Category Fusion. Prepositional Constructions in Celtic Languages.

Piotr Stalmaszczyk

Department of English and General Linguistics, University of Łódź

piotrst@uni.lodz.pl

(handout)

0. Preliminaries:

be-languages vs. *have*-languages (Isatsenko 1974, in: Bayda 2006: 131).

1. Pronominal/prepositional possessive constructions in Celtic:

Ir. *Tá airgead agam* 'is money at-me'
W *Mae arian gen i* 'is money with-me'

2. Terminology:

'inflected preposition', 'conjugated preposition', 'pronominal preposition', 'prepositional pronoun', 'suffixed pronoun'

3. Other languages:

Pol. *doń* 'towards-him' < *do* 'to' + *niego* 'him', *zeń* 'from him' < *z* 'from' + *niego* 'him, etc. (only: *w, na, o, przez, za, do, dla, od, ze* + *niego* 'him', masc., accusative)

Sp. *conmigo* 'with-me', *contigo* 'with-you', *consigo* 'with-oneself' (but: *con él* 'with him', *con ella* 'with her')

4. Category <u>fusion</u> / <u>agglutination</u> / <u>incorporation</u>:

"In Welsh as in Irish the pronoun is regularly <u>fused</u> together with the preposition" (Strachan 1909: 37).

"Personal pronouns forming objects of prepositions in Brit[ish] and Goidelic came to be <u>agglutinated</u> to the prepositions, and ultimately developed into mere inflexions" (Morris-Jones 1913: 397).

"A personal pronoun as object, governed by a preposition, is generally <u>incorporated</u> with the preposition and the latter is conjugated similar to a finite verb" (Holmer 1962: 78).

5. Origin:

The very "term 'conjugation' is in fact not absolutely appropriate, as the 'endings' of the conjugated prepositions have nothing in common with the inflectional endings of the verbs"; these 'personal endings' are historically: "nothing but the personal pronouns of Proto-Celtic, which formed an accentual unit with the preceding preposition and consequently came into such close contact that the two eventually <u>merged</u> and came to be regarded as a single unit" (Stifter 2006: 87).

6. Prepositions **AT** ('at; with; by; of; from') and **ON** ('on; near; at'):

AT Ir. *ag* 'at; for' (Sc.G *aig*, Mx *ec*) < OIr. *oc*
W *gan* 'with; by; from; since' (Co. *gans*, B *gant*) < OW *cant*, MW *can*, W *gan*, Co. *gans*, OB *cant*, B *gant* (cf. OIr *cét*)

ON Ir. *ar* 'on; in; at' (Sc.G *air*, Mx *er*) < OIr. *for* 'on' + *ar* 'for, on account of'
W *ar* 'on; upon; over; at' (Co. *war*, B *war*) < OW *guar*, MW *gor*, *gwar*, Co. *gor*, *war*, OB *guar*, B *war* (cf. OIr. *for*)

7. Celtic preposition **AT**:

	W	Co.	B	Ir.	Sc. G	Mx
	gan	**gans**	**gant**	**ag**	**aig**	**ec**
1 sg.	gennyf	genev	ganin	agam	agam	aym
2 sg.	gennyt	genes	ganit	agat	agad	ayd
3 sg. m.	ganddo	ganso	gantañ	aige	aige	echey
3 sg. f.	ganddi	gensi	ganti	aici	aice	eck
1 pl.	gennym	genen	ganimp/ ganeomp	againn	againn	ain
2 pl.	gennych	genowgh	ganeoc'h	agaibh	agaibh	eu
3 pl.	ganddynt	gansa	ganto/gante	acu	aca	oc

8. Possession:

Possession is "a state rather than an action and as a consequence, in Irish as in many languages, it is expressed nominally rather than verbally" (Ó Corráin 1997a: 92).

9. Possession in Celtic:

Ir. *Tá airgead agam* 'I have money' (is money at-me)
Tá beirt mhac aige 'he has two sons' (is pair son at-him)
Bhí sos fada againn 'we had a long break' (was break long at-us)
Sc.G *Tha airgead agam* 'I have money' (is money at-me)
Dad a tha agad 'anything you have' (anything is at-you)
Mx *Ta argid aym* 'I have money' (is money at-me)
NW *Mae arian gan i* 'I have money' (is money at-me)
SW *Mae arian gyda fi* 'I have money' (is money with-me)

10. Irish *ag* as a <u>possessive</u> or <u>agentive</u> marker (cf. Bayda 2006: 137).

11. 'Extended' possession:

