

The first sentence here shows the normal transitive use of the verb cp 'wipe [sth]' in which there are two event participants and the lexical suffix -uk 'hand' is interpreted as referring to the hand of the affected event-participant.
'you'. In (47b) (taken from (7b) above), ap appears as an ordinary intransitive middle of body action and =ak refers to the hand of I, with which it is partially identified (I ≥ E). In (47c), however, the event is presented as having two participants, the wiper and the object wiped, and so the verb bears transitive agreement, just as in (47a). As it is in ordinary intransitive middles, however, the appearance of -m in (47c) signals the partial identification of I with some other event-participant, in this case an instrumental midpoint (*'m) realized by the lexical suffix =ak (*'m) (cf. verbs of speaking with =uc 'mouth' and verbs of motion/travel with =af 'foot').

Other instrumental forms found in BCT are listed in (48):

(48) Instrumental middle (50 instances of 12 stems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>crół</td>
<td>*ənself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šić</td>
<td>*ikuc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?ayl</td>
<td>*aw=??uc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?ayw</td>
<td>*ay=uc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?aw</td>
<td>*aw=??uc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?al</td>
<td>*a=uc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?ay</td>
<td>*ay=uc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?ayw</td>
<td>*aw=??uc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?aw</td>
<td>*aw=??uc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?ay</td>
<td>*ay=uc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?ayw</td>
<td>*aw=??uc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?ay</td>
<td>*ay=uc(m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?ayw</td>
<td>*aw=??uc(m)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These forms tend to have rather idiomatic uses, and in many of these the literal sotomatic meaning of the lexical suffix seems to be giving way to a more grammaticalized sense of the typical action performed by that body part (hence, mak 'hand > use, do' and uc 'mouth > eat, speak / food'). The transitivity of the verbal root in such constructions may be as much a result of this process of grammaticalization—wherein the lexical suffixes become causative-like verb extensions—as it is the result of the use of -m, although the appearance of the somatic suffix in itself, even in lexicalized expressions, does not appear to transitive the verb, as shown in (49):

(49) (a) wix=ki=ku-?it=nok s-cayxak=sk ta=tucak=na=t+?k
    be.then-[qvi]-[cpp]-[expv]-[perf]
    "they finished hand-3s"
    (BCT 187, line 19)

(b) ... s-cayxak=m-tit
    np-finish-band-[md]-3p-3p
    '"when they had finished with them' 
    (BCT 224 – 25, line 199)

Thus, this is the combination of the middle marker and the lexical suffix which allows for the formation of the syntactically transitive clause, the lexical suffix introducing an additional participant and the middle-marker ensuring that the new participant is an instrument partially identified with I, as shown in (47) above.

Another use of -m in transitive clauses is found with events of mental activity or cognition, as in (50):

(50) wix=ki=ku-?ay=tu-tit s-cxal=smxsta-tal=uss+?k s-xci=lik=m-tis
    be-it-[qvi] np-do-[cau]-3p-3s D+np-person-become=3d
    'he did this to the human beings because he was angry at them' 
    (BCT 122, line 249)

According to Kemmer (1993), verbs of cognition and emotion such as ssjakm 'get angry at [s.o.]' bear middle-marking because they present I as being in some way separate from I's cognitive/emotive faculties—that is, E is I's mind (I ≥ E). (51) shows the prototypical mental event as the interaction of I with some stimulus (S):

(51) (a) wix=ki=ku=naaat=tmax=aw=cc
    (tqvi)-qvi-[repl]-3p-3p
    'they were making each other cry' 
    (BCT 7, line 23)

(b) ... s-kal=tmax=cm=3s
    np-meet-[cpp]-[md]-3p-3s D+person+3d
    '"when she met a man' 
    (BCT 128, line 12)

(53a) is an example of a typical reciprocal event which can be broken down into two fully distinguished sub-events—that is, it can be subdivided into two separate sub-events A makes B cry and B makes A cry. While (53a) presents both events as a whole, its components represent discrete actions—e.g. A insults B and B insults A. A's insult causing B to cry and B's insult causing A to cry. The event in (53b), however, is not fully distinguishable into two separate sub-events in that meeting is an inherently reciprocal action: if A meets B, then necessarily B meets A and the event described by the first statement is necessarily the same event described by the second. Thus, even though (53b) has two components in that, from the point of view of each of the participants, there are two meetings (or mental events of first-encounter), these meetings are in fact part and parcel of the same event (the crossing of paths of the two characters involved) and so can not be fully distinguished. In this sense, an

34The morpheme -tmax means 'distant'.
35Literally, these last three forms are, respectively, 'meet-eye', 'meet-foot', and 'meet-face'; the last form obligatorily bears the reciprocal suffix -tmax (see the discussion of (53) below).
36This last form is especially numerous in BCT, accounting for twenty-three separate instances of the instrumental -m.
event such as (53b) is non-unitary and the verb k̓a̓l 'go to meet [s.o.],' appears suffixed with both the reciprocal suffix -tn̓axʷ 'each-other' and -m to give the reading 'meet [s.o.].'

