Reflexive - Middle and Reciprocal - Middle Continua in Romanian

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1. Introduction

The term "middle" has enjoyed increasing attention in linguistics since first being coined (Oxford English Dictionary, 1921:5521) to depict an inflectional category found in Modern Greek. The subject of "middle" and "middle domains" has been approached from the perspective of functional, typological and cognitive frameworks, following contributions made by Cornilescu (1998), Faltz (1985), Frajzyngier and Traci (eds. 1999a, b), Geniušienė (1987), Givón (1994), Haiman (1983), Kemmer (1993a, b), Lakoff (1977), Langacker (1987, 1991), Maldonado (1992, 1999) and Manney (2000).

The present work investigates two middles categories found inside the Romanian Middle Domain, namely reflexive middles and reciprocal middles (defined in what follows) and aims to show that: (1) Kemmer's (1993a, b) cross-linguistic account of middle voice systems is also applicable to Romanian, and more significantly (2) that the two middle situation types form semantic and formal continua with their non-middle counterparts, prototypical reflexives and prototypical reciprocals, respectively. The paper is organized as follows: section 2 recapitulates the basic terminology and nomenclature concerning middles and middle systems and gives a short insight into the essence of the middle prototype; sections 3 and 4 introduce the reflexive-middle continua and the reciprocal-middle continua in Romanian, respectively; and finally, section 5 summarizes the main contributions of the work.

2. The middle prototype

According to Kemmer, a middle system represents "the set of relations between the morphosyntactic and semantic middle categories" (1993b:238). By a *morphosyntactic middle* is understood "a language specific category characterized by an overt marker (or paradigm of morphologically related markers) that in the course of time acquires the function of expressing the semantic category of middle" (Kemmer 1993b:237).

In Romanian, the morphosyntactic middle is the pronominal *se* and its variants; hence, I will refer to *se* as the Romanian *middle marker, the* middle marker because Romanian obeys the general tendency (cf. Kemmer 1993b:47) of only having one such marker. By *middle marker* is meant the grammatical device used to "indicate that the two semantic roles of Initiator and Endpoint refer to a single holistic entity" (Kemmer 1993b:66). Its function contrasts with that of a reflexive marker, which is used to indicate "the unusual fact that the different roles happen to be filled by the same entity" (ibid). In other words, middle markers simply confirm the fact (without placing special emphasis on it) that two semantic roles are filled by the same

entity, whereas reflexive markers draw attention to a situation in which this unusual coreference of participant roles takes place. In middles, the coreference is natural, whereas in reflexives it is more significant and somewhat unexpected. The contrast between reflexives and middles stems from the observation made by Faltz (1977:7), and confirmed by Kemmer (1993b) in a cross-linguistic survey, that verbs such as *wash*, *shave*, *bathe* and *dress* are "commonly performed reflexively by people" (we will see more examples at the end of this section and in sections 3 and 4). While this frequent usage does not deny the possibility of their use in a non-self-directed context, it has led to their being marked as a special category, distinct from other verbs which are not used in this way – namely as middles.

Languages which contain a middle marker and a middle system (as defined above) are termed *middle-marking languages,* Romanian being of this type. Situation types which are expressed through the help of a middle marker are referred to as *middle situations* or *middle uses,* and together all middle uses constitute the *Middle Domain[1]* of a language.

According to Kemmer (1993b:73), the middle category is placed on a continuum formed by prototypical one-participant events and prototypical two-participant events, roughly half-way between reflexives and one-participant events. At one end of the continuum, we have events that are characterized as having one participant, both physically and conceptually, and hence no degree of distinguishability between participant roles. Middle events are similar to this, with the exception that they have some minimal degree of distinguishability between participant roles. Reflexive events have two distinct participants conceptually, but only one physically (the actions they depict are self-directed). Finally, at the other end of the continuum, we find events which encompass two distinct participants, both conceptually and physically, and have a high degree of distinguishability between participant roles.

Reciprocal middles constitute a kind of extension to reflexive middles, where instead of dealing with distinguishability of participant roles, what we have is rather distinguishability of component sub-events. This is discussed in further detail in section 4, where reciprocal middles are defined and exemplified.

