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Why Jesus and Job spoke bad Welsh : the origin and distribution of V2 orders in Middle Welsh

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CHAPTER 6

Information structure and word order in syntax

6.1 Introduction

MM: What are you teaching this term?

YT: One session on vampires (found some really nice old texts) and one on rules concerning archery ceremonies.

MM: That sounds great!

YT: One of them is about a primordial ladyvamp who descends to earth!

MM: Then what happens?"

Previous chapters focussed on the core notions of information structure and Middle Welsh word order. If we look at the above conversation between two academics, we clearly see that information-structural primitives like givenness and focus appear in sentences with ‘abnormal’ word-order patterns: even wh-elements that usually appear sentence-initially can be preceded by other elements. In this chapter the main question therefore is: how do information structure and word order relate to the syntax of Welsh?

To answer this question it is first of all important to define syntax itself in relation to word order. Early syntactic research often merely concentrated on the word order of the verb and its core arguments. Languages that did not seem to have a preference for one particular basic word order were called ‘non-configurational’ (cf. K. Hale (1983) on the Austronesian language Warlpiri). This as opposed to configurational languages in which the ‘grammar’ determined the order of words in the sentence. But what part of the ‘grammar’ is this? In functional traditions like the Prague School, discourse-semantic notions could also play a role in structural

relations. This was formalised in syntactic accounts by, amongst others, Jackendoff (1972) and Horvath (1981). Around the same time, Li and Thompson (1976) distinguish subject-prominent languages from topic-prominent languages in which the morphology and syntax highlight topic-comment distinctions, rather than grammatical functions like subject or object. This then led to a third type of language: discourse-configurational. According to É.Kiss (2001), languages are discourse-configurational if they link either or both of the discourse-semantic functions topic and focus to particular structural positions.

This leaves some interesting questions open. First of all, are these discourse-semantic functions an overall property of the language or do they, for example, only play a role in a certain domain? If there is a ‘particular structural position’, where in the sentence can we find this? And, finally, is this the same cross-linguistically and if not, how do we account for language variation?

This chapter aims to address some of these issues that are relevant for Middle Welsh. It discusses how the information-structural notions introduced in Chapter 3 can be integrated into syntax. The corresponding Middle Welsh word order patterns discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 are then analysed syntactically. Each of the core notions of information structure are finally considered in greater detail in case studies on focus, topic, givenness and text cohesion.

6.2 Integrating IS and word order in syntax

According to Lambrecht (1994:6-13), language is a tripartite system consisting of syntax, semantics and information structure. Semantics is concerned with the *meaning* of words and utterances. Information structure is a pragmatic notion signalling how a certain message is conveyed or, following Lambrecht, ‘why there are so many sentence structures’ (Lambrecht, 1994:9). Syntax, finally, is the form or formal structure. It is often broadly described as ‘sentence construction’: the way words group together in phrases and sentences (Tallerman, 2011:1). The questions and answers in the introductory conversation above show various linguistic strategies (e.g. *wh*-movement, but also if we read it out loud, special intonation on the word *then*, for example). These strategies can be paired with certain interpretations (e.g. aboutness topics, contrastive focus, etc.). As ?:1 points out, however, this pairing “does NOT mean that the interpretation is there BECAUSE of the linguistic strategy ⇒ correlation ≠ causation.”

This section gives a brief overview of formal ways to integrate information structure into syntax and marks the basic assumptions for the present study of historical Welsh.¹

¹Dependency grammars are not included in the present overview, since they are traditionally less concerned with linear word order than, for example, phrase structure grammar. There are, however, attempts to implement information-structural notions in lexicalised dependency grammar formalisms, like Topological Dependency Grammar (TDG) (cf. Kruijff and Duchier (2003)).

6.2.1 Formal combination of IS and syntax

There are various ways to formalise this ‘grouping of words’. In theory, this could be done by a dedicated set of rules predefined for a certain language. Starting from grammatical functions, for example, a language like English could have the very basic rule to group the core arguments of the verb together in the order ‘subject-verb-object’. To account for all possible variation, both within one language, but also cross-linguistically, we would have to define a vast amount of rules for each specific context or sentence type. This is undesirable for many reasons, not in the least because it cannot *explain* why the ‘grouping of words’ is the way it is and why it differs from other types of sentences or other languages and, crucially, why that is not always the case.

Syntacticians have therefore tried to formalise this system, abstracting away from a predefined set of rules. Language, and in particular grammatical knowledge was since the work of Noam Chomsky in the 1950s viewed as a modular cognitive system in the generative approach. This system is considered to be a computational system (C_{HL}) interfacing with other cognitive modules like the conceptual-intentional system concerned with meaning and the sensory-motoric system producing and processing sounds.

The constructivist or usage-based view denies this modularity of the grammatical system. Linguistic representations are instead grounded in experiences of language use (cf. Langacker (1988)). In construction grammar (cf. Fillmore, Kay, and O’Connor (1988), Goldberg (1995)) this means that both grammatical rules as well as words consist of pairings of form and meaning: sounds and meaning are linked according to conventions of the speech community leading to an inventory of constructions: a Constructicon. Constructions in the Constructicon are assumed to bear different kinds of relationships to each other (cf. Beekhuizen (2015:14-16)). Both lexical and grammatical constructions can be combined like building blocks creating larger and more complex linguistic units. In such a system, information-structural phenomena (like topic or focus) must be coded as properties of constructions. Features are used to indicate these ‘rhetorical relations’ (cf. Östman and Virtanen (1999:92-93)) in the construction matrix, just like grammatical relations (Subject, Object, etc.), semantic roles (Patient, Agent, etc.) and situational frame-roles (like ‘buyer’ or ‘seller’ in a commercial transaction).

