

THE SEMANTICS OF MIDDLE VOICE IN SOMALI*

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1. Introduction

Somali has a number of lexical affixes which form derived verbs, such as causatives, from other verbs or create verbs from other categories. The morphology of these affixes is by now well documented, e.g. by Moreno (1955), Andrzejewski (1968, 1969), Saeed (1993). What is less well understood are the meanings and functions of these affixes. This article is concerned with one of these affixes: -at.¹ This affix has received several names, including *riflessivo* (Moreno 1955), *medio-riflessivo* (Bruno 1984), and, because its most productive use is in forming benefactive verbs, the *autobenefactive* affix (Andrzejewski 1968, Puglielli 1984, Saeed 1993). Since, as we shall see, the functions of the affix correspond to what has traditionally been called middle voice in other languages, we shall adopt the term *middle affix* in this article.

Although the literature on Somali contains several brief mentions of the range of meanings associated with this affix,² there has been no extended discussion of these meanings nor any attempt to classify middle verbs into semantic classes. We also still await a comparison of the range of Somali middle voice functions with middles in other languages. This article is an attempt to begin these tasks. Our aim at this early stage is mostly descriptive: to isolate and exemplify the range of meanings associated with this affix. To do this we shall set up semantic classes of middle verbs as described in section 3 below. As discussed there, one aim of this article is to provide substantial,

* In researching this article, I have relied greatly on the excellent dictionaries of Somali: Abraham (1962), Yaasiin (1976), Agostini et al. (1985) and Zorc & Osman (1993). I would in particular like to thank Dunwoody Press, and most especially Steve Bladey, for allowing me pre-publication access to the electronic form of Zorc & Osman (1993). I would also like to thank Cabdillaahi Dirir Xirsi and Cabdiraxmaan Afey for their advice and insights on the data in this article, and Martin Orwin for his helpful comments.

¹ As described in the next section, the morphological shape of this affix varies. Some authors, e.g. Bell (1953) use the form found in imperative verb forms, -o, as the reference form for the affix; others e.g. Moreno (1955), Puglielli (1984), use the form -at, which is the underlying form of the -ad surface form found in some verbal paradigms and nominal derivations; while still others, e.g. Andrzejewski (1968), use the form -an found in the infinitive and associated compound verb forms. Given its role in nominal derivation and its presence in simple verb forms, we will assume that the -at form is more basic and we use it as the reference form hereafter.

² See, for example, Andrzejewski (1968: 7-8), Abu-Manga & Jungrathmayr (1988).

if not exhaustive, lists of each class of middle verbs. Before that however we provide in section 2 below a few morphological preliminaries.

2 Morphological preliminaries

Somali has three types of verb: a large and productive class of *suffix* or 'weak' verbs, a very small class of *prefix* or 'strong' verbs and the irregular verb *yahay* 'be'.³ The prefix class varies across dialects but in Standard Somali constitutes four verbs: *yidhi* 'say', *yimi* 'come', *yiil* 'be (in a place)' and *yiqiin* 'know'. Neither prefix verbs nor *yahay* 'be' productively support middle or other lexical affixes and are thus not discussed here.⁴ The suffix class have the basic structure schematically represented in (1):

- (1) [ROOT + LEX + AGR + INFL]

where ROOT is the unpredictable basic form of the verb, presumably stored in the lexicon; AGR are the agreement affixes which correspond to the person, number and gender of the subject of the verb; INFL are the inflectional endings which give information about tense, mood and aspect, and LEX are the lexical affixes which, when added to the verb root, change the basic meaning of the verb to form a derived verb. The lexical affixes we are concerned with here are the middle affix *at*, and, tangentially, because of its interaction with *at*, the causative affix *is*.⁵

To clarify the later discussion we need to make two observations about the middle affix in its position between the verb root and the agreement affixes. The first is that when it occurs together with the causative affix, the middle affix always follows the causative affix. We will see examples of this in

³ The transcription used is the official Somali orthography. The dialect described is Common or Standard Somali, with a bias in the data towards northern varieties; see Lamberti (1986) for discussion of Somali dialects. The following abbreviations are used: 1/2/3 = first/second/third person; SG/PL = singular/plural; M/F = masculine/feminine; V/N/ADJ = verb/noun/adjective; COLL = collective; CAUS = causative; CLASS = classifier; INTR/TR/DITR = intransitive/transitive/ditransitive; s.o./s.t. = someone/something; ~ = alternating with; * = underlying form; *r.w.* = related word(s).

⁴ We might note in passing that the prefix verbs are under pressure from the suffix class. This pressure is reflected by instability in the prefix paradigms: suffix forms or hybrid prefix and suffix forms are present as options in many inflected forms. The pressure is also reflected in the fact that at least one prefix verb *yiqiin* 'know' has a middle form *aqoonsa* 'recognize, acknowledge' (see 3.4), which however is inflected as a regular suffix verb. We ignore in the present discussion this interesting question of inter-class tension.

⁵ Once again, there are a number of citation forms for this affix in the literature, reflecting its variability across verbal paradigms and derived nominals. For the same reasons as adopting *-at* for the middle affix, we will use *-is* as the citation form for this causative affix.

section 3 below. For now we can see an example of this ordering in the imperative (citation) forms in (2):

- | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------|------------|--|
| (2) (a) | ROOT | hub (INTR) | 'be sure' |
| (b) | ROOT+CAUSATIVE | hubi (TR) | 'make sure of, verify' |
| (c) | ROOT+CAUSATIVE+MIDDLE | hubso (TR) | 'make sure of s.t. for oneself; investigate' |

In the complex form *hubso* in (2c) the causative affix is represented by *-s-* and the middle affix by *-o*.

The second observation is that the form of these affixes is very variable, depending on the morpho-phonological context. We can already see a little of this from the example in (2b) where the causative affix *-is* shows up as *-i* when word final in imperatives, while the middle *-at* shows up as *-o*. In other verbal forms these affixes have other realizations. The complexity of the variation has meant that most commentators have chosen to set up verbal conjugations on the basis of the added lexical affixes. Thus bare root verbs are usually assigned to Conjugation 1; roots with causative affixes to Conjugation 2; and roots with middle affixes (with or without causatives) to Conjugation 3; see Bell (1953), Andrzejewski (1968) and Saeed (1993) for variations on this approach. These conjugations may then be subdivided into morphological subclasses. We will not be concerned with the morphological details here;⁶ but one division of middle verbs, i.e. of conjugation 3, is worth noting.

This division is based on the effect on middle verbs of a general phonological rule of syllable reduction. Simply, whenever grammatical rules produce trisyllabic words of the structure (C₁) V₁ C₂ V₂ C₃ V₃, if V₂ is a short vowel it will be omitted, reducing the word to the disyllabic structure: (C₁) V₁ C₂ C₃ V₃.⁷ This syllable structure rule applies across grammatical categories: so, for example, if one adds a plural ending *-o* to the noun *gabadh* 'girl', we find the following: *gabadh + o* → *gabdho* 'girls'. The addition of a middle affix to verbs often produces the environment for this rule, with the complication that the underlying *-t-* found in many realizations of the middle affix *-at* is one of the Somali segments most vulnerable to contextual phonological rules like assimilation, coalescence, etc. So, to take a single example, if we choose a root verb *wad* 'drive' and form a middle verb, we find the contrast between the past simple first person singular form in (3a) and the second person form in (3b):

⁶ See, for example, Saeed (1993) for a summary.

⁷ For a phonological account of this rule see Orwin (1994: 216-223). Orwin points out that the rule does not occur if C₂ is /t/ or /k/, or when C₂ is the same as C₃.

- (3) (a) *wad at - ay
drive MIDDLE 1SG PAST SIMPLE
Syllable Reduction →
*wadtay
Coalescence →
watay
'(I) drove for myself'
- (b) *wad at t ay
drive MIDDLE 2SG PAST SIMPLE
No Syllable Reduction (environment not met) →
*wadattay
Coalescence →
wadatay
'(You) drove for yourself'

The effect of sound rules on middle forms which undergo syllable reduction are quite complex, see Andrzejewski (1968) for details. Because of this, writers on Somali have often divided middle verbs into two subconjugations: Conjugation 3a for verbs where syllable reduction is not involved and Conjugation 3b where the rule applies, with various consequent sound changes. To ensure comparability between this article and previous work we have followed this subdivision and all lists divide middle verbs into the two patterns: Conjugations 3a and 3b.