Despite its lack of precise boundaries, the middle category can be delimited with the help of the following two semantic properties:
　　(1) Initiator as affected entity (Endpoint),
　　(2) Low degree of elaboration of events.　　　　　　　　　　(Kemmer 1993b:238)

First, the Initiator of an event is coreferential with the Endpoint of that event. This is in agreement with the definition of the middle voice proposed by Lyons in which "the 'action' or 'state' affects the subject of the verb or his interests" (1968:373).

Secondly, extending his definition, Kemmer defines the semantic property of *degree of elaboration of events* as being "the degree to which the participants and component subevents in a particular verbal event are distinguished" (1993b:121). The speaker has a choice of either

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[1] The term "Middle Domain" is given in capital initial letters (and so will all other domain names such as the Reciprocal Domain), in order to eliminate the potential confusion between the category "middle" and the overall domain of "middle".

presenting an event or its participants as "undifferentiated wholes" (ibid) or as distinct entities. The semantic and pragmatic factors which pertain to the property of elaboration of events are summarized by Kemmer as:
(1) Backgrounding of participants,
(2) Predictability or expectedness of certain participant relations,
(3) Degree of conceptual complexity in a participant.   (Kemmer 1993b:209)

Other notions related to that of relative elaboration of events are found in the literature, such as "conceptual independence" of participants or sub-events (Haiman 1983), "individuation of participants" (Hopper and Thompson 1980), "non-distinctness of arguments" (Langacker and Munro 1975) or "distinctness of participants or relations" (Lichtenberk 1985).

Kemmer (1993b) summarizes Middle Domains found in the world's languages as including the following components (or a subset of these, depending on the language): body action events, indirect middles, logophoric middles, naturally reciprocal events, cognition middles, spontaneous middles and passive middles. In Romanian, the middle marker *se* occurs in all the types identified by Kemmer, with the exception of logophoric middles. Body action events, indirect middles and cognition middles form what I term the category of reflexive middles, and naturally reciprocal events form the class of reciprocal middles. There are exemplified below in sentences (1) and (2). They constitute the focus of the paper and each one will be discussed in the following sections (the other middle types are beyond the scope of the paper and will not be mentioned further).

(1) Naturally reflexive middle
 El   *se*   *lungeşte.*
 3SG:NOM:MASC   3:ACC   lie.down
 'He lies [himself] down.'

(2) Naturally reciprocal middle
 Generalii *se*   *ceartă.*
 generals   3:ACC   argue
 'The generals are arguing with each other.'

3. Reflexive − Middle continuum

3.1 Naturally reflexive middles and prototypical reflexives in Romanian.

As discussed in the previous section, a prototypical reflexive construction represents situations where the Agent NP or Experiencer NP is coreferential with the Patient NP or Stimulus NP (Kemmer 1993b). Similarly, syntactically, it can be interpreted to be the situation where the subject of a sentence is coreferential with its object. The *primary reflexive strategy*, as described by Faltz (1985), or the main strategy found in Romanian for encoding reflexive situations comprises the set of pronouns often referred to as "reflexive pronouns" by various grammars (such as Avram 1986 and Bărbuţă *et al* 2000) and their use (specifically, the third person singular accusative forms) was exemplified in examples (1) and (2) above.

In addition to a primary reflexive strategy, Faltz also identifies a second type of strategy for expressing reflexivity, termed a *secondary reflexive strategy*. This strategy has the same function as the primary reflexive strategy, namely that of signalling a "reflexive-like coreference" (Faltz 1985:21), but it involves oblique noun phrases. In Romanian, the secondary strategy comprises an emphatic pronoun which carries the essence of the coreferentiality following the corresponding accusative pronoun. It is hence a *compound reflexive* (Faltz 1985:49). The sentence in (3) illustrates the use of the third person singular masculine accusative form, required by the preposition.

(3) *Ion discută   cu   Maria despre el   însuşi.*
    Ion converses with Maria about 3SG:MASC:ACC 3SG:MASC:ACC(EMPH)
    'Ion talks to Maria about himself.'

The sentence in (4) shows what happens when the emphatic pronoun is left out.

(4) *Ion$_i$ discută   cu   Maria despre el$_{i,j}$.*
    Ion converses with Maria about 3SG:MASC:ACC
    'Ion$_i$ talks to Maria about himself$_i$/him$_j$.'