In Lexical Functional Grammar (cf. Bresnan (2001)), on the other hand, information structure is considered to be one of the possible structures that are hypothesised in the LFG framework. Language consists of multiple dimensions of structure, e.g. the representation of grammatical functions (f(eature)-structure), syntactic constituents (c(onstituent)-structure), but also semantic, morphological and phonological structures. Information-structural notions are thus combined (and constrained) like any other part of language.

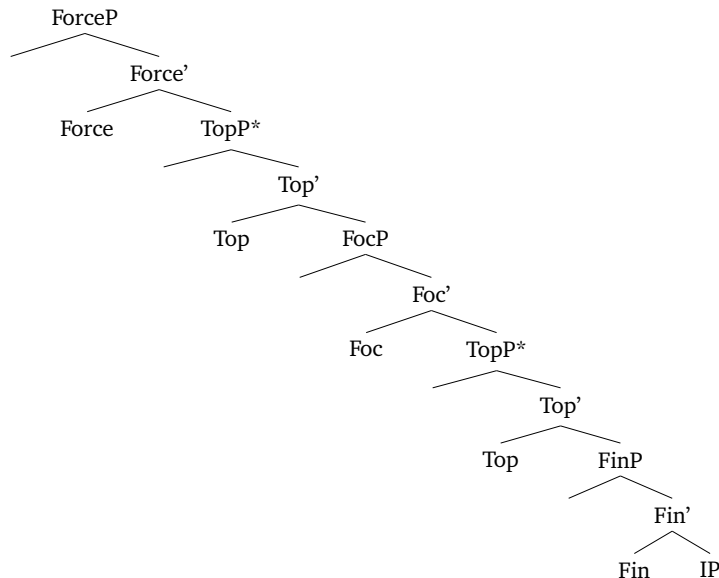
Extra levels have also been proposed in a generative framework. López (2009) takes discourse to be “a computational module that assembles sentences (and possibly other units) into Discourse Representation Structures” (López, 2009:22). He further posits a pragmatics module that “assigns features relevant for the

insertion of a syntactic object into a discourse structure to constituents in certain positions.” (López, 2009:22). These ‘positions’, according to López, are the edges of syntactic phases (in the sense of Chomsky (2000)). The relevant features for him are binary +/- Anaphoric and +/- Contrast (rather than Topic or Focus).

A featural approach to information-structural notions is crucial in other frameworks as well. In Head-driven phrase structure grammar (HPSG) the relevant units of linguistic information are signs (cf. Pollard and Sag (1987) and Pollard and Sag (1994)). These signs explicitly express phonological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic information, formalised as typed feature structures. Engdahl and Vallduví (1996) implemented information structure in this framework as a set of features in the CONTEXT (the part representing pragmatic information) of the feature matrix.

A different way of implementing information-structural features is to sequence them in a universal hierarchy of functional heads. Cartography was the first proposal ‘mapping’ the information-structural features in such a way in the left periphery of the clause (Rizzi, 1997). His work is based on various types of topic and focus phrases found in clause-initial position in Italian (and other Romance languages). Cinque (1999) subsequently added a similar detailed structure for adverb positions. A central hypothesis in this framework is that this fine hierarchy (see example (1) based on Rizzi (1997)) and order of functional projections is universal, i.e. it can be found in all languages.

(1)



A major test case for the Cartographic framework is thus presented by other languages than Italian (or Romance) on the basis of which this articulated structure was originally proposed. The main question is whether it is necessary to assume this rigid hierarchy for languages that do not overtly show these types of topic

and focus constituents. A further question is whether languages that do exhibit multiple topic and focus phrases in the left periphery always order those in the same way. In light of the latter, various scholars working on for example (Old) Germanic (Frascarelli, 2007), Chinese (Badan & Del Gobbo, 2011) or Hungarian (Lipták, 2011) have suggested refinements or additions to Rizzi's original proposal.

Cartography is not the only way to integrate information structure in the syntax. What could be argued to be the opposite view of cartographic syntax 'full' of information structure is 'Clean Syntax' (cf. ?:2). In this other extreme point of view advocated by, amongst others, Fanselow and Lenertová (2011), information structure and syntax are completely independent (see also experimental work by Onea and Beaver (2011) and Destruel and Velleman (2014)). Both these extremes - a syntax full (Cartography) or completely devoid (Clean) of information structure face empirical challenges (for examples from Bantu languages, see Cheng and Downing (2012) and ?).

Another solution is presented by interface approaches developed by, amongst others Neeleman and Van de Koot (2008) and Kučerová and Neeleman (2012). In their framework, syntax is mapped to information structure at the interface, with movements being driven by the necessity of the complements of topics and foci to be constituents at the interface. This line of research is based on the frequently-found interaction between 'marked' prosodic patterns and information structure. Conditions or rules at the interface between syntax and phonology restrict the possible derivations and interpretations. From this point of view, information structure and syntax interact only indirectly, mediated by prosodic manifestations (see also Szendrői (2001), Zubizarreta (1998) and Horvath (2010)). To account for syntactic focus movement, Horvath (2010) introduces an Exhaustive Identification Operator requiring stress-based (information) focus within its c-command domain. Topic-comment structures, on the other hand are dealt with via the Comment Mapping Rule posited by Neeleman and Van de Koot (2008):

(2) **Comment Mapping Rule**

If XP in (3) is interpreted as topic, then interpret N2 as comment.