3. The semantic range of middle verbs

As mentioned earlier, the most striking use of the middle affix to non-Somali observers has been its autobenefactive meaning, as shown in (4c) below:

- (4) (a) Waa karayaa
CLASS⁸ cooking
'It is boiling/cooking.'
- (b) Wuu karinayaa.
waa+uu karinayaa
CLASS+he cooking-CAUSATIVE
'He is cooking it.'
- (c) Wuu karsanayaa.
waa+uu karsanayaa
CLASS+he cooking-CAUSATIVE-MIDDLE
'He is cooking it for himself.'

⁸ The set of classifiers in Somali identify various sentence types: *ma*, for example, identifies yes-no questions. The classifier *waa*, shown in these examples, occurs chiefly in positive main clause declaratives without focus. See Saeed (1993) for details and Saeed (1984) for arguments against treating *waa* as a verb focus particle.

In (4) we can see the three related verbs: the root verb *kar* (INTR) 'boil, cook', the causative verb *kari* (TR) 'cook', and the middle verb *karso* (TR) 'cook for oneself'. This use of the middle is very common and very productive. However, as we shall see, it is by no means the only meaning which attaches to the middle affix and using the term *autobenefactive* for this affix is somewhat misleading, especially for comparative purposes.

In this section we will identify six different but related meanings of the middle affix. The aim is simply to present the classification together with a sufficiently substantial amount of examples to show the validity of the classification. In the lists of verbs, examples of lexically related words are given (under *r.w.*), whenever they throw light on the semantics of the derivational relations that the verb root enters into. This use of related words is not exhaustive, merely illustrative. We provide brief introductory notes on each use of the middle, leaving more general discussion to section 4. It will be evident that these six semantic classes of middle verbs do not form tight well-defined and mutually exclusive categories. Rather they form a continuum with some overlap at the edges between classes. We will discuss in section 4 the possibility of a more abstract level of analysis at which all six may be seen to share one or more common semantic features.

3.1. Action is inherently reflexive

We begin with a class of middle voice verbs which describe actions that are inherently *reflexive*, i.e. where the subject is both the agent of the action and the entity affected by the action as in (5b) and (6c) below:

- (5) (a) dhay (V, ROOT, TR) 'annoint, rub (oil, ointment) on'
(b) dhayo (V, MIDDLE, TR) 'rub oneself with (oil, ointment)'
- (6) (a) diir (V, ROOT, INTR) 'become warm'
(b) diiri (V, CAUS, TR) 'make warm, warm'
(c) diirso (V, MIDDLE, INTR) 'warm oneself'

We must note that Somali draws a distinction between inherently reflexive actions, portrayed by middle verbs, and reflexive instances of non-inherently reflexive actions, where a reflexive pronoun *is* 'self' is used with a non-middle verb, e.g.:

- (7) (a) Wuu dilay
waa+uu dilay
CLASS+he killed
'He killed it/him/her/them'
- (b) Wuu is dilay
waa+uu is dilay
CLASS+he self killed
'He killed himself'

Reflexive middles may be syntactically transitive or intransitive. The verb *dheefso* 'nourish oneself on', for example, is a transitive middle, as can be seen from (8) below:

- (8) Soomaalidu waxay dheefsataa xoolaha nool.
 Soomaalidu waxa+ay dheefsataa xoolaha nool
 Somalis+the what+they nourish-themselves-on livestock living
 'The Somalis nourish themselves on/subsist on livestock.'

Other reflexives are intransitive: the verb *daaweyso* (INTR) 'treat oneself with medicine' is derived from the transitive verb *daawee* 'treat with medicine' (itself derived from *daawo* (NF) 'medicine'). Here the middle affix has a detransitivizing effect. The object of the transitive *daawee* is the recipient of the medical care; in the reflexive *daaweyso* the recipient is incorporated into the verb's semantics and the verb has no syntactic object.

The underlying semantic schema of these verbs seems to be of action turning back on the subject rather than being directed to another entity. One set of reflexive middles seems to extend this to motion, e.g. *laabo* 'turn back', *manjarrogo* 'turn around, turn over', *noqo* 'turn back, return', where the idea is of the subject's motion circling back to or around the starting position.

Below is a representative selection of reflexive middle verbs:

(9) *Middle Voice Verbs: Reflexive Verbs*

Conjugation 3a

<i>dhako</i>	INTR	'hide oneself'
<i>dhawrso</i>	INTR	'protect oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>dhawr</i> (NM) 'protection'; <i>dhawran</i> (ADJ) 'protected'
<i>dheefso</i>	TR	'nourish oneself on, get nourishment from'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>dheef</i> (NF) 'nourishment, sustenance'; <i>dheefi</i> (V, CAUS, TR) 'nourish'
<i>diirso</i>	INTR	'warm oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>diir</i> (V, ROOT, INTR) 'become warm'; <i>diiri</i> (V, CAUS, TR) 'warm'
<i>gabbo</i>	INTR	'hide oneself; duck, dodge'
<i>gurso</i>	TR	'take into oneself, absorb (e.g. when food that is cooking absorbs the water)'
<i>harqo</i>	INTR	'submerge and suffocate oneself; be overwhelmed'
<i>harso</i>	TR	'put oneself in the shade of s.t., shelter from the sun under'
<i>jirso</i>	INTR	'shelter oneself (from e.g. rain)'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>jiri</i> (V, CAUS, TR) 'shelter s.o. (from e.g. rain)'
<i>leexso</i>	TR	'turn s.t. towards oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>leexi</i> (V, CAUS, TR) 'turn, divert'
<i>tagso</i>	INTR	'take oneself out of reach, take oneself too far'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>tag</i> (V, ROOT, TR) 'go to'
<i>wehesho</i>	TR	'take s.o. along with oneself, take as a companion'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>wehel</i> (NM) 'companion'
<i>xigso</i>	TR	'make oneself close to'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>xig</i> (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be near, next'

Conjugation 3b

<i>daaweyso</i>	INTR	'treat oneself with medicine'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>daawo</i> (NF) 'medicine'
<i>dhabayso</i>	INTR	'assure oneself, ascertain, make sure'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>dhab</i> (NF) 'truth, certainty'
<i>dhuumaalayso</i>	INTR	'play hide-and-seek, hide oneself'
<i>dhuumo</i>	INTR	'hide oneself'
<i>digarrogo</i>	INTR	'relocate, move, change one's address'
<i>faakihayso</i>	INTR	'enjoy oneself, have a good time'
<i>gaafso</i>	INTR	'prepare oneself, get ready'
<i>gaashaamo</i>	INTR	'shield oneself; prepare oneself for s.t.'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>gaashaan</i> (NM) 'shield'
<i>galaafso</i>	TR	'drag s.o. along behind oneself; be a bad influence upon'
<i>hifo</i>	INTR	'repent, regret, blame oneself'
<i>laabo</i>	INTR	'turn back, go back, return; curve'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>laab</i> (V, ROOT, TR) 'curve, bend, fold'
<i>maageero</i>	TR	'enclose; encircle; trace a circle around s.t.'
<i>maaxo</i>	INTR	'replenish oneself, be replenished (of water in a well)'
<i>madaddaalo</i>	INTR	'be entertained, amuse oneself'
<i>muuqo</i>	INTR	'appear, show (up); be evident, visible'
<i>noqo</i>	INTR	'turn or go back, return'
<i>qallooco</i>	INTR	'bend, be bent or crooked, stoop, incline toward, curve'
<i>xogo</i>	TR	'scratch oneself (on a part of the body)'; <i>r.w.:</i> <i>xoq</i> (V, ROOT, TR) 'scratch'

3.2. *Action is inherently reciprocal*

Middle voice is also used for actions that are inherently reciprocal. In transitive reciprocals typically both the subject and object are agents, participating in an action that is bi-directional, as in *garayso* (TR) 'agree with'. In intransitive reciprocals the subject(s) participate in an action shared by two or more people, e.g. *jarayso* 'play Somali checkers' or *kurayso* 'hold a pre-delivery pregnancy ceremony'. As with reflexives, middle voice identifies inherently reciprocal actions; non-inherent reciprocals involve the pronoun *is* 'self, each other' as in (10):

- (10) Way is arkeen
 waa+ay is arkeen
 CLASS+they other saw
 'They saw each other'⁹

⁹ This sentence can of course also mean 'They saw themselves'. Normally the context would disambiguate; if not, other strategies can be used involving full nominals: see Saeed (1993: 180) for brief discussion.