In (4), the topic of Ion and Maria's conversation could be either Ion or some other male participant – the sentence is ambiguous. However, by employing the emphatic pronoun *însuşi*, the speaker can anchor the meaning of the oblique noun phrase back to the Agent noun phrase Ion, as given in (3).

It follows that Romanian is a *two-form non-cognate language* (Kemmer 1993b), having a light form, the middle marker *se* involved in the primary reflexive strategy, and a heavy one, the emphatic *însuşi* used in the secondary reflexive strategy. The two forms are not historically related. The light-heavy distinction is made according to phonological content (*se* having less phonological content than *însuşi*).

However, there is no direct contrast between the actual light and heavy forms[2], as found by Kemmer (1993b) in a wide range of languages. In Romanian, the contrast occurs between the occurrence of the middle *se* form on the one hand, and the combination of *se* and *însuşi* on the other. This is illustrated in examples (5) and (6).

(5) *Ion se   spală.*
    Ion 3SG:ACC washes
    'Ion is washing.'

(6) *Ion se   ceartă pe   el   însuşi.*
    Ion 3SG:ACC scold   on   3SG:ACC 3SG:MASC(EMPH)

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[2] This is because, as pointed out by one of the referees, the heavy form is exclusively used in oblique positions, whereas the light one never occurs in such positions. While an explanation as to why this should be the case is interesting to explore, this is beyond the scope of the present paper and is left for future research.

'Ion is scolding himself.'

The examples given in (5) and (6) contrast in more then just their formal marking. They also differ with respect to their semantic content, on a deeper level than the obvious difference between the acts of 'washing' and 'scolding': they differ with respect to their conceptualization, as will be maintained in what follows.

If we consider the sentence in (6), Ion's act of scolding himself is neither required, nor expected to be self-directed under the default reading – people tend to scold others and (arguably) only rarely themselves. In contrast, the act of washing, given in (5), is often used in a self-directed way. It is more common for Ion to wash himself than it is for him to wash somebody else. As mentioned in section 1, while it is not denied that people can and do talk about washing things/entities other than themselves, one schema which appears to be frequent with the verb 'wash' (among others) is its use in situations where Initiators and Endpoints are identical. Haiman (1983) termed verbs depicting these kinds of events *introverted*. Introverted verbs denote "actions which the subject generally performs upon one's self" (1983:803). They contrast with *extroverted* verbs which depict "actions which are usually performed toward others" (ibid). Note that the two terms form a graded continuum, rather than denoting discrete classes, in that, some verbs are clearly introverted, other verbs are clearly extroverted and others still lie somewhere in between the two notions, thus not being able to be categorized as either introverted or extroverted.

Secondly, Ion can be understood to be more affected by his actions in sentence (5), since his washing affects his physical state, but his scolding himself does not.

Thirdly, the situation in (6) alludes to a kind of "split" between "the Ion" that is doing the scolding and "the Ion" that is being scolded. In (5), however, there is no such split; there, Ion the Agent and Ion the Theme appear fused into one single entity (which functions in two different capabilities). Put another way, examples (5) and (6) start out from a different set of assumptions regarding the expectedness or requirements of the action expressed and they uncover a different conceptualization in terms of the number and affectedness of the participants involved. I view Haiman's introverted-extroverted opposition as working in harmony with Kemmer's notion of participant distinguishability, rather than in opposition to it (for an alternative view see Smith 2004).

One observation which can be made concerns the fact that the heavy marker, *însuşi*, does not necessarily always occur with a preposition (although this is often the case). For instance, in the case of coreferential Agents and Beneficiaries, no preposition is required:

(7) *Ion* *îşi*   *demonstrează* *lui*   *însuşi*   *teorema.*
     Ion   3:DAT   demonstrate   3SG:MASC:DAT   3SG:MASC(EMPH)   theorem
     'Ion is demonstrating the theorem to himself.'

The Agent role is coreferential with the Beneficiary role (both pointing to Ion), as signalled by the two forms *îşi* (the dative variant of *se*) + *însuşi*. The emphatic form *însuşi* cannot be left out:

(8) **Ion îşi demonstrează lui teorema.*
  Ion 3:DAT demonstrate 3SG:MASC:DAT theorem

If, however, *lui însuşi* is left out (as in 9), the default interpretation is that Ion is demonstrating *his* (own) theorem (the one he came up with) to someone else – no coreferentiality is implied (though admittedly, under special circumstances, it can also be interpreted as self-directed, but this is only in rare contexts).