(3) $[_{N1} XP [_{N2} \dots t \dots]]$

According to Aboh (2010), however, information-structural features such as topic and focus must have their origin in the Numeration just like Case and φ -features. He emphasises that in a minimalist approach to the study of language, syntax is the computational system C_{HL} that maps some array of lexical choices (the Numeration) to the sound-meaning pairs (π, λ) .² Sentences are built from the items in the Numeration only and features can thus not be added during the derivation (i.e. during the structure-building). This is called the Inclusiveness Condition:

“Given the numeration N , C_{HL} computes until it forms a derivation that converges at PF and LF [...] A “perfect language” should meet the

²'Sound' could also be a sign in sign languages.

condition of inclusiveness: any structure formed by the computation [...] is constituted of elements already present in the lexical items selected for N; no new objects are added in the course of computation apart from rearrangements of lexical properties.” (Chomsky, 1995:228)

From this point of view topic and focus, for example, but also interrogative force or the concept of contrast, are part of the numeration and project in syntax. This could result in a Cartographic hierarchy of information-structural heads and phrases in the left periphery of the clause. Alternatively, topic and focus features could be clustered on a single C (or Force/Fin) head, at least in languages without multiple phrases in the left periphery of the sentence. The status of the C-domain in itself (articulated or not) is a topic of various recent studies. Since constituents in the left periphery of the C-domain often interact with other linguistic domains such as prosody, they can be argued to exist in a dimension that differs from the core argumental syntax. Constituents that are information-structurally marked, for example, exist on a different plane and can therefore be targeted by prosody. Examples of interface studies suggesting such an approach are Cheng and Downing (2012) (for focus in Zulu) and D’Alessandro and Van Oostendorp (2016) (based on truncated vocatives in various languages).

6.2.2 Assumptions for the present study

Despite the lack of spoken data, phonological interface approaches as the ones mentioned above have been developed for older stages of Germanic languages (cf. Hinterhölzl (2009)). These studies have to make certain assumptions about the phonological phrases and their relation to syntactic structure. Hinterhölzl (2009:56) suggests for example that a “right-headed phonological phrase (in a verb cluster) must sit on a right branch with respect to the syntactic head that is to become its prosodic sister”. Word order preferences are due to violable interface conditions defining ideal mappings between syntactic and prosodic structures (cf. Hinterhölzl (2009)).

There is, to my knowledge, no systematic study of prosodic structure in Middle Welsh in relation to syntactic phrases. This severely complicates drawing any conclusions using any of the above-mentioned phonological interface approaches. For the present study, I therefore adopt Aboh’s (2010) view with information-structural features starting out in the Numeration with other linguistic items the speaker chooses to express. In the course of the (narrow) syntactic derivation, these features can then enter into an Agree relation with a probing head in the C-domain.

6.2.3 Middle Welsh syntax

Traditional Welsh grammarians were intrigued by Middle Welsh because of its ‘abnormal’ i.e. ‘non-verb-initial’ word order as discussed in the previous chapters. Information structure was considered to have played an important role as ‘a pragmatic constraint’ on the syntax (cf. Poppe (1991), Fife (1991)). From such

a functionalist view, the word order or syntax was determined by information-structural notions like topic or focus. Studies along this line of research mainly focussed on the description and distribution of various possible word orders (e.g. subject-initial, object-initial or adjunct-initial). This left the questions of how and why these information-structural notions interacted with the syntax unanswered.

The puzzle of Middle Welsh word orders

At a glance, the puzzle of Middle Welsh word order patterns is the following. From a synchronic, Middle Welsh, point of view, there seem to be two main strategies. Traditional Welsh grammarians have distinguished those based on functional (topic vs. focus) and grammatical (subject-verb agreement vs. default third-person singular agreement) characteristics. ‘Topicalised’ sentences exhibit subject-verb agreement and are traditionally called ‘Abnormal Sentences’ or, in Welsh *brawddeg annormal* (see Chapter 4). ‘Focalised’ sentences do not exhibit agreement and are called ‘Mixed Sentences’ (*brawddeg gymysg*).³ Typical examples of abnormal and mixed sentences are shown in (4) and (5):

- (4) *A ’r guyrda a doethant y gyt*
 and the nobles PRT come.PAST.3P together
 ‘And the nobles came together’ (Abnormal Sentence - PKM 90.27)
- (5) *Mi a ’e heirch.*
 I PRT 3FS seek.3S
 ‘(it is) I who seek her’ (Mixed Sentence - WM 479.24)

Abnormal Sentences like (4) typically show agreement in number between the preverbal subject and the finite verb.⁴ This sentence is thus not only ‘abnormal’ because it is not verb-initial (like Modern Welsh), but also because it shows agreement with plural full DP subjects. This is unique in both Middle and Modern Welsh, since usually only pronouns show agreement in any part of the language (the verbal system, but also as ‘inflected’ prepositions). Full DPs never cause agreement and the language thus exhibits a similar type of Complementarity Principle as was observed by, amongst others, Borsley and Stephens (1989a) and Stump (1989) for Breton. From a functional perspective “no special emphasis is intended for the word or phrase which comes at the beginning” (D. S. Evans, 2003 [1964]:180).

The Mixed Sentence exemplified in (5) on the other hand is used “[w]hen a part of the sentence other than the verb is to be emphasized” (D. S. Evans, 2003 [1964]:140). It was originally preceded by a form of the copula and followed by a relative clause. Since relative clauses usually do not exhibit agreement (D. S. Evans, 2003 [1964]:60-61), the verb is found in the default third-person singular form even when the subject/antecedent is a pronoun as seen in (5) with a first-person singular pronoun *mi* ‘I’. Sometimes, the original copula is still found, shown in (6):

³Names in Modern Welsh are given because much of the secondary literature on this topic was written in Modern Welsh. I will keep using the traditional Abnormal and Mixed labels for the sake of convenience.