As will be clear from the examples below, two typical types of activity we find these reciprocal middles used for are, firstly, financial relations like bargaining, arranging credit, etc. and secondly, games and ceremonies.

(11) *Middle Voice Verbs: Reciprocals**Conjugation 3a*

asaagso	TR	'put oneself on the same level as s.o.'
beecso	TR	'sell (a possession)'
beegso	TR	'try to measure up to, become equal with'; <i>r.w.:</i> beeg (NM) 'grain measure'
deynso	INTR	'borrow, contract a debt'; <i>r.w.:</i> deyn (NF) 'debt, credit'
dhaafso	DTR	'exchange'; <i>r.w.:</i> dhaaf (V, ROOT, TR) 'pass by, pass near'; dhaafi (V, CAUS, DTR) 'pass s.t. (by/near s.o.), pass s.t. to s.o.'
dhexso	TR	'have relation (of two persons or more) in business etc.' <i>r.w.:</i> dhex (NF) 'centre, middle'
firdho	INTR	'scatter, break away from a group, disperse'; <i>r.w.:</i> firdhi (V, CAUS, TR) 'scatter'
ganacso	INTR	'do business, trade'
garawso	TR	'agree, accept a verdict'
guddoonso	TR	'come to a decision in committee; reach a verdict' <i>r.w.:</i> guddoon (NM) 'decision; conclusion'
hoobso	TR	'share out the milk while milking or when selling milk'
qaybso	TR	'share (out), take a share; divide, apportion among oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> qayb (NF) 'part, division, share'
yobso	INTR	'assemble, gather together (of people or animals)'

Conjugation 3b

baayoco	TR	'discuss the price of s.t.; bargain; conduct business' <i>r.w.:</i> baayac (V, ROOT, TR) 'bargain, haggle'
beddelo	TR	'exchange; change money or places (etc.)'; <i>r.w.:</i> beddel (V, ROOT, TR) 'change'
boogo	TR	'visit, pay a visit'
caashaqo	TR	'anchor, secure, fasten s.t. securely to s.t. else'
canshuuro	TR	'pay a tax on s.t.; ransom, redeem s.t. (for oneself)'
carbuuno	TR	'reserve for oneself; put a deposit on'
dammiino	TR	'post bail; guarantee'
dhawrtayso	TR	'contribute food to a communal meal; give alms'
dhiibo	TR	'entrust to, give in trust; present, hand over to'
ergiso	TR	'borrow s.t. temporarily, take in trust'
filayso	TR	'consider s.o. as equal or as a member of one's peer-group'
geddiso	TR	'exchange, barter'
googgaaleyso	INTR	'pose a riddle, play a game of riddles'
ijaaro	TR	'rent, hire'
jarayso	INTR	'play Somali checkers'
kiilo	TR	'measure out the weight and volume for oneself; fill to the brim, load up'; <i>r.w.:</i> kiil (V, ROOT, TR) 'measure weight and/or volume'
kireyso	TR	'hire, rent out for oneself'

kudayo	TR	'imitate, copy, do the same as'
kurayso	INTR	'hold a pre-delivery pregnancy ceremony'
macmiilo	TR	'become a supplier for s.o.; be a regular customer of s.o. (e.g. to have an account with a shop or a bar)'
madaxfuro	TR	'redeem or pay s.o.'s ransom; pay one's debts'
maddooyeyso	INTR	'play the children's game maddooyamaddooyo' (where an object is hidden in a hand and a rhyme recited)
masruufo	TR	'spend (as money for food); pay living expense of s.o.' meertayso TR 'share s.t. by passing it around'
nabdayso	TR	'greet one another'; <i>r.w.:</i> nabad (NF) 'peace'
qardayso	INTR	'borrow'
qoodeyso	TR	'do by turns, take turns (e.g. at the well)'
qorituuro	INTR	'draw lots using small pieces of wood of varying lengths'
rogrogo	INTR	'participate in petty trading'
rubisaaro	TR	'extract interest on a loan; make a very high profit'
rukumo	TR	'reserve, have a regular arrangement, buy on account'
safo	INTR	'stand in line; be lined up, form a queue'
sarriifo	TR	'exchange (foreign currency)'
sheekeeyso	INTR	'tell each other stories; chat, socialize'; <i>r.w.:</i> sheeg (V, ROOT, TR) 'report'; sheeko (NF) 'tale, story'
siiso	DTR	'buy, pay a price for s.t.; exchange; give away s.t. very dear'
taraarayso	INTR	'hold a pre-delivery ceremony (in which a pregnant woman receives the blessings of family and friends for the coming birth)'
toogayso	TR	'take turns; do s.t. in turn or by turns'; <i>r.w.:</i> toog (NF) 'turn, go'
tuuro	INTR	'pile up, be amassed, be gathered together'
waalayso	INTR	'play the hand-clapping game'
xaajeyso	INTR	'talk together (over a matter), negotiate, enter into a negotiation'

One subset of middle reciprocals which perhaps merits special mention are those which describe family forming or family strengthening actions. Typical examples of these are in (12) below:

(12) *Middle Verbs – Family Reciprocals**Conjugation 3a*

dhaxso	TR	'marry, get married, take a wife'
guurso	TR	'marry, get married'
qareenso	TR	'rely on s.o. because of a blood relationship, ask for help or a favor (from a relative)'; <i>r.w.:</i> qareen (NM) 'relative, relatives, kin'

Conjugation 3b

alkumo	TR	'get engaged; ask for a girl's hand in marriage'; <i>r.w.:</i> alkun (NM) 'fiancé, boyfriend', alkun (NF) 'fiancée, girlfriend'
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casabayso	TR	'take a person as one's relative, admit kinship with s.o.' <i>r.w.:</i> casabo (NF coll.) 'relations, relatives'
habarwaco	INTR	'call on one's mother's kin for help; ask relatives for assistance'; <i>r.w.:</i> habar (NF) 'mother'; wac (V, ROOT, TR) 'call, invite'
khudbasireyso	TR	'marry s.o. in a secret ceremony'; <i>r.w.:</i> khudbo (NF) 'sermon, marriage ceremony'
naagayso	TR	'make into a wife; discipline as one's wife'; <i>r.w.:</i> naag (NF) 'woman, wife'
qaraabayso	TR	'treat as one's own relative, consider as a relative'; <i>r.w.:</i> qaraabo (NF) 'relatives'
shirayso	TR	'slaughter (an animal) for family consumption, slaughter in the dry season to divide meat amongst families'
walaaleyso	TR	'consider s.o. as (close as) one's brother or sister'; <i>r.w.:</i> walaal (NM) 'brother'; walaal (NF) 'sister'

3.3. Action affects the body of the subject

This is a large class of middle verbs which describe actions that affect the subject's body. They typically describe actions the subject performs on his or her own body and can be divided into three types. The first describe *bodily motion and posture*. These verbs typically describe several types of action including the position the subject assigns to the whole or part of the body, e.g. dhambacaadso 'lie down on one's stomach'; actions involving the body where the physicality is highlighted, e.g. qooranso 'look at by craning one's neck'; and actions done to the body, e.g. jirriqso 'grind one's teeth'.