(9) *Ion îşi demonstrează teorema.*
  Ion 3:DAT demonstrate theorem
  'Ion is demonstrating his (own) theorem.'

The situation types which are formally and semantically similar to (5) and (7) are referred to as **prototypical reflexives** and those represented by (6) are termed **naturally reflexive middles**. Prototypical reflexives refer to what is usually understood as the "typical" reflexive construction, containing two normally distinct participant roles that happen to be borne by the same entity. On the other hand, naturally reflexive middles depict situations which are necessarily or frequently semantically reflexive and often involve introverted verbs[3]. In Romanian, naturally reflexive middles comprise body action middles (*se spăla* 'wash oneself', *îşi pieptăna* 'brush one's hair', *îşi întinde* 'stretch one's [arm]', *se trezi* 'wake up', *se lupta* 'fight for oneself') and mental middles (*se decide* 'decide', *îşi vedea* 'see one's [interest]', *îşi plînge* 'cry for one's [pity]', *se teme* 'be scared of').

3.2 Continua between naturally reflexive middles and prototypical reflexives.

So far we have seen that Romanian natural reflexive middles are semantically characterized by the following properties:
  (1) Low distinguishability of participants,
  (2) Typically affected Agents and Experiencers,
  (3) The actions they denote are expected to be performed on, through or for oneself.
Following Kemmer (1993b), these properties are collapsed into the more general semantic property of low elaboration of events (introduced in section 2). In contrast, prototypical reflexive situations involve a higher distinguishability of participants and actions which are not intrinsically expected to be performed on, through or for oneself. In other words, they exhibit comparatively higher elaboration of events. Formally, the semantic middle-reflexive contrast is mirrored in Romanian by a light-heavy contrast in marking: verbs such as *se pieptăna* 'comb (oneself)', *se duce* 'go', *se apleca* 'bend (oneself) down', *se trezi* 'wake (oneself) up', *se decide* (decide), *se asemăna* (resemble), *se plînge* (complain), *se lăuda* (boast) all take the light marker *se*, whereas verbs such as *preda* (teach), *picta* (draw), *urla* (scream), *certa* (scold), *învinui* (blame), *vorbi* (talk), etc. all take the heavy form *însuşi* in combination with *se*.

However, a closer inspection of the Romanian data suggests that there is no rigid boundary between the two categories of natural reflexive middles and prototypical reflexives, but rather

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[3] Interestingly, the verb *se sinucide* 'to commit suicide' takes light marking. It is obvious that *se sinucide* is a highly introverted verb since no one can commit suicide for anyone else: * *Ion sinucide pe Maria* * 'Ion commits suicide on Maria'. This brings further support to the claim that introverted verbs require middle marking.

the two categories form semantic and formal continua where one category "blends" into the other. First, we will see formal evidence for this and subsequently semantic evidence will be presented. Consider the example (10):

(10) *Emma* **se** *convinge (pe sine* **însăşi)** *să plece.*
    Emma 3:ACC convinces on 3:ACC 3SG:FEM(EMPH) to leave
    'Emma convinces herself to leave.'

The participant of the event depicted in example (10), namely Emma, is affected by her act of leaving and the event is conceptualized as having a single participant; but the verb need not denote a self-directed action (it is the more common case that one tries to convince someone *else* to do something). The heavy marker functions as an emphatic, stressing the fact that the event comprises a self-directed action. Hence the sentence in (10) shares two out of the three semantic properties associated with middles: having low degree of participant distinguishability and affected Agents and Experiencers, but not the expectation that the action have identical participants. The middleness of (10) is reflected by the obligatory occurrence of the light marking. On the other hand, its semantic divergence from the prototypical middle situation type is formally mirrored by the optional presence of the heavy marking. These situation types are termed **reflexive emphatic middles**, in order to show their strong middle characteristics on one hand, and the function of the optional heavy marking, which emphasizes the coreference among the NPs encoding the participants involved, on the other.