In actual fact, verbs which express inherently non-unitary events account for only a small fraction of instances of -m in the corpus. In BCT, the conflation of two non-unitary events into a single clause most consistently receives middle marking in situations that seem best described as applicatives, constructions which take an oblique object or PP expressing a goal and promote it to direct object, as shown in (43), repeated here in (54):

(54) a. pu̓x tiʔ̓imilk̓+tx ʔut̓+imus?uul̓+tx
      come D+man+D P+D+theft+D
      'the man came to the thief'

(b) pu̓x-m-is tiʔ̓imilk̓+tx ʔut̓+imus?uul̓+tx
come-[mid]-3s-3s D+man+D D+theft+D
'the man attacked the thief'

In the sentence in (54a) we have an example of a simple intransitive verb of motion with a goal phrase; in (54b) the same verb affixed with -m becomes syntactically transitive, taking a direct object designating the goal of the motion. Following an analysis by Tuggy (1988), applicatives such as these, formed on intransitive predicates, denote a complex event in which I performs a specific action that has a potential but unspecified effect on E. What I does is fully specified by the stem of the verb to which the applicative morpheme is attached, but the effect on E (which, by dint of being an individuated entity not identified with I, is realized as a direct object) is unstated and left for contextual or pragmatic factors to decide. This pattern is represented in (55).

(based on Tuggy 1988)

Here, the applicative event is shown as consisting of two separate components, I's action (jagged arrow) and the effect on E, which remains unstated. This implies a certain non-unitariness—not of endpoint or initiator, but of event. The middle in (54b) thus marks this non-unitariness of an event that is nonetheless realized as a single clause in the same way that the middle in earlier examples marks the non-unitariness of an event-participant realized as a single NP or pronoun.

In all, this applicative use of -m in BCT appears with seven different stems:

(56) Applicative uses (16 instances of 7 stems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Transitive</th>
<th>Intransitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ap</td>
<td>&gt; ap-m</td>
<td>-ap-m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-go</td>
<td>&gt; go to [s.o.]</td>
<td>'come'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| -n̓a̓laʔ | > n̓a̓laʔ to [s.o.] | 'come at [s.o.]'
| -riendly | travel at night | 'contest' |
| -n̓a̓laʔ | > n̓a̓laʔ to [s.o.] | 'contest'
| -riendly | 'travel at night' | 'contest'
| -riendly | 'play a trick on [s.o.]' | 'safe'
| -riendly | 'speak to [s.o.],' | 'speak to [s.o.],'
| -riendly | 'speak to [s.o.],' | 'speak to [s.o.],'
| -riendly | 'speak to [s.o.],' | 'speak to [s.o.],'

Most of these forms are based on verbs of motion, which are a common base for applicatives across languages. Another use of -m which seems to be closely related to the applicative is found quite frequently in association with transitive verbs of speaking; in such uses, an intransitive verb denoting a speech act becomes a syntactically transitive verb whose object is the person spoken to. Compare the sentences in (57a) and (b):

(57) (a) ?aʔ-ʔ̓al̓ma-ku-či̓-šs cut-s-k̓ʷ ʔiʔ̓+x̓maňu+yt ʔut̓+il̓+imaʔ+š̓s [res]-die-[dub]-[surp]-[perf]-[ind] say-3s-[qtv] D+person+D P+D+child+3po+D

"But she must be dead now," the woman said to her daughter'

(b) yaya-ʔ̓liw̓a-timut-s cut-m-is-k̓ʷ aʔ+kt̓ʷ̓ taʔ+mna+š̓s good-[sem]-[caus-refl]-[imp] say-[md]-3s-3s P+then D+child+3po+D

'Be brave,' he told his son then'

The verb in (57a) is the intransitive verb cut 'speak,' which—like its English gloss—may express a listener in a PP, in (57b), the verb (here in reduplicated form) is affixed with -m, becoming syntactically transitive, and the listener is promoted to direct object, just as in (54). Other verbs of speaking which show this pattern are:

(58) Transitive speech events (20 instances of 3 stems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Transitive</th>
<th>Intransitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ʔax̓-s</td>
<td>cut-m</td>
<td>cut-m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'speak'</td>
<td>'speak'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| waylit | wayilt-m | 'speak to [s.o.]'
| 'assent, agree' | 'assent to, agree with [s.o.]'