One consistent pattern is where a root verb is stative, describing a body posture, and the associated middle verb is dynamic and inchoative, describing the action of assuming that position, e.g. fooror (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be in a bent over, stooped position' and foororso (V, MIDDLE, INTR) 'bend over, stoop'. Other examples of this in (13a) below include dhacadiidso 'stretch out on one's back', dhambacaadso 'lie down on one's stomach', jiifso 'lie down to sleep' and kadalloobso 'squat down'.

As can also be seen from the following examples, a large number of these verbs describe various ways of ingesting material into the body. We include a large number of examples here because this class of middles has not received attention in the literature.¹⁰

(13) Bodily actions: (a) bodily motion & posture

Conjugation 3a

barko	TR	'put (a pillow) under one's head; use s.t. as a pillow'; <i>r.w.:</i> barkin (NF) 'pillow, cushion'
barqo	INTR	'lie down (in the late morning)'; <i>r.w.:</i> barqo (NF) 'part of the morning when animals graze before milking'
barraaqso	INTR	'sit improperly or sloppily'; <i>r.w.:</i> barraaq (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be seated in an improper way'
baxso	INTR	'flee, run away, escape'; <i>r.w.:</i> bax (V, ROOT, INTR) 'go out, leave, depart'
calaalso	TR	'chew'
canannaqso	INTR	'ruminate, chew the cud'; <i>r.w.:</i> canannaqsi (NM) 'cud'
candhaaqso	INTR	'sit lolling on the ground'; <i>r.w.:</i> candhaaq (NM) 'unseemly way of sitting lolling around on the ground'
cusko	TR	'lean on s.t.; support oneself on one's elbows'
dhabaqso	TR	'drink noisily, lap (of animals)'
dhacadiidso	INTR	'stretch out prone on one's back'; <i>r.w.:</i> dhacadiid (V, ROOT, INTR) 'lie on one's back'
dhakhso (~ dhaqso)	INTR	'rush, hurry, be quick'
dhambacaadso	INTR	'lie down on one's stomach' <i>rw:</i> dhambacaad (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be lying down on one's stomach'
dhiidhiibso	INTR	'sit down on the ground with one's knees together' (polite for women); <i>r.w.:</i> dhiidhiib (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be seated with legs stretched out on the ground'; dhiidhiibsi (V, CAUS, TR) 'make someone sit with legs stretched on the ground'
dhunko	TR	'kiss'
fiiqso	TR	'sip, drink with a sucking motion, suck in'
foororso	INTR	'bend over, stoop, bow'; <i>r.w.:</i> fooror (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be in a stooped, bent over position'
fuuqso	TR	'suck in short bursts (especially from a vessel with a spout)'; <i>r.w.:</i> fuuq (NF) 'sucking noise'
habso	INTR	'collapse to the ground out of weakness'
hiinso	TR	'sip; suck up the last amount of liquid from a vessel'
jalleecso	INTR	'look to the side, look sideways'; <i>r.w.:</i> jalleec (V, ROOT, INTR) 'turn around, look around'; jalleeci (V, CAUS, TR) 'incline, tilt'
jiifso	INTR	'lie down to sleep, go to bed'; <i>rw:</i> jiif (V, ROOT, INTR) 'sleep'
jiiqso	TR	'suck noisily; suck one's teeth'
jimicso	INTR	'stretch oneself; exercise, work out; perform gymnastics'
jirriqso	INTR	'grind one's teeth'; <i>r.w.:</i> jirriq (NM) 'shrill, sharp noise'
jirroorso	TR	'tense one's muscles; bear (pain)'

¹⁰ Here, as in the other lists, we largely ignore the very common compound middle verbs, because their description would lead us too far afield. We can take as a single typical example: jilbajabso (intr.) 'kneel (down)', from jilbo (n.m.pl.) 'knees' and jebi (~ jabi) (v., caus., tr.) 'break'.

joogso	INTR	'stop (oneself), halt, come to a stop; stand up'; <i>r.w.:</i> joog (V, ROOT, TR) 'be in a place, stay'; jooji (V, CAUS, TR) 'cause to stop, halt'
kaasho	TR	'lean on, depend on; support'
kabbo	TR	'sip, gulp'
kacso	INTR	'feel sexual desire; have an erection (of a man)'; <i>r.w.:</i> kac (V, ROOT, INTR) 'rise, arise'; kici (*kaci) (V, CAUS, TR) 'cause to rise, rouse, activate'
kadalloobso	INTR	'squat (down)'; <i>r.w.:</i> kadalloob (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be in a squatting position'
libiqso	INTR	'blink, wink an eye; flutter the eyelashes'
maggowso	TR	'drink a mouthful (of milk)'; <i>r.w.:</i> maggowsii (V, CAUS, TR) 'give s.o. a mouthful (of milk)'
mergo	INTR	'choke (on one's food); suffocate; be strangled or smothered'
muudso	TR	'suck on, dissolve s.t. in one's mouth'
neefso	INTR	'breathe'; <i>r.w.:</i> neef (NF) 'breath, respiration'; neefi (V, CAUS, TR) 'let air out of s.t.; deflate'
nuuxso	INTR	'wobble, jiggle'; <i>r.w.:</i> nuuxi (V, CAUS, TR) 'move s.t. a little, jiggle, wobble'
qooraanso	TR	'look at by craning one's neck, glance at sideways'; <i>r.w.:</i> qoor (NF) 'neck'
ruxmo	INTR	'shake oneself, wobble; get churned (of butter)'; <i>r.w.:</i> rux (V, ROOT, TR) 'shake'
shiiqso	TR	'chew s.t. and swallow the juice'; <i>r.w.:</i> shiiq (V, ROOT, INTR) 'shrink, melt'
siinso	INTR	'blow one's nose'; <i>r.w.:</i> siin (NM) 'nasal mucus'
siko	INTR	'shift position, move a bit, make a slight movement' <i>r.w.:</i> siki (V, CAUS, TR) 'move s.t. a little'
tu'oo	INTR	'squat, get down on haunches (of camels)'

Conjugation 3b

dego	INTR	'get down from, alight'; <i>r.w.:</i> deg (V, ROOT, INTR) 'go lower, sink'; deji (V, CAUS, TR) 'cause to go down, lower, sink'
dhabbaco	INTR	'stretch out on one's stomach, lie prone'
dhifo	TR	'pull violently, snatch, jerk away'
duco	INTR	'strain (in childbirth or defecation), contract body muscles'
durduuro	INTR	'run wildly (of animals, e.g. excited camels)'

A second type of bodily action middles are *grooming verbs*, e.g. tidco 'braid one's hair' and xiidho 'shave (oneself)'. Such verbs seem often to occur in middle voice forms cross-linguistically: examples have been reported in languages as diverse as Ancient Greek (Bakker 1994), Hungarian and Quechua (Kemmer 1994). Examples of Somali grooming middles are below:

(14) *Bodily actions: (b) grooming verbs**Conjugation 3a*

diibso	INTR	'use some scent, perfume oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> diib (NM) 'perfume, fragrance'
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diifso	INTR	'blow one's nose'; <i>r.w.:</i> diif (~ duuf) (NM) 'nasal mucus, snot'
siinso	INTR	'blow one's nose'; <i>r.w.:</i> siin (NM) 'nasal mucus, snot'
subko	TR	'rub ghee or oil on one's hair'; <i>r.w.:</i> subag (NM) 'ghee, clarified butter'
tidco	TR	'braid one's hair'; <i>r.w.:</i> tidic (V, ROOT, TR) 'braid (hair)'
uunso	INTR	'perfume oneself with incense'; <i>r.w.:</i> uunsi (n.m) 'incense'
xaaqso	INTR	'expectorate'; <i>r.w.:</i> xaaq (V, ROOT, TR) 'sweep, brush clear'