Example (10) shows support for the claim that the two categories of prototypical reflexives and naturally reflexive middles span formal and semantic continua onto which sentences are placed on the basis of their marking patterns and semantic differences. The two continua are connected in that the marking patterns employed are motivated by graded semantic differences in terms of the speaker's conceptualization of the events. The optional or obligatory presence of the heavy marker in the intermediate categories between natural reflexive middles and prototypical reflexives alludes to a *mind-body split* (to varying degrees, depending on the situation), as noted by Haiman (1995).

At the middle end of the continua we have natural reflexive middles which denote situation types marked by the light pronominal (*se*), contrasting with prototypical reflexives denoting events marked by both the light and the heavy forms and exhibiting middle semantics. Actions which involve one and the same participant filling distinct semantic roles are placed closer to the middle end of the continua. Similarly, situations where the identical participants are conceptualized as one holistic entity also push them towards the middle end of the continua. This type of conceptualization may arise out of two possible scenarios: (1) the aforementioned intrinsic expectation that the action is self-directed, or (2) the speaker's desire to background the coreferentiality relation in favor of foregrounding some other aspect of the event. All these situation types receive light marking *(se* form).

Reflexive emphatic middles are placed in between the categories of natural reflexive middles and prototypical reflexives, both in terms of their marking patterns and their semantics. These denote situation types which are relatively neutral with respect to their introvertedness (and extrovertedness), they can be successfully interpreted to be self-directed without needing any

special clarification, but at the same time, their self-directedness can still be highlighted (under normal circumstances) by additional heavy marking, without causing semantic anomalies.

At the reflexive end of the continua we have events which denote actions that are typically extroverted and which are associated with contexts where the relation of coreference is not expected under the default reading or in situations where reflexivity requires special contrast or emphasis. This is mirrored by the marking patterns employed. In this case, the heavy form is required in addition to the light one, in order to signal the unusual circumstances of one and the same participant filling two semantic roles, which would otherwise be filled by distinct entities. The continua are summarized in Figure 1.
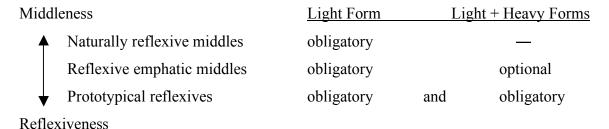
Middleness	Light Form	Light + Heavy Forms
▲ Naturally reflexive middles	obligatory	—
Reflexive emphatic middles	obligatory	optional
▼ Prototypical reflexives	obligatory and	obligatory

Reflexiveness

Figure 1. Middle − Reflexive continua in Romanian

Two observations can be made about the middle-reflexive continua. First, the formal continuum and the semantic one progress in the same fashion. At the middle end of the continua, we have light marking corresponding to a relatively lower degree in elaboration. At the reflexive end of the continua, the combination of light + heavy marking is used to denote a relatively higher degree of elaboration.

Secondly, it follows that in Romanian, the marking patterns of prototypical reflexive and naturally reflexive middles are **economically** motivated since predictable information is given less coding − assumed coreferentiality is marked by light forms. On the other hand, less predictable information receives more coding − unexpected or special emphasis of coreferentiality is marked by the obligatory use of the light and heavy forms (Haiman 1983). Moreover, there is also **iconic motivation**. Less semantic content is assigned less phonological content: lower degree of participant distinguishability is marked by light forms. Similarly, more semantic content receives more phonological content: higher degree of participant distinguishability is signaled by heavy forms (ibid). In sum, Romanian marking patterns are both economically and iconically motivated, the two types of motivations working in harmony.

4. Reciprocal − Middle continuum

4.1 Naturally reciprocal middles versus prototypical reciprocal events in Romanian.

As we saw in the earlier example (2) in section 2, Romanian also employs the middle marker to encode reciprocal situation types. The *prototypical reciprocal situation* is defined as one in

which "there are two participants, A and B, and the relation in which A stands to B is the same as that in which B stands to A" (Lichtenberk 1985:21). Faltz's (1985) concept of a reflexive strategy can be extended to a *reciprocal strategy*. Similarly to the case of reflexives, a reciprocal strategy is defined as a formal means of expressing reciprocal semantics.

Romanian also has two reciprocal strategies: a pronominal one using the middle marker (exemplified in 11), which appears in constructions depicting what Kemmer terms *naturally reciprocal events* (Kemmer 1993b:99,100), and a compound one, using the emphatic *unul (PREP) altul* (as given in 12) which is used together with the light marker to depict *prototypical reciprocal events* (Kemmer 1993b:97).