Ir.   *Bíodh ciall agat* 'have sense' (be-IMPER. sense at-you)
        Tá an tsláinte aige 'he has good health' (is the health at-him)
        Tá grá aici air 'she loves him' (is love at-her on-him)
        Tá a fhios agam 'I know' (I have knowledge < is its knowledge at-me)
        Tá snámh agam 'I can swim' (is swimming at-me)
        Tá agam! 'I have it' (= 'I comprehend')! (is at-me)
        Tá Gaeilge agat 'you know Irish' (is Irish at-you)

Sc.G *Tha Gàidhlig gu leòr aige* 'he knows Gaelic well' (is Gaelic a lot at-him)
        Tha fhios agam air sin 'I know about it' (is knowledge at-me of it)

Mx   *Ta fys aym* 'I know' (is knowledge at-me)
        T'eh jarroodit aym 'I have forgotten' (is forgotten at-me)

12. 'Emotions':

Ir.   *Tá áthas orm* 'I am happy'
        Tá amhras orm 'I suspect'
        Tá codladh orm 'I am sleepy'
        Tá tart orm 'I am thirsty'
        Tá slaghdán orm 'I have a cold'

Sc.G *Dè tha ceàrr ort?* 'What's wrong with you?'
        Dè tha a' cur air? 'What ails him?'
        Tha an cnatan orm 'I have a cold'
        Bha am fiabhras air 'He had the feaver'
        Bha an cianals air 'He was homesick'

W   *Nid oes ofn arnaf* 'I am not afraid'
        Cywilydd arnat 'Shame on you'
        Mae'r frech goch arni 'She has measles'
        Mae pen tost arnaf i 'I have a headache'
        Roedd y ddannoedd arni 'She had a toothache'

13. Celtic Englishes:

        This day the fire went out on him … (Filppula 1999: 219)
        He lost my knife on me. (Dolan 1998: 189)
        The cow died on me. (Dolan 1998: 189)
        He put lies on me. (Joyce 1910: 26)

        The breath was gettin' short on him. (Filppula 1999: 220)
        … have quite a drop of drink on them. (Filppula 1999: 220)
        The climate is a fright on you. (Filppula 1999: 220)

The nerves went on him. (Filppula 1999: 221)

There is great humour on him. 'he is very humorous' (Wagner 1959: 116)
There is some glee on ye. 'you are greatly delighted about something' (Wagner 1959: 116)
There is some dread on'm. 'he is afraid of something' (Wagner 1959: 116)
It will be sore on you 'it will pain you' (Wagner 1959: 116)

There is sickness on you. (Lady Gregory)
There is dread on me. (Lady Gregory)
There will be mockery on me. (Lady Gregory)
The weight of grief that is on her. (W. B. Yeats)
Her husband was after dying on her. (J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands*)
His cow had died on him. (J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands*)
There was great anger on him. (J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands*)
It's all my fault and sorrow is on me because I made you suffer. (Patrick MacGill)
Curses be on you! (Patrick MacGill)

14. Phrasal hybrids:

There's not a *brón* on her. 'She shows no signs of grief' (Dolan 1998: 43)
What *eagla* is on you? 'What are you afraid of?' (Dolan 1998: 114)
I have a great *gortach* on me. 'I am very hungry' (Dolan 1998: 130)
Everyone had great *meas* on him. 'Everyone had great respect for him' (Dolan 1998: 172)
He has no *meas* for money. 'He doesn't care for money' (Ó Muirithe 1996: 135)
I had no *meas* on where I left the coat. 'I had no recollection where I left the coat' (Macafee 1996: 220)
You'll bring *náire* down on us! 'You'll bring shame on us' (Ó Muirithe 1996: 143)

15. Two tendencies:

1) 'Conservative': "… the ingrained conservativism of Irish is illustrated by the fact that, though every one of languages which have shered its territory over the past 1,500 years possessed a verb 'to have', Irish has not borrowed such a verb nor developed it as a calque. It still expresses the concept by the substantive verb + preposition" (Mac Eoin 1993: 142)

2) 'Modern': "The analytic process of separation of pronoun subjects from an active verb (…) seems to continue. (…) The likelihood is that this process will extend also to the conjugated prepositions…" (Mac Eoin 1993: 142-143)

16. Theoretical implications:

category squish (Ross), incorporation (Gruber), conflation (Talmy; Hale & Keyser); construction (Goldberg)

17. Implications for theory of language contact (cf. 14).

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