⁴Agreement in Gender is never found on inflected verbs in Welsh.

- (6) *Ys mi a 'e heirch.*
 is.3S I PRT 3FS seek.3S
 'It is I who seek her.' (WM 479.29)

If we disregard any notions of information structure, it is impossible to make a formal distinction between the abnormal and the mixed sentence if the subject is a singular noun or a third-person singular pronoun. The verb in these cases would exhibit third-person singular inflection anyway. According to D. Simon Evans, "[f]ormal divergence is found only when the sentence is negative" (D. S. Evans, 2003 [1964]:180), as shown in (7):

- (7) a. *Y dyn ny doeth.*
 the man NEG come.3S
 'the man didn't come' (Abnormal Sentence)
- b. *Nyt y dyn a doeth.*
 NEG the man PRT come.3S
 'it was not the man who came' (Mixed Sentence)

Willis (1998:6) notes, however, that this difference might simply reflect the distinction between negation of the entire proposition or of a single constituent. In the examples he gives with the abnormal order (7a), the negation follows the subject, whereas in the mixed order (7b), it precedes the emphasised/fronted phrase in sentence-initial position. Negation in Abnormal Sentences as found in (7a) is not often found, however. The preferred word order for sentence negation is NegVSO as shown in (8):

- (8) a. *Ny chymerwn ninheu y gan y tayogeu hynny.*
 NEG take.1P we from with the churls these
 'We will not take that from these churls.' (PKM 53.28)
- b. *Ny welei ef y twrwf rac tywylllet y nos.*
 NEG see.PAST.3S he the commotion as darkness the night
 'He could not see the commotion as the night was so black.' (PKM 22.23)

Apart from subjects, direct objects or adjuncts (adverbs or prepositional phrases) could also appear in sentence-initial position, either with or without 'emphasis'. Just like the antecedents of relative clauses, subjects and direct objects were obligatorily followed by the preverbal particle *a* (as seen in (4), (5) and (6) above). This particle caused lenition or soft mutation of the immediately following verb. Whenever an adjunct appeared in sentence-initial position, the preverbal particle *y(r)* was used (without any form of consonant mutation), as in (9):

- (9) *Yna y doeth y kennadeu.*
 then PRT come.PAST.3S the messengers
 'Then the messengers came.' (PKM 79.27)

From a synchronic syntactic point of view, the most important question is how the Abnormal and Mixed Sentences are derived? Furthermore, apart from their

agreement patterns, do these patterns differ in any way? If that is the case: how are they different? And, furthermore, do these differences arise from differences in their information-structural status?

Although the observed generalisation of topic (agreement) vs. focus (no agreement) seems to hold most of the time, there are many exceptions. There are examples of sentences with agreement that clearly contain contrastively focussed subjects (see (10a)). But there are also cases without expected agreement where no focus can be detected either (see (10b)). To make matters worse, as Poppe (2009) points out, there are cases in which differences in agreement appear in the exact same (con)text, but in different manuscript versions, as shown in (11).

- (10) a. *Miui hagen a uydaf gyfarwyd ywch*
 I.EMPH however PRT be.1S familiar to.2P
 'I, however, will be familiar to you.' (Culhwch 899)
- b. *Kennadeu a aeth at uranwen.*
 messengers PRT go.PAST-3S to Branwen
 'Messengers went to Branwen.' (PKM 40.1-2)
- (11) a. *Ti a y gwelho*
 you PRT 3FS see.SBJ-3S
 'You will see it' (White Book CO 451)
- b. *Ti a y gwelhy*
 you PRT 3FS see.SBJ-2S
 'You will see it' (Red Book equivalent)

The Middle Welsh word order situation is further complicated by the fact that other types of word order appear alongside the above-mentioned Abnormal and Mixed sentences. There are verbal noun constructions with and without auxiliary verbs appearing in contexts of narrative continuity (see Chapter 5). But there was also a special type of copular clause with sentence-initial *sef* marking the focussed identificational predicate (see section 6.3 below). In the course of the Middle Welsh period, however, this *sef*-construction further developed and the original identificational focus of the predicate was lost, resulting in yet another option to express propositions in a narrative context.

Syntactic studies of Middle Welsh

According to various Welsh scholars (MacCana (1973), Fife (1988), T. A. Watkins (1977)), the Abnormal Sentence was never part of the spoken language in Middle Welsh. Verb-initial order according to them had always been the norm and these 'fronting' constructions with sentence-initial subject or objects were a purely literary device (Fife, 1991:89-90).

Willis (1998), however, convincingly showed based on cross-linguistic as well as language-internal evidence that this cannot be the case. The abnormal and mixed orders cannot be a literary device, but must be a case of a verb-second constraint on the grammar of Middle Welsh. From a cross-linguistic point of view, it is unlikely that a highly literary rule as proposed from Middle Welsh would have developed

in related languages independently. Breton and Cornish also exhibit subject- and object-initial word orders, so it is more likely that these were present already in the parent language Brythonic. From a language-internal point of view, it is difficult to explain how such a syntactically complex rule as topicalisation could be learnt for purposes of writing only (see also Borsley et al. (2007:292-293)). According to Willis, this requires “an awareness that constituents other than the subject could be fronted and a *conscious* awareness of the notion of ‘topic.’” (Willis, 1998:13).

Tallerman (1996) proposed to explain the difference between the abnormal sentence and the mixed sentence by positing different derivations for each of them. Abnormal Sentences involve adjunction of the topic XP to CP and the syntactic subject is realised as *pro*, triggering subject-verb agreement. According to Borsley et al. (2007:293), however, this is problematic, because it predicts multiple topics should be possible. Topicalisation in Middle Welsh was not recursive, according to Willis (1998): only one of the preverbal constituents could be an argument (hanging topics and left-dislocations aside): “[a]ll other fronted elements are adverbial” (Borsley et al., 2007:293).