(11) *Ion   şi   Marian   **se**   bat.*
     Ion   and   Marian   3:ACC   fight
     'Ion and Marian are fighting each other.'

(12) *Ion   şi   Marian   **se**   sprijină   **unul**   **pe   altul**.*
     Ion   and   Marian   3:ACC   uphold   one:SG:MASC:ACC   on   other:SG:MASC:ACC
     'Ion and Marian uphold each other.'

As we saw with naturally reflexive middles, in terms of the marking patterns, the contrast is not between the light and the heavy forms[4], but rather between the light and the combination of light + heavy marking. Again, similarly to naturally reflexive middles, the heavy marker frequently appears with prepositions but not exclusively, as exemplified in (13).

(13) *Ion   şi   Marian   **îşi**   explică   **unul**   **altuia**   nemulţumirile.*
     Ion   and   Marian   3:DAT   uphold   one:SG:MASC: other:SG:MASC: complaints
                                 ACC   DAT
     'Ion and Marian explain their complaints to each other.'

Note that in (12) and (13), both the light and the heavy forms are required in order to avoid ungrammaticality. This is not always the case, i.e. sometimes the light marker (the middle *se*) is permitted to occur by itself. However, in those cases it functions as a marker of natural reflexive middles, not of natural reciprocal middles. For instance in example (14a), the children are necessarily washing themselves, and not each other. The only possibility of obtaining a reciprocal reading would be to add the heavy form, as in (14b)

(14a) *Copiii   **se**   spală*
     children   3:ACC   wash
     'The children are washing themselves.'

(14b) *Copiii   **se**   spală   **unul**   **pe   altul**.*
     children   3:ACC   wash   one:SG:MASC:ACC   on   other:SG:MASC:ACC
     'The children are washing each other.'

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[4] As noted before, the heavy form can occur on its own in oblique position, but this is not discussed here because it does not contrast with the middle marker in any way in that position, since the middle marker never occurs with objects of preposition.

In general, naturally reciprocal events (referred to as *naturally reciprocal middles* henceforth, in order to assert their middle characteristics) are marked by the light marker *se* and correspond to the patterns noted by Kemmer cross-linguistically. The middle marker is used to point out that two or more (unindividuated) participants are involved in one and the same holistic relation with each other and, typically, it appears in sentences denoting events with simultaneously occurring component sub-events. It is more restricted than the light + heavy marking pattern (found in prototypical reciprocal events) and, in contrast to its ability to occur with just any transitive verb, the light marker cannot occur regularly with just any verb. In Romanian, the verbs which occur in naturally reciprocal middles can be classified in the following semantic classes: (physically) antagonistic (*se lupta*, 'fight each other', *se pocni* 'punch each other'), affectionate (*se admira* 'admire each other', *se săruta* 'kiss each other'), associated social actions (*se saluta* 'greet each other', *se întîlni* 'meet each other'), agreement (*se ajuta* 'help each other'), disagreement (*se invidia* 'envy each other', *se ignora* 'ignore each other') and similarity (*se asemăna* 'look like each other').

The distinction between prototypical reciprocals and naturally reciprocal middles is similar to the one we have seen in section 3 between prototypical reflexives and naturally reflexive middles. This opposition can be collapsed into the more general semantic property of *relative elaboration of events* (Kemmer 1993b:121), whereby naturally reciprocal middles have a relatively low degree of elaboration of events since their component sub-events are less distinguishable from one another (Kemmer 1993b:112). In contrast, prototypical reciprocal situations have a relatively high degree of elaboration of events due to their greater participant and sub-event distinguishability. Formally, the opposition between naturally reciprocal middles and prototypical reciprocals is reflected in the use of the light versus light + heavy forms, respectively.

4.2 Continua between naturally reciprocal middles and prototypical reciprocals.

As argued for naturally reflexive middles, naturally reciprocal middles will be shown to also form semantic and formal continua with their non-middle counterparts. Consider the following example:

(12a)　*Prietenii*　**se**　*sărută*　**(unul**　　**pe**　**altul)**　　*pe*　*obraz.*
　　　　friends　3:ACC　kiss　one:SG:MASC:　on　other:SG:MASC:　on　cheek
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　ACC　　　　　　ACC
　　　　'The friends kiss (each other) on the cheek.'