Conjugation 3b

cusbuuro	INTR	'paint oneself up, dye oneself with henna'; <i>r.w.:</i> cusbur (NM) 'henna'
dhukayo	INTR	'clean one's ear, remove ear-wax'; <i>r.w.:</i> dhukay (NM) 'ear-wax'
feero	TR	'comb (one's hair)'; <i>r.w.:</i> feer (V, ROOT, TR) 'comb s.o.'s hair'
findhicilo	INTR	'pick one's teeth'; <i>r.w.:</i> findhicil (NM) 'fragrant tree species, used as a toothpick'
kuulo	INTR	'apply kohl to one's eyelashes; put on eyeliner'; <i>r.w.:</i> kuul (NF) 'kohl (eye make-up)'
luqluqo	INTR	'gargle, wash one's mouth out'; <i>r.w.:</i> luqluq (NM) 'mouthwash, water for rinsing mouth'
malaasayso	TR	'do one's hair with oil or gel (traditionally with malaas); set one's hair by flattening it'; <i>r.w.:</i> malaas (NF) 'red or white clay used in hairdressing'
maydho	INTR	'wash oneself, bathe oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> maydh (V, ROOT, TR) 'wash'
qoordiido	INTR	'get a razor cut, have one's hair cut at the back of the neck'; <i>r.w.:</i> qoor (NF) 'neck'
qubeyso	INTR	'take a bath'; <i>r.w.:</i> qub (V, ROOT, TR) 'spill'; u ... qubee (V, INTR, CAUS.) 'to bathe s.o.'
rifo	TR	'pluck, shave (one's hair, eyebrows, etc.)'; <i>r.w.:</i> rif (V, ROOT, TR) 'pluck'
rummayo	INTR	'brush or clean one's teeth with a rummay twig'; <i>r.w.:</i> rummay (NM) 'twig of the cadey plant used to clean teeth'
weesayso	INTR	'make one's ritual ablutions before praying'; <i>r.w.:</i> weeso (NF) 'ablutions before prayer'
xiidho	TR	'shave off (one's beard, etc.)'; <i>r.w.:</i> xiidh (V, ROOT, TR) 'shave off'

The third type of bodily actions is related to grooming verbs and describes actions involving the body and clothing, e.g. xidho 'dress up, put on (clothes)'. Examples include:

(15) Bodily actions: (c) clothing verbs

Conjugation 3a

garbasaaro	INTR	'wear a garbasaar shawl'; <i>r.w.:</i> garbasaar (NM or F) 'Somali woman's shawl'
garraarso	TR	'knot clothing over the right shoulder (as in women's dress); <i>r.w.:</i> garraar (NM) 'style of wearing women's clothes, involving knotting material over the shoulder, etc.'
garwaaxeedso	TR	'drape shawl or clothing around oneself (as when sitting on the ground)'
gasho	TR	'put on (one's clothes), wear'; <i>r.w.:</i> gal (V, ROOT, TR) 'enter'
gunto	INTR	'wrap clothing around one's waist; dress oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> gunud (NF) 'knot'; gunud (V, ROOT, TR) 'knot'
huwo	TR	'wrap (a cloth) round oneself; cover oneself with cloth or a blanket'; <i>r.w.:</i> hu (NM) 'clothing'
illo	TR	'put on, try on (shoes)'

Conjugation 3b

arratiro	INTR	'get oneself new clothes'; <i>r.w.:</i> arrad (V, ROOT, INTR) 'have worn clothing, need new clothes'
cimaamado	INTR	'wear a cimaamad'; <i>r.w.:</i> cimaamad (NF) 'man's shawl'
duubo	TR	'wrap oneself up, bind oneself, wrap on (a bandage, a turban)'; <i>r.w.:</i> duub (V, ROOT, TR) 'roll up, wrap'
feydo	TR	'unclothe, strip, show (off) part of one's body'; <i>r.w.:</i> feyd (V, ROOT, TR) 'take off, uncover'
ganbayso	INTR	to put on the ganbo; <i>r.w.:</i> ganbo (NF) 'woman's head-scarf'
hagoogo	TR	'cover the head with (a cloth), wrap a cloth round one's head'; <i>r.w.:</i> hagoog (V, ROOT, TR) 'cover'; hagooji (V, CAUS, TR) 'put a veil over a bride's head'
hullaabo	TR	'wrap (a cloth) around oneself (to be hidden from view)'; <i>r.w.:</i> hullow (V, ROOT, TR) 'cover, hide'
indhasaabo	INTR	'blindfold one's eyes'; <i>r.w.:</i> indho (NM PL) 'eyes'; saab (NM) 'protective cover'
indhashareero	INTR	'veil (oneself)'; <i>r.w.:</i> indho (NM PL) 'eyes'; shareer (V, ROOT, TR) 'block, obstruct'
labbiso	INTR	'dress oneself up, put on one's best clothes'; <i>r.w.:</i> labbis (NM) 'attire, dress, suit of clothes'
(~lebbiso)		
qaawiso	TR	'strip, remove clothes from, uncover (part of one's body)'; <i>r.w.:</i> qaawan (ADJ) 'naked, nude'; qaawi (V, CAUS, TR) 'strip (s.o.)'
qayiro	TR	'change (clothes)'; <i>r.w.:</i> qayir (V, ROOT, TR) 'change'
shukayso	INTR	'to put or wear the shuko'; <i>r.w.:</i> shuko (NF) 'the full black veil and cloak worn by some Muslim women'
sido	TR	'put on, wear'; <i>r.w.:</i> sid (V, ROOT, TR) 'carry'
xanjeero	TR	'knot and put on as a carrying sling for a baby'; <i>r.w.:</i> xanjeer (NM) 'carrying sling for a baby'

xeydo (~ xaydo)	TR	'tuck up (one's skirt or clothing) (for running, etc.); <i>r.w.:</i> xeyd (~ xayd) (V, ROOT, TR) 'lift, raise'
xidho	TR	'dress, put on (clothes)'; <i>r.w.:</i> xidh (V, ROOT, TR) 'fasten, close'
xijaabo	intr	'be veiled, get covered'; <i>r.w.:</i> xi jaab (V, ROOT, TR) 'veil, cover'

As can be seen from the examples above, bodily action middles, like reflexives, can be either transitive or intransitive.

3.4. Action affects the mind/emotions of the subject

This class of middle verbs includes actions which engage the emotions or cognitive abilities of the subject. They include verbs describing emotions of love, anger, etc., especially involving loss of control, but also include verbs describing talk activities, thinking, understanding and religious faith. One problem in describing this class is accounting for the fact that some verbs which seem to be in a related, or the same, semantic field are not middle verbs. This is particularly true of verbs of speech: thus while we find examples in the list below like xamo 'gossip', barooro 'keen, wail', and dhaaro 'swear (an oath)', other verbs like hadal 'talk', qayli 'shout' and hees 'sing' are not middle verbs. At our present level of knowledge this question cannot be answered: it may be that there is some semantic distinction between these verbs which requires a finer grained semantic analysis. Equally, it may be that these particular middle verbs represent some kind of metaphorical extension of verbs of bodily action. Below is a representative selection:

(16) Emotion & cognitive verbs

Conjugation 3a

aqoonso	TR	'recognize, acknowledge'; <i>r.w.:</i> yaqaan (V, PREFIX, TR) 'know'; aqoon (NF) 'knowledge'; aqoonsii (V, CAUS, TR) 'make s.o. know, understand'
bawso	TR	'learn through watching or listening'
cabso	INTR	'fear, be afraid'; <i>r.w.:</i> cabsii (V, CAUS, TR) 'frighten, make afraid'
calmo	TR	'like, love; choose'
dhayalso	TR	'take lightly or as a joke; not consider s.t. very important'; <i>r.w.:</i> dhayal (V, ROOT, INTR) 'joke'
dhibso	TR	'be annoyed at, feel irritated by'; <i>r.w.:</i> dhib (V, ROOT, TR) 'annoy, disturb, bother'
gacalso	TR	'show affection to, love, cherish'; <i>r.w.:</i> gacal (NM COLL) 'beloved people; parents'
garwaaqso	TR	'recall, remember'
gedmo	INTR	'be confused or mistaken'
karahso	TR	'dislike, have antipathy for'
laho	INTR	'be consumed with desire, have a burning desire'