Alternatively, Willis (1998) proposes the difference between agreement and the lack thereof in subject-initial sentences in Middle Welsh is based on a difference in movement. Topicalised Abnormal Sentence involve A-movement of the subject via SpecAgrSP, whereas focalised mixed sentences are derived by A'-movement. The focalised subject skips the higher agreement projection and goes straight from SpecTP (where it receives Nominative Case) to SpecCP. One possible objection to this approach is that additional assumptions have to be made about the trace or copy of full DP subjects. This is unexpected according to the Complementarity Principle that seems to hold in all other parts of the grammar: full DPs never seem to cause agreement. An additional assumption that the trace or copy of the full DP *can* result in number inflection on the verb thus has to be made.

Interim summary

Studies of Middle Welsh word order patterns have initially focussed on functional descriptions of the various verb-second orders that deviated from the Modern Welsh verb-initial norm. Though much progress was made describing various information-structural patterns, these ‘purely pragmatic’ approaches (like for example Poppe (1991) or Fife (1991)) ran into problems accounting for the variation in agreement and, crucially, the lack thereof (as pointed out in detail by Poppe (2009)). These difficulties arose not in the least because there was no consensus on what the basic notions of information structure were and how they could be defined and implemented in systematic analyses of the language. This I have tried to remedy by clearly outlining information-structural methodology and terminology in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 I furthermore concluded that the distribution of word order patterns in Middle Welsh could be the result of multiple factors interacting with each other. Information-structural features do play a role, but they cannot be taken into account in complete isolation. In the remaining part of this chapter I therefore examine examples from each of the core notions of information structure discussed

in Chapter 2 focussing on how they are integrated into (or part of) the syntactic system of Middle Welsh.

6.3 Case Study I: Focus-background

As has become clear from Chapters 4 and 5, there are various ways to exhibit focus in Middle Welsh. In this section I propose a syntactic analysis of one particularly frequently found focus construction in Middle Welsh: identity predicate focus by means of the lexical item *sef*. There are various so-called '*sef*-constructions' in Middle Welsh, all of which derived from the identity copular clause with anticipatory predicates. A diachronic analysis of the various stages of the grammaticalisation process is presented in Chapter 7. This section focusses on the syntactic derivation of the *sef*-construction, starting from the derivation of the two types of unmarked copular clauses.

6.3.1 Identity predicate focus: the data

As shown in Chapter 4, copular matrix clauses in Middle Welsh exhibit two possible word order patterns as shown in the schemas in (12a) and (12b):

- (12) a. *ys* - Predicate Complement - Subject (CPS)
 b. *mae* - Subject - *yn* Predicate Complement (CSynP)

In the present tense each of these constructions yields a different form of the copula: *ys* or *mae*. In (12b) there is a special predicate marker *yn* introducing the predicate complement. This predicate marker *yn* is never found in examples with CPS word order with the schema presented in *excop*. This difference goes back to the traditional Celtic distinction of true copulas and substantive verbs (cf. for example Lash (2011) on Old Irish). Examples reflecting this distinction are presented in (13a) and (13b):

- (13) a. *Ys gohilion hwnn*
 be.PRES.3S remainder DEM.MS
 'That one is remaining.' (CO 472)
- b. *Ac y mae y enw yn parawt.*
 and PRT be.PRES.3S 3MS name PRED ready
 'and his name is ready' (PKM 76.19)

Willis (2015) notes that a third type of word order is found in non-finite subordinate copular clauses with the infinitival copula *bod* 'to be', as shown in schema (14):

- (14) *bod yn* Predicate Complement - Subject (CynPS)

This schema of subordinate copular clauses *does* exhibit the predicate marker *yn*, but the Subject and Predicate complement are in the same order as the matrix

copular clauses *without* the marker *yn*. An example of this Predicate-Subject order in subordinate clauses is shown in (15):

- (15) *Duw, a wyr pob peth, a wyr bot yn eu*
 God REL know.PRES.3SG every thing PRT know.PRES.3SG be.INF PRED false
hynny arnaf i.
 that on.1SG me
 ‘God, who knows everything, knows that that is a lie about me.’ (PKM 21.3)

Finally, a special form of the copular clause with focus on the identificational predicate puts a petrified form of the copula and the anticipatory predicate in initial position ((*y*)s + *ef* > *sef*), followed by the subject and the predicate in that order (*sef* Subject - Predicate):

- (16) *Sef gwreic a uynnawd gwreic ieuank*
 sef woman PRT want.PAST.3S woman young
 ‘That was the woman he wanted, a young woman.’ (YBH 6)

This *sef*-construction took up many shapes and forms during the Middle Welsh period. In Chapter 7, I argue that these forms represent different stages in a process of grammaticalisation. In the following section I zoom in on the synchronic syntactic analyses of the above copular clauses and the *sef*-construction in particular.

6.3.2 Identity predicate focus: syntactic analysis

There are various possible ways to derive the above sentences that explain the superficial difference in Subject-Predicate vs. Predicate-Subject word order. Assuming that the subject starts out in the specifier of the Predicate Phrase, some form of predicate raising is necessary to arrive at copula-initial word orders. Adger and Ramchand (2003) propose such raising analyses for Scots Gaelic (to SpecTP). In the following sections I show how their approaches can be extended to account for the various word orders found Middle Welsh copular clauses, including the identificational predicate focus clauses or so-called ‘*sef*-constructions’.