The forms given here show a syntactic pattern that looks to be the equivalent of the applicative—the promotion of an oblique object or goal to a direct object in the clause. In a true applicative, however, the second event participant is construed as having been in some way affected or potentially affected by the action of I, although the exact nature of that affectedness may merely be implicit in the nature of the action or in discourse. In the case of speech acts, it is not as clear to what extent the listener is affected by what is said or by the act of speaking itself, although it certainly could be argued that I's action, speaking, does have an effect (or a potential effect) on the psyche of the listener. Like more ordinary applicatives, speech events can thus be seen as consisting of two separate components—the speech act of I and the perception of that speech by the listener—and so conform to the Bella Coola middle pattern in the same way that the applicative does, representing the conflation of two events which are intimately connected but not entirely unitary.

The final middle use to be discussed here is also related to the notion of the non-unitariness of events and is associated with certain specific verbs that participate in what are commonly called raising constructions, structures in which a transitive verb takes as its direct object an actant (syntactic argument) of an embedded clause. In Bella Coola, raising takes place out of morphologically nominalized clauses, roughly the equivalents of English that-phrases in sentences like we know that he is going, as in (59):

(59) a. ʔ̓ax̓-lap-tit was+ʔ̓imilk̓-uku+c-e x̓-lap-aw
know-3p-3p D+men-[plural]+D np-go-go 3p

"we know the men [and] that they are going" (Davis & Saunders 1978: 42)

In this sentence, the matrix verb, ʔ̓ax̓-lap 'know,' shows object agreement for the person and number of one of the actants in the embedded clause, in this case the subject, and the utterance as a whole represents two separate, non-conflated events. There are, however, a few verbs which appear with -m in similar constructions and give a conflation-event reading. One of the most common of these is ʔ̓ax̓-lap 'go,' which forms expressions with the meaning of 'begin to...'

(60) a. ʔ̓ax̓-lap-ak-m-it ʔ̓ax̓-t̓s̓-i̓t s-kaʔ-ʔ̓istux-it
      gos̓hand-[mid]-3s-3p Pthen np-ir-[skim]-3s-3p
      'they started to skin him then'

(b) ʔ̓ax̓-lap-ak-m-I̓-k̓ʷ̓ taʔ+i̓l̓-td̓it+ts̓ ʔ̓s̓-kaʔ-ʔ̓al̓-li̓-ʔ̓-ím
      go-[mid]-3s-pass-[qtv]-[sust] D+year+D np-[n]-[res]-roll-3s-pass
      'the youth began to be roled every now and then by his playmates'.

Sentence (60a) uses two clauses to represent a single event; the matrix verb agrees with both the subject and the object of the embedded clause, the subjects of the two clauses necessarily being coreferential. In (60b), the same structure is given formed on passives of the matrix and the embedded clause. There are three stems that appear in such constructions in the BCT (one of which, ʔ̓ax̓-lap 'go,' is also involved in applicatives):

42This form is further decomposable into way 'okay' and -it 'say, go like.'
These uses of \(-m\) qualify as middle uses because they subdivide an event into two components which, like the components of the applicative event, can be identified with one another and which share the participants, but which are not completely equivalent and are realized in separate clauses (although unlike the applicative event, both components are fully specified). Thus, verbs of this type are like applicative and transitive verbs of speech in that they give us a conceptual of a single event composed of two sub-events whose partial identity is indicated by the middle-marker \(-m\). Partial identification of sub-events is thus subsumed along with partial identification of event-participants under the general heading of relative elaboration and it is over these two domains that the bulk of the instances of the Bella Coola \(-m\) range, making it an excellent candidate for a middle marker.