The sentence in (12a) expresses a reciprocal situation: each friend kisses the other on the cheek. What is unusual here is the presence of *both* the light and the heavy marker (with the latter being optional). The event of kissing lends itself to being interpreted as comprising two sub-events which take place sequentially (one person kisses the other and *then* the second kisses the first) and this constitutes the motivation for the use of the additional heavy marker in (12a). However, were the light form used only by itself, the situation would be interpreted as one continuous event, where the kissing occurred simultaneously. Furthermore, if we compare examples (12b) and (12c), we see that in situations where the kissing is most likely to

be simultaneous (as in the case of kissing someone on the lips), the use of the emphatic form in addition to the light marker is questionable.

(12b) *Prietenii* ***se*** *sărută* *pe buze.*
 friends 3:ACC kiss on lips
 'The friends kiss on the lips.'

(12c) *? Prietenii* ***se*** *sărută* ***unul*** ***pe altul*** *pe buze.*
 friends 3:ACC kiss one:SG:MASC:ACC on other:SG:MASC:ACC on lips
 '? The friends kiss each other on the lips.'

Sentences which contain both markers, with the heavy form being optional are termed **reciprocal emphatic middles**; "reciprocal" in order to distinguish them from reflexive emphatic middles (section 3.2), and "emphatic" because the heavy form can optionally be used for additional emphasis.

Romanian does not appear to have reciprocals where the heavy marker is obligatory and the light one is optional, or where either form could be accepted (although this latter possibility appears to be frequent cross-linguistically, according to Kemmer 1993b:105).

In Romanian, the middle-reciprocal continua are similar to the middle-reflexive continua (see section 3.2). At the middle end of the formal continuum, we have constructions marked by the light form. These depict situations which exhibit a lower degree of separateness in their component sub-events making up the overall event and hence a lower degree of elaboration. Next are reciprocal emphatic middles, which allow the optional use of the heavy form, to highlight the reciprocal nature of the relation described. Finally, at the reciprocal end of the formal continuum, we have prototypical reciprocals, marked by the combination of light + heavy markers. These depict situations which comprise a higher degree of separateness in their component sub-events and thus a higher degree of elaboration. As argued for middle-reflexive continua, the middle-reciprocal continua are iconically and economically motivated (Haiman 1983) and furthermore, the two continua, the formal one and the semantic one, progress in the same fashion. The middle-reciprocal continua found in Romanian are summarized in Figure 2.
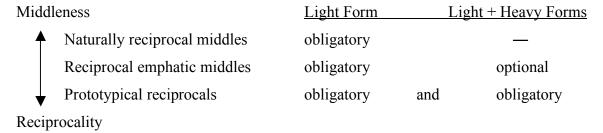
Middleness		Light Form		Light + Heavy Forms
↑ Naturally reciprocal middles		obligatory		—
Reciprocal emphatic middles		obligatory		optional
↓ Prototypical reciprocals		obligatory	and	obligatory
Reciprocality				

Figure 2. Romanian Middle - Reciprocal continua

5. Conclusion

This paper has presented evidence in favour of the claim that cognitive links exist between the various uses of *se* and, furthermore, that these uses can be placed under the umbrella of the

semantic property of low elaboration of events (Kemmer 1993a, b). Moreover, in accordance with previous accounts of the Spanish (Maldonado 1992, 1999) and the Modern Greek (Manney 2000) Middle Domains, in Romanian it is also possible to draw connections between the uses of the middle marker and show that they are not arbitrary, but rather have a deeper cognitive basis. This origin lies with the speaker's conceptualization of a given event, which is reflected in the linguistic expression selected. The selection involves a lower or higher elaboration of events, realized linguistically as a middle or non-middle construction, respectively.

The present research has uncovered semantic and formal continua between two distinct Romanian middle types and their non-middle counterparts. This feeds into the assumptions of cognitive theories regarding the graded (rather than binary) nature of class membership and fuzzy (rather than absolute) nature of their boundaries. The issue of linguistic categorization remains an important aspect defining human nature in general – an aspect which requires further investigation. Do other languages have such continua as these described for Romanian? If so, what is the nature of these continua? Are there situation types which are not found in Romanian? What is their motivation? These and other questions remain to be answered by future research in quest for a better understanding of Middle Domains across the world's languages.

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