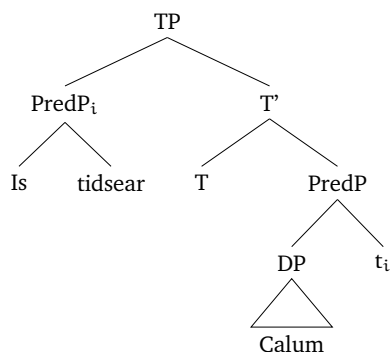
Adger and Ramchand (2003) propose an analysis raising the copula and the predicate together for what they call ‘Inverted Copular Clauses’ (ICCs) in Scots Gaelic with the same Predicate-Subject word order. Consider the following example in Scots Gaelic (SG) and the derivation in (18) (cf. Adger (2011:4)):

- (17) *Is tidsear Calum.*
 COP-PRES teacher Calum
 ‘Calum is a teacher.’ (SG ICC - Adger and Ramchand (2003:335))

The raising of the predicate is motivated to satisfy the EPP property of T: the copula raises and pied-pipes its complement. The copula could not raise on its own due to its ‘extreme phonological weakness, so head movement to adjoin to T does not occur’ (Adger and Ramchand (2003:336)). The EPP triggers the movement of Pred’,

in the notation of Adger and Ramchand (2003). Under Minimalist assumptions of Bare Phrase Structure, this would be considered ‘PredP’ and as such it could be moved as a phrase (see also Adger and Ramchand (2003:336n6)).⁵

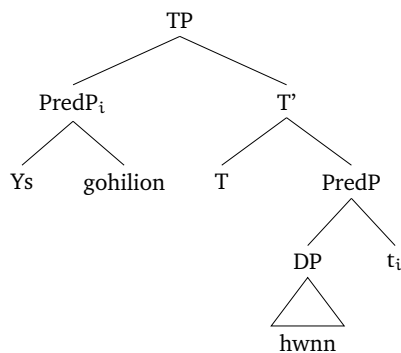
(18)



This predicate raising analysis would yield the copula-predicate-subject (CPS) order for Early Middle Welsh sentences like (19) as shown in (20).

(19) *Ys gohilion hwnn*
 be.PRES.3S remainder DEM.MS
 ‘That one is remaining.’ (CPS - CO 472)

(20)



One way of explaining the difference between this CPS order and an example with the predicate marker *yn* like (21) is to leave the Predicate Phrase *in situ* and satisfy the EPP of T by (first) merging the copula *mae* there.⁶

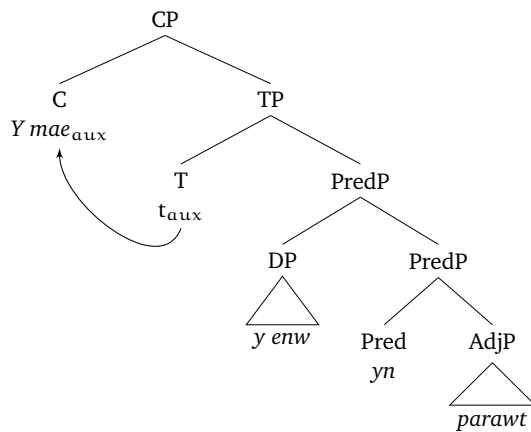
(21) *Ac y mae y enw yn parawt.*
 and PRT be.PRES.3S 3MS name PRED ready
 ‘And his name is ready’ (CSynP - PKM 76.19)

⁵Technically, we are in fact dealing with ‘optional’ pied-piping of the predicate complement in this case. If the Pred-head is probed and therefore moved to SpecTP, it can pied-pipe its complement.

⁶Note that movement of the subject DP to SpecTP would be possible, but entirely string-vacuous in this derivation.

The difference thus lies in the presence of the lexical predicate marker *yn* in the Numeration. This external merger of *mae* further creates the option to move it up to the C-domain as suggested by, amongst other, Roberts (2005) for all inflected forms of *bod* ‘to be’ in Welsh (which would also allow the subject to move to SpecTP to agree with the inflected verb). Agreement with the subject could be established by the auxiliary form of *bod* ‘to be’ in the T-head probing the subject in SpecPredP and subsequently moving up adjoining the sentence-initial particle in the (higher⁷) C-head. The Predicate *yn* and the Adjectival Phrase *parawt* can remain *in situ* lower down in the clause in this configuration.

(22)



Adger & Ramchand’s (2003) analysis of the copular constructions has a solid semantic background involving a **holds** predicate that predicates a property of an individual as follows (cf. Adger (2011:4)):

- (23) a. $[[\text{Pred}']] = \lambda x. \text{holds}(\text{teacher}, x)$
 b. $[[\text{Calum}]] = \text{Calum}$
 c. $[[\text{PredP}]] = \text{holds}(\text{teacher}, \text{Calum})$

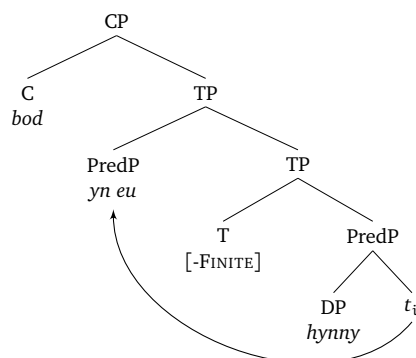
Recall that in non-finite subordinate copular clauses introduced by *bod*, the word order was copula-*yn*-Predicate Complement-Subject. The copula in this case consists of the infinitival form *bod* ‘to be’. When introducing a subordinate clause, however, *bod* can be analysed as the complementiser in the C-head of the clause. In this case, the infinitival T-head is empty and can probe the Predicate head that again moves to SpecTP pied-piping its complement just as in the matrix CPS orders. A derivation of the subordinate clause in (24) is shown in (25):

⁷Roberts (2005) argues that auxiliary forms of *bod* ‘to be’ end up in the higher C-head of an articulate CP he labels ForceP, but I leave out the details of the C-domain here, because they are not relevant to the present discussion. In Chapter 7, however, I will return to this issue.