miyirso	INTR	'come to, regain consciousness'; <i>r.w.</i> : miyir (NM) 'consciousness, ability to distinguish things; rationality'; <i>u...</i> miyiri (V, CAUS, INTR) 'bring someone to their senses, reassure, calm'
tasho	INTR	'consider, ponder, think over'
<i>Conjugation 3b</i>		
ashahaado	INTR	'say the profession of the Muslim faith'
baasayso	TR	'be pessimistic about, expect the worst; consider s.o. unfortunate'
baqo	INTR	'fear for oneself; flee because of fear'; <i>r.w.</i> : baq (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be afraid'
bargaro	TR	'partially forget, half remember'
baro	TR	'learn; study'; <i>r.w.</i> : bar (V, ROOT, TR) 'teach'
barooro	INTR	'mourn, keen, wail'; <i>r.w.</i> : baroor (NF) 'high pitched women's lament'
cabo	INTR	'complain, reproach'
canaano	TR	'scold, rebuke, reprimand; criticize'; <i>r.w.</i> : canaan (NF) 'reproof, censure'
caro	TR	'fly into a rage; destroy things in frustration'; <i>r.w.</i> : caro (NF) 'rage, fury'
cawdu-billeyso	INTR	'invoke protection from God against the devil'; <i>r.w.</i> : cawdu-billaahi (~ acuudu-billaahi) (Arabic) 'May God protect me!'
cibaadayso	INTR	'worship'
codo	INTR	'appeal, request, ask for s.t.'; <i>r.w.</i> : cod (NM) 'voice, vote'; codee (V, CAUS, TR) 'speak or vote in favour of s.o.'
cudurdaaro	INTR	'justify one's actions'
cululubo	TR	'remember, recall'
daalaco	TR	'read quietly or to oneself'
dabeebo	INTR	'argue'; <i>r.w.</i> : dabeeb (NF) 'discussion, argument'
deexo	INTR	'talk a lot, chatter on'
dhaaro	INTR	'swear, take an oath'; <i>r.w.</i> : dhaar (NF) 'oath'
dhabatayso	TR	'put the evil eye on s.o.'; <i>r.w.</i> : dhabato (NF) 'the evil eye'
dhegeyso	TR	'listen to'; <i>r.w.</i> : dheg (NF) 'ear'
dhigo	TR	'study, learn'; <i>r.w.</i> : dhig (V, ROOT, TR) 'write'
durraamo	TR	'pray to'
garo	TR	'understand, know (how)'
goco	TR	'remember, reminisce'
gooso	TR	'decide about, make up one's mind about'
hibo	TR	'reflect about s.t. continually, be incapable of forgetting'
jeclayso	TR	'long for, ardently desire'; <i>r.w.</i> : jecel (ADJ) 'wanting, enamoured of, in love with'
macnayso	INTR	'believe s.t. to be so; interpret, take as'
maho	INTR	'feel love, desire, affection'
nebcayso	TR	'hate, dislike'
niyeyso	TR	'intend, desire, bear in mind'
oddooroso	TR	'forecast, foresee'

quuso	INTR	'lose heart, despair, become discouraged'; <i>r.w.</i> : quus (NF) 'loss of hope'
rumayso	TR	'believe in, accept as true'; <i>r.w.</i> : run (NF) 'truth'
sharayso	TR	'consider bad, loathe, reject'
xamo	TR	'gossip, talk about s.o. absent'; <i>r.w.</i> : xan (NM) 'gossip'
xusuuso	TR	'remember, call to mind'; <i>r.w.</i> : xusuus (NF) 'memory'; xusuusi (V, CAUS, TR) 'cause to remember, remind'

Once again these middles include both transitive and intransitive verbs.

3.5. Action benefits the subject

As mentioned earlier, this use of middle voice verbs, usually termed *autobenefactive*, has been taken as representative of the functions of the affix -at, probably because it is the most productive use. However, as this present classification shows, it belongs to an array of related semantic categories.

While autobenefactive middles can be seen as adding an extra semantic argument to their base verb, they typically do not affect the syntactic argument structure of the base verb. Thus an intransitive verb like *ducee* 'pray, ask for God's blessing' forms the intransitive middle *duceyso* 'pray for oneself, ask God's blessing for oneself'; while the transitive verb *door* 'choose' forms the transitive middle *dooro* 'choose for oneself'.

Since this autobenefactive use of the middle affix is well attested, and is quite productive, we can provide a relatively short list from the very numerous examples.

(17) Middle Voice Verbs: autobenefactives

Conjugation 3a

daaqso	DTR	'put animals to pasture for oneself'; <i>r.w.</i> : daaq (V, ROOT, TR/INTR) 'graze' (of livestock); daaji (V, CAUS, TR) 'to put (animals) to pasture'
dhadhanso	TR	'taste s.t. for oneself'; <i>r.w.</i> : dhadhan (NM) 'taste'; dhadhansi (V, CAUS, TR) 'taste, try (food); dhadhansii (V, CAUS, TR) 'have someone taste s.t.'
dhiiqso	TR	'milk an animal for one's own benefit'; <i>r.w.</i> : dhiiq (V, ROOT, INTR) 'give milk (of udder)'
eedayso	TR	'accuse or blame s.o. for one's own benefit'; <i>r.w.</i> : eed (V, ROOT, TR) 'blame, accuse'; eeddee (V, CAUS, TR) 'accuse, criticize'
faasho	INTR	'predict or foretell the future for oneself'; <i>r.w.</i> : faal (NM) 'omen, divination (by pebbles); faali (V, CAUS, INTR) 'predict the future'
hubso	TR	'make sure of s.t. for oneself, ascertain, be sure; investigate'; <i>r.w.</i> : hub (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be sure'; hubi (V, CAUS, TR) 'make sure of, verify'

jabso	TR	'break for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> jab (V, ROOT, INTR) 'break'; jebi (V, CAUS, TR) 'break'
kaydso	TR	'save, store away for oneself, preserve'; <i>r.w.:</i> kayd (NM) 'reserve, store'; kaydi (V, CAUS, TR) 'store, preserve, reserve'
muraadso	INTR	'take an interest for oneself; be involved in'; <i>r.w.:</i> u ... muraad (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be interested in, concerned with'
qabso	TR	'capture, catch, get for oneself; do for oneself; conquer, seize; occupy; violate (a woman)'; <i>r.w.:</i> qab (V, ROOT, TR) 'have, hold, possess'; qabo (V, MIDDLE, TR) 'catch hold of, hold in the hand, arrest, detain'
quruxso	TR	'make beautiful for oneself, adorn for one's own benefit'; <i>r.w.:</i> qurux (NF) 'beauty'; qurxi (V, CAUS, TR) 'make beautiful, decorate'
raadso	TR	'look for s.o. or s.t. for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> raad (NM) 'footprint, track, trail'; raadi (V, CAUS, TR) 'track, pursue, look for'
shukaanso	TR	'woo or court s.o. on one's own, for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> shukaami (V, CAUS, TR) 'woo, court'
unko	TR	'begin to make s.t. for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> unug (V, ROOT, TR) 'begin to make s.t.'
xayubso	TR	'grab s.t. and take it away by force for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> xayuubi (V, CAUS, TR) 'snatch away, take away by violence'

Conjugation 3b

baaro	TR	'try to find out for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> baar (V, ROOT, TR) 'try to find out, investigate'
beero	TR	'farm or cultivate for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> beer (V, ROOT, TR) 'farm, cultivate'
danayso	INTR	'pursue one's own interests, be opportunistic'; <i>r.w.:</i> dan (NF) 'interest'; daneer (V, CAUS, TR) 'be interested in s.t.'
dooro	TR	'choose or select for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> door (V, ROOT, TR) 'choose'
duceyso	INTR	'pray for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> ducee (V, CAUS, INTR) 'pray, ask for God's blessing'
faago	TR	'dig for oneself (a hole, den, burrow) (of animals)'; <i>r.w.:</i> faag (V, ROOT, TR) 'dig'
fasiro	TR	'explain s.t. for oneself, interpret'; <i>r.w.:</i> fasir (V, ROOT, TR) 'explain'
hayso	TR	'have; keep for oneself; possess'; <i>r.w.:</i> hay (V, STATIVE, TR) 'have, possess'
liso	TR	'milk (an animal) for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> lis (V, ROOT, TR) 'milk (an animal)'
masabbido	TR	'slander s.o. (for one's own benefit), blame falsely'; <i>r.w.:</i> masabbid (V, ROOT, TR) 'slander'
qaado	TR	'take for oneself, accept, borrow'; <i>r.w.:</i> qaad (V, ROOT, TR) 'take'

galo	TR	'slaughter for oneself; sacrifice'; <i>r.w.:</i> qal (V, ROOT, TR) 'slaughter'
uumo	TR	'create s.t. for oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> uun (V, ROOT, TR) 'create'
weyddiiso	DTR	'request s.t. of s.o.; ask or urge s.o. for s.t. on behalf of oneself'; <i>r.w.:</i> weyddii (V, DTR) 'ask s.o. for s.t.'