5 Transitivity and the continuum of unitariness

In conclusion, it seems that the majority of uses of \(-m\) (246 instances of 89 stems) conforms closely enough to well-known and widely recognized properties of middle-morphemes in the broad sample of languages examined by Kemmer (1993) that it can be safely labeled as a marker of middle voice. Like the middle in many languages, \(-m\) appears in syntactically intransitive clauses denoting grooming and other actions directed towards the initiator's own body (\(I \geq E\)); it appears in verbs denoting speech events (\(I \geq M\)), and in verbs of body posture, translational, and non-translational motion (\(I \leq E\)); and, as in many languages, it is used to form mediopassives and verbs expressing spontaneous events (\(I \leq E\)), this last meaning having been extended somewhat to a cross-linguistically more unusual use in the formation of inchoative-like expressions (\(I \leq S\)). In addition to these standard uses of the middle-marker, Bella Coola makes use of \(-m\) in some syntactically transitive clauses, including those in which an intermediary event-participant such as an instrument is partially identified with the initiator (\(I \geq M \geq E\)) of a semantically transitive event; where the initiator interacts with an individuable midpoint (\(M\)) and the endpoint is the own self-interest (\(I \leq E \leq M\)), and events where \(I\) interacts with some external stimulus (\(S\)) and the endpoint is the own psyche (\(I \leq E < S\)). Bella Coola also applies \(-m\) to the formation of syntactically transitive clauses in certain applicable and applicative-like expressions in which, as discussed in Section 4.2, it serves to mark the non-unitariness of an event expressed as a single clause. \(-m\) also appears associated with what resembles raising constructions where it indicates the non-universalities of events whose partial identification with one another is reinforced by the sharing of arguments across clause boundaries. The common thread linking all of these uses of \(-m\) (accounting for 248 instances of 79 stems) seems to be the notions of unitariness and partial identification, as summarized in (16) on the next page. The most varied use of the middle marker of the middle occurs where a clause presents a single-event participant as a non-unitary whole, one part functioning as the initiator of an event or process, another part serving as a stimulus (\(S\)), midpoint (\(M\)), or endpoint (\(E\)) (194 instances of 64 stems).

Unitariness of participants forms a continuum, as in (63), also on the next page. At the lower end of the continuum are single-episode events whereas at the other extreme we have a two-episode event involving two highly individuable (and in themselves unitary) participants. The centre portion of the continuum is divided between reflexives—where there is a single participant treated as if it occupied two distinct and separate semantic roles—where some even-episode is conceived of as a non-unitary whole, parts of which fill distinct semantic roles in the clause. Typically, one of these semantic roles must be that of initiator, but—in Bella Coola, at any rate—the role with which \(I\) is partially identified need not be \(E\), but can be an intermediary point (\(M\)) such as an instrument or the stimulus (\(S\)) in an event of cognition. Another interesting feature of Bella Coola with respect to this scale is that the minimal criteria for the occurrence of the transitive agreement paradigm with a stem seems to be the construal of the event as having two fully individuable participants rather than the realization of a particular semantic role as \(E\); reflexive clauses are marked with intransitive agreement suffixes, restricting syntactic transitivity to the high end of the scale of unitariness.

There is, however, one use of \(-m\) that does not quite fit the characterization of the middle as marking partial identification of event-participants—although, oddly enough, it is not one of the unusual-looking transitive uses that is the problem, but the apparently more mundane use of \(-m\) as a transitive marker discussed in Section 3.4. In this use, \(-m\) is affixed to a syntactically transitive verb and renders it intransitive, showing a pattern reminiscent of what Kemmer (1993) calls an object-deletion middle. Although they are not obviously marked as non-unitariness, many of these cases still conform to the cross-linguistic definition of the middle in that object-deletion represents a relatively lower elaboration of events than the corresponding transitive form of the verb with a direct

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\(^{32}\)These form can be broken down as follows: say 'finish' + \(\text{t} \) [inchoative] + \(\text{j} \) [semantically].

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\(^{33}\)This form can be broken down as follows: say 'finish' + \(\text{t} \) [inchoative] + \(\text{j} \) [semantically].
lexicalized, the subschematic meanings of -m seem both to have been extended over an unusually broad area of the cross-linguistic domain of the middle voice and to have bifurcated, possibly through the loss of the self-interest reading, into two separable sub-domains. The first of these, non-unitariness, is standard and well-attested middle meaning across languages, while the second, reduced participant saliency, corresponds in part to other relatively well-known type of middle—the activity and object-deletion middle—and in part to a more novel form which allows for the realization of an oblique object and so falls slightly outside the realm of “reduced elaboration of participants”—and, like its transitivizing uses, serves as an example of the varied and innovative uses of -m.

List of Abbreviations

References