- (24) ... *bot yn eu hynny arnaf i.*
bod PRED false that on.1SG me
 ‘... knows that that is a lie about me.’

(PKM 21.3)

(25)



The characteristics of the T-head, rather than the phonological strength of the copula in the Pred-head (as Adger and Ramchand (2003) argue) might thus be the reason why movement to SpecTP is triggered or not.⁸ (26) shows the three possibilities and characteristics of T and the Numeration in greater detail:

- (26) a. *ys* - Predicate Complement - Subject (CPS)
 Numeration: { T_[+FINITE], DP_{Sbj}, Copula *ys*, DP_{PredComp} }
 ⇒ empty finite T-head bears EPP attracting PredP
- b. *mae* - Subject - *yn* Pred. Complement (CSynP)
 Numeration: { T_[+FINITE], Aux. *mae*, Pred. marker *yn*, DP_{Sbj}, AdjP_{PredComp} }
 ⇒ Aux first-merged in finite T: EPP may attract subject
- c. (Matrix) ... *bod yn* Pred. Complement - Subject (...CynPS)
 Numeration: { (Matrix), T_[-FINITE], complementiser *bod*, Pred. marker *yn*, DP_{Sbj}, AdjP_{PredComp} }
 ⇒ *bod* first-merged in C: empty non-finite T attracts PredP

In both (26a) and (26c) the T-head is empty and therefore able to attract the PredP to its specifier. In (26b), on the other hand, the auxiliary must be first-merged in the T-head (to receive tense inflection), therefore movement of PredP does not take place. In the non-finite subordinate clauses finally, *bod* has no tense inflection and can be directly merged as the complementiser in the C-head.

⁸Willis (2015) also presents a predicate-raising proposal based on featural differences in the T-head. His analysis involves raising to the outer specifier of an extra VPredP and further remnant movement of the predicate complement, which results in the same possible range of word order patterns. I do not adopt Willis's proposal here, however, since it presents further complications when it comes to explaining the (historical) developments in the various different kinds of *sef*-constructions. As I argue in the next sections and in Chapter 7, Adger & Ramchand's (2003) approach *can* be extended to account for those as well, which is why I adopt and extend their approach for Scots Gaelic here.

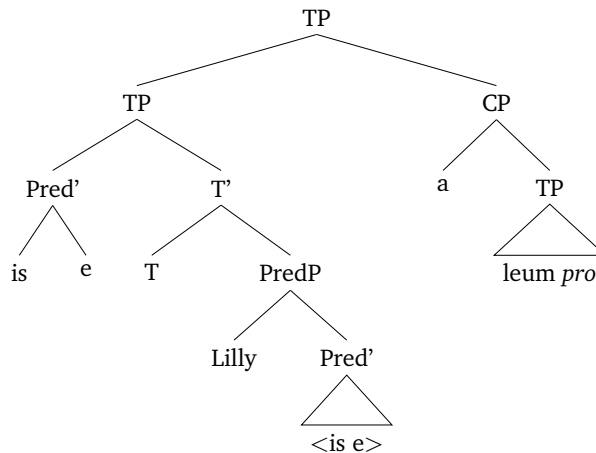
Now the basic structures of the copular clauses are clear, let us turn to the information-structurally marked options with cleft structures. In Gaelic, the Inverted Copular Clause (ICC) with predicate raising is now somewhat archaic, but it was used to build many other constructions in the language such as clefts. These clefts were eventually preferred over the ICC orders as shown in (27a) and augmented copular clauses as in (27c).

- (27) a. 'S e tidsear a tha ann an Calum.
 COP-PRES it teacher REL be.PRES in Calum
 'Calum is a teacher.' (Preferred cleft structure - Adger (2011:3))
- b. Is e Lilly a leum.
 COP it Lilly that jumped
 'It's Lilly that jumped.' (Cleft - Adger (2011:5))
- c. 'S e Calum an tidsear.
 COP-PRES AUG Calum the teacher
 'Calum is the teacher.' (ACC - Adger and Ramchand (2003:339))

Adger's (2011) derivation of a cleft sentence like (27b) is shown in (28) (semantically) and (29) (syntactically):

- (28) [[Cleft]] = **holds**
 $(\lambda x \exists e. \text{jump}(e) \wedge \text{agent}(x, e) \wedge \text{past}(e), \text{Lilly})$

(29)