3.6. Subject undergoes a process but has no control over it

The final class of middles consists of verbs where the subjects undergo a process over which they have no control. Typically the verbs describe events or processes which change the state of the subject and can thus be labelled inchoatives, e.g. habso 'collapse, fall in pieces' or rayso 'get well, heal'. As can be seen from the examples below, these verbs include a large range of natural processes like dhalo 'be born', mirayso 'bear fruit', and ilkayso 'teethe, grow teeth'.

This class seems semantically to be at the opposite end of the middle voice range from reflexive middles, where typically the subject is involved in the action both as agent and patient. In these inchoative middles the subject is clearly a non-agent and the verb describes not a linking action but a process which the subject undergoes. It is significant that unlike other middle classes where the verb may be transitive or intransitive, these inchoative middles are always intransitive. Note too that many of this set are derived from noun bases.

One further point is worth making. These inchoative middles can have as subjects both entities who could, with other verbs, display agency and those which could not. So a verb like buko 'get ill' can be used of people, while verbs like dharabso 'collect dew, get covered in dew' or daxalayso 'become rusty, get covered in rust' will naturally have non-sentient subjects.

We discuss the relationship of this class to other middles in section 4. Some examples are given below; again we include a substantial list because this function of the middle has largely escaped attention.

*(18) Middle Voice Verbs: Uncontrolled Inchoation**Conjugation 3a*

badso	INTR	'increase'; <i>r.w.:</i> badi (V, CAUS, TR) 'make numerous, increase'
balqo	INTR	'spill over or out of (a container)'; <i>r.w.:</i> balaq (NM) 'small quantity of liquid'; balqi (V, CAUS, TR) 'spill'
bogso	INTR	'get well, heal, recover'
buko	INTR	'become sick, ail'; <i>r.w.:</i> bug (~ buk) (V, ROOT, INTR) 'be sick'
burqo	INTR	'gush, pour out'

dharabso	INTR	'collect dew; get covered with dew'; <i>r.w.:</i> dharab (NM) 'dew'; dharbi (V, CAUS, TR) 'moisten, sprinkle with water'
doogso	INTR	'receive abundant rain'; <i>r.w.:</i> doog (V, ROOT, TR) 'conserve rainwater'
doorso	INTR	'change; heal, get better'; <i>r.w.:</i> doori (V, CAUS, TR) 'change, improve'
garaadso	INTR	'reach the age of reason, reach maturity'; <i>r.w.:</i> garaad (NM) 'understanding, reason'
habso	INTR	'collapse, fall to pieces'
qarxo	INTR	'explode, burst'; <i>r.w.:</i> qarax (n.m) 'explosion'; qarax (V, ROOT, INTR) 'explode'; qarxi (V, CAUS, TR); cause to explode'
sulxo	INTR	'slip, slide'; <i>r.w.:</i> sulux (NM) 'slipperiness, slippery ground'

Conjugation 3b

baaho	INTR	'be hungry; be in need'; <i>r.w.:</i> baahi (NF) 'need, hunger'
bado	INTR	'increase, multiply'; <i>r.w.:</i> badi (NF) 'big amount, mass, multitude'; badi (V, CAUS, TR) 'increase'
ballaadho	INTR	'become wide, get enlarged'; <i>r.w.:</i> ballaadhs (V, MIDDLE, TR) 'widen for oneself'
bilaabo	INTR	'get started'; <i>r.w.:</i> bilaab (V, ROOT, TR) 'start, begin'
bilo	INTR	'start, commence (of a lunar month)'; <i>r.w.:</i> bil (NF) 'crescent moon'
bu'o	INTR	'open with a pop, burst open'
buuro	INTR	'grow fatter; get stronger; swell up'; <i>r.w.:</i> buuran (ADJ) 'fat, plump'
caaryayso	INTR	'develop mould; decay, become decayed'; <i>r.w.:</i> caaryo (NF) 'mould, mildew'
cagaaro	INTR	'turn green'; <i>r.w.:</i> cagaar (NM) 'green colour'
caleemayso	INTR	'sprout and put forth leaves (of a tree)'; <i>r.w.:</i> caleen (NF) 'leaf'
caqliso	INTR	'become intelligent; become experienced'; <i>r.w.:</i> caqli (NM) 'intelligence, wisdom'
ciirayso	INTR	'become pale (travel worn)'; <i>r.w.:</i> ciiro (NF) 'grey colour'
curo	INTR	'become initiated; be created; give birth for the first time'; <i>r.w.:</i> curad (NM) 'firstborn child'
daabo	INTR	'become sick, get diarrhoea (of young animals)'; <i>r.w.:</i> daab (NF) 'diarrhoea in young animals (caused by taking too much milk)'
daado	INTR	'spill down, pour down, flow away'; <i>r.w.:</i> daad (NM) 'flood, floodwater'; daadi (V, CAUS, TR) 'water, irrigate'
dagiigoxo	INTR	'slide down, slip'
daxalayso	INTR	'become rusty, get covered with rust'; <i>r.w.:</i> daxal (NM) 'rust'
dhalo	INTR	'be born'; <i>r.w.:</i> dhal (V, ROOT, TR) 'sire, beget'

dhimo	INTR	'die, pass away'; <i>r.w.:</i> dhin (V, ROOT, TR) 'reduce, curtail, diminish'
¹ doogo	INTR	'benefit from abundant rain, be rained on heavily'; <i>r.w.:</i> doog (NM) 'greenery, fresh grass (after rain)'
² doogo	INTR	'reopen, become painful (of an old wound)'; <i>r.w.:</i> doog (NF) 'effects of a wound'
foolo	INTR	'be in labour, start to give birth'; <i>r.w.:</i> fool (NF) 'labour, birth pains'
furfuro	INTR	'come untied, come loose, come apart'; <i>r.w.:</i> fur (V, ROOT, TR) 'open'
guduudo	INTR	'become red, reddish-brown'; <i>r.w.:</i> guduud (NM) 'red colour, red-brown colour'
hoobo	INTR	'be destroyed, be annihilated'; <i>r.w.:</i> hoobi (V, CAUS, TR) 'destroy, annihilate'
ilkayso	INTR	'teethe, grow teeth'; <i>r.w.:</i> ilig (NM) 'tooth' (PLURAL: ilko NM 'teeth')
jiriiricoo	INTR	'get goosebumps, get gooseflesh'
kabo	INTR	'recover, recuperate; set (of broken bone)'; <i>r.w.:</i> kab (V, ROOT, TR) 'mend, repair, set (of bones)'
labeenayso	INTR	'form cream on top (as milk)'; <i>r.w.:</i> labeen (NF) 'cream'
le'o	INTR	'die off; become extinct'
¹ maarayso	INTR	'get rusty, get oxidized'; <i>r.w.:</i> maar (NF) 'rust'
² maareyso	INTR	'get spoiled, go bad, go off (water etc.)'; <i>r.w.:</i> maar (NF) 'going bad'
madho	INTR	'become empty, get used up'; <i>r.w.:</i> madhi (V, CAUS, TR) 'empty, finish off'
malaxayso	INTR	'suppurate, form pus, become pussy'; <i>r.w.:</i> malax (NF) 'pus'
mirayso	INTR	'bear fruit, give fruit'; <i>r.w.:</i> miro (NM) 'fruit'
nabayso	INTR	'get pimples; get infected (blister etc.)'; <i>r.w.:</i> nabar (NM) 'wound, sore, abscess, infection'
naqayso	INTR	'grow green again, sprout (after rain)'; <i>r.w.:</i> naq (NM) 'fresh growth after rain'
qolfayso	INTR	'form a scab (of wound); be covered with scabs'; <i>r.w.:</i> qolof (NF) 'scab, scale'
qubo	INTR	'spill, be spilt; fall (of leaves or fruit)'; <i>r.w.:</i> qub (V, ROOT, TR) 'spill'
qumbaco	INTR	'have a relapse (into a former illness)'
rayso	INTR	'get well, heal'; <i>r.w.:</i> ray (V, ROOT, INTR) 'improve, progress'
sisibo	INTR	'slip, slide'; <i>r.w.:</i> sisib (NF) 'slippery place'
ubaxayso	INTR	'flower, produce flowers'; <i>r.w.:</i> ubax (NM) 'flower'
waalo	INTR	'become insane, go mad'; <i>r.w.:</i> waal (V, ROOT, TR) 'make mad, drive insane'

4. The semantics of middle voice: general comments

The main aim of this article has been to present the range of uses of the middle affix -at; and to suggest that given this range it is more accurate to label the

affix a *middle* affix rather than simply an *autobenefactive* affix. Clearly further investigation of the semantics of this affix is required. In this section we can sketch a couple of issues important to such an investigation.

4.1. Formation of middle verbs

We can see from the related words sections in the examples earlier that the middle affix can create middle verbs from a range of bases: for example, from root verbs, e.g. *tidic* (V, ROOT, TR) 'braid (hair)' → *tidco* (V, MIDDLE, TR) 'braid one's (hair)'; or from causative verbs, e.g. *diiri* (V, CAUS, TR) 'make warm' → *diirso* (V, MIDDLE, INTR) 'warm oneself'. A very small number of verbs seem to be derived directly from nouns, e.g. *guduud* (NM) 'reddish-brown colour' → *gudduudo* (V, MIDDLE) 'turn reddish-brown'.¹¹

The semantic effect of the middle affix is of course dependent upon the inherent semantics of the base to which it is attached. We can see this by comparing examples of different derivational 'paths' based on the same root. So, for example, the noun *ballaar* (NF) 'width, breadth' can be the base for the inchoative middle verb *ballaaro* (INTR) 'become wide, widen, broaden'. However this root can also form a causative verb *balaari* (TR) 'make wider, widen', which in turn can be the base for a different middle verb, which has an *autobenefactive* meaning: *ballaarso* (TR) 'widen for oneself, for one's own benefit'. Two similar examples are in (19) and (20) below:

- (19) (a) *dhaar* (NF) 'oath' → *dhaaro* (V, MIDDLE, INTR) 'swear an oath'
 (b) *dhaar* (NF) 'oath' → *dhaari* (V, CAUS, TR) 'make s.o. swear (an oath)' → *dhaarso* (V, MIDDLE, TR) 'swear (an oath) for one's own benefit'
- (20) (a) *layr* (NF) 'air, breeze' → *layro* (V, MIDDLE, INTR) 'flap in the wind, flutter in the breeze'
 (b) *layr* (NF) 'air, breeze' → *layri* (V, CAUS, TR) 'fan, air s.t. out' → *layrso* (V, MIDDLE, INTR) 'place oneself in the breeze/in the fresh air'

One related point is that while most middle verbs have existing verbal bases, there are gaps in the system: middle verbs like *soco* 'walk, go on, proceed' or *noqo* 'turn back, go back', for example, have no non-middle counterparts. It is also interesting that some verbs are ambiguous between uses of the middle. The verb *diirso*, for example, which derived from *diir* (root, INTR) 'become

warm' and *diiri* (caus, TR) 'warm', can be interpreted in two ways: as an intransitive reflexive meaning 'warm oneself' or a transitive *autobenefactive* 'warm s.t. for oneself'.

4.2. Transitivity

Middle affixes are often described as argument reducing or *detransitivizing* elements. We can see, though, from our examples that the middle affix in Somali does not have a unified and simple, purely syntactic effect of this kind. The middle voice affix changes the semantic argument structure of a base verb but its effect on the base verb's syntactic argument structure cannot be summed up in a simple unitary rule. Thus the *autobenefactive* use of the middle involves the addition of a semantic argument with no effect on syntactic argument structure, while some, but not all, reflexive middles involve the absorption of a syntactic argument into the lexical semantics of the verb. Finally, it seems that non-control inchoatives are routinely intransitive, whatever the argument structure of the underlying verb. The conclusion we will draw here is that the effect of the middle affix on the syntactic argument structure of a base verb is complex and beyond the scope of this preliminary survey.

4.3. The semantic unity of middle voice

We have identified six basic uses of middle voice in Somali. As mentioned earlier, the six sets of verbs described do not form clearly defined, mutually exclusive sets. There are possible overlaps: some verbs might be assigned to more than one class, or their membership may be open to debate. The verb *miyrso* 'come to, regain consciousness', for example, which we have classified as a verb of cognition, might be described instead as a non-control inchoative middle. Similarly we would hardly expect to be able to draw a firm line between verbs describing actions done to oneself (as in reflexives) and those done to one's body (as in some bodily action middles). Indeed we will take this overlapping to result from the fact that these middle verb classes form a continuum of what we might call the *locus of effect* of the action of the verb. We could such characterize such a continuum as in (21).

(21) *Locus of effect in middle verbs*

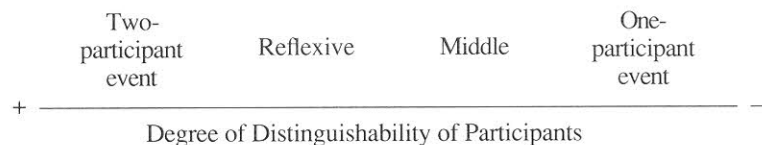
subject and others (reciprocals) – subject's interests (*autobenefactives*) –
 subject's self (*reflexives*) – subject's body – subject's emotions/mind

We could contrast these uses with what Givón (1984) has called the *prototypical transitive event*, where there are two distinct entities: an agent acting with volition upon an inanimate patient which is affected by the event. These uses of the middle in Somali can be seen as a way of characterizing situations divergent from this prototypical two-participant event: events where the distinction between the participants is eroded. Kemmer (1994) suggests

¹¹ Though this may simply be a case where an intermediate verb is not in use, as discussed below. The more normal derivational path is for a noun to be formed into a verb by the very productive process of adding the *-ays* (*ayn*) affix e.g. *barako* (n.f.) 'blessing, divine favour' → *barakee* (v., tr.) 'bless, give blessing' (see Saeed 1993: 61 for a description of this affix). Thereafter a middle verb may be formed from this derived verb: → *barakayso* (v., middle) 'gain divine favour for oneself (by pious deeds)'.

adding another, opposing pole: a prototypical one-participant event, and a cline of participant differentiation between them, as in the diagram (22) below.

(22) *Situation types and participants* (Kemmer 1994: 209)



Thus languages, like Somali, with middle constructions have two intermediate characterizations of situations, reflexive and middle, between the two poles of two- and one-participant events.

This seems a promising approach to Somali middles for the uses described in (21) but it leaves us with the problem of incorporating into this schema the last class of middle verbs: non-control inchoatives. As we saw, these verbs typically describe one-participant events: the subject is the one participant and some process or event outside the subject's control effects a change of state in the subject. One unifying approach might be to adopt from Klaiman (1991) the notion of *affectedness* and claim that what all of these middle uses have in common is that the verb's subject is the entity affected by the action. This is essentially the traditional approach to middle voice, characterized as follows by Lyons (1968):

The implications of the middle (when it is in opposition with the active) are that the 'action' or 'state' affects the subject of the verb or his interests. (Lyons 1968: 373)

One question this leaves for future investigation, though, is the relationship between these non-control middles and simple active intransitives in Somali.

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