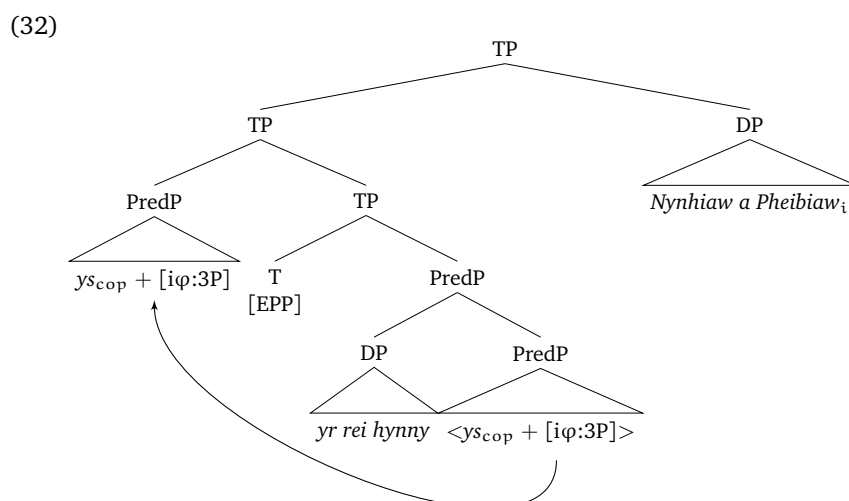


Middle Welsh also used a cleft structure containing a sentence-initial copula *ys* with a directly following anticipatory predicate like the *e* in Scots Gaelic in example (29). From an information-structural point of view, these constructions can be analysed as a clear focus of the (identificational) predicate. Considering the common background of the languages and further similarities in the copular system (like the distinction between substantive verbs and true copulas), it is tempting to extend Adger's (2011) analysis to these Middle Welsh constructions as well. The word order schema of these sentences is given in (30). It resembles that of the first

type of copular clauses with the order CPS. In these constructions with focussed identificational predicate complements, an extra ‘anticipatory’ predicate appears in the form of an agreeing pronoun, just like the *e* in the above example in Scots Gaelic. In (31), the anticipatory pronoun *hwy* agrees with the plural predicate identifying the names of the two oxen ‘Nynnyaw and Peibiaw’. This predicate complement is focussed and adjoined to TP. The subject *yr rei hynny* ‘those ones’ remains *in situ* in the specifier position of the PredP. The derivation of example (31) would look like (32):

(30) Copula *ys* - anticipatory predicate - Subject - Focussed Pred. Complement

(31) *Ys hwy yr rei hynny, Nynhiaw a Pheibiaw*
 be.PRES.3S they the ones DEM.P Nynniaw and Peibiaw
 ‘Those are Nynniaw and Peibiaw’
 (Lit. ‘This is who those are NYNNIAW AND PEIBIAW.’) (CO 598)



This particular sentence is the only example in Middle (or Old) Welsh showing agreement between the anticipatory predicate *hwy* ‘third-plural pronoun’ and the coindexed predicate *Nynhiaw a Pheibiaw* adjoined to TP. All other examples exhibit the third-person singular pronoun *ef*, which later merged with the predicate yielding the petrified focus marker *sef* (from copula *ys* + *ef*, see Chapter 7 for a diachronic analysis of the subsequent changes). It is difficult to draw any conclusions from one single example, but if agreement was indeed an (earlier?) option, then the focussed predicate complement *Nynhiaw a Pheibiaw* is likely to be extraposed (right-dislocated) to TP from its base-generated position as the complement of the predicate *ys*.⁹ Agreement can then be achieved via two possible strategies:

⁹Alternatively, in a framework that does not permit rightward movement, *Nynhiaw a Pheibiaw* could be

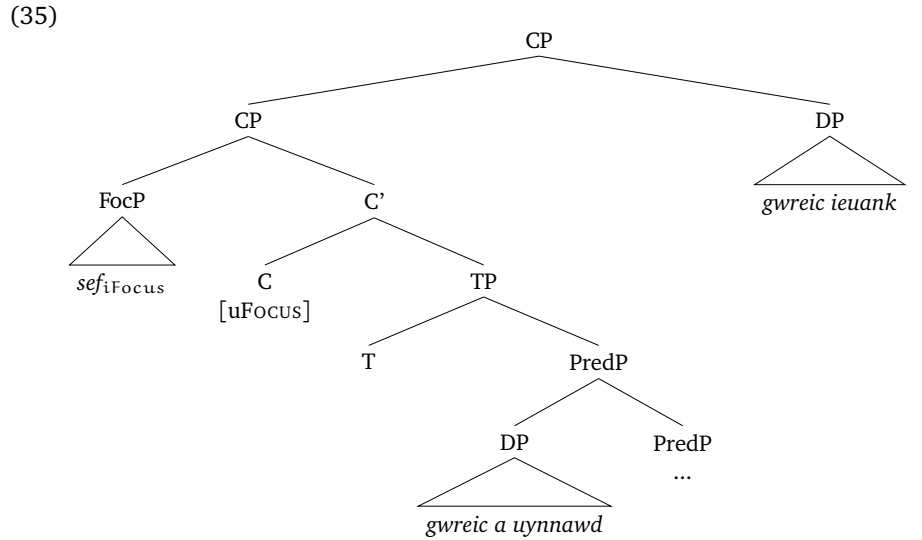
1. The extraposed predicate complement leaves its φ -features behind, which are subsequently spelled out as the third person pronoun *hwy* that surfaces as the anticipatory predicate (cf. Trace Conversion as proposed by Fox (2002)).
2. In the Colon Phrase approach (cf. Koster (2000) and others) the nominal predicate actually contains a co-existing third-person plural pronoun *hwy* AND the nominal predicate *Nynhiaw a Pheibiaw*: in this case the pronoun simply moves up with the copula to the Specifier of TP

Either way, the semantic representation of the identificatory copular clause in example (31) remains the following:

- (33) a. $[[\text{Pred}']] = \lambda x.\text{holds}(\text{Nynhiaw a Pheibiaw}, x)$
 b. $[[\text{those ones}]] = \text{those ones}$
 c. $[[\text{PredP}]] = \text{holds}(\text{Nynhiaw a Pheibiaw}, \text{those ones})$

As soon as the copula and anticipatory predicate pronoun merged to *sef*, it became a mere marker of focus merged in the C-domain to satisfy the $[u\text{FOCUS}]$ on the C-head. An example of this is given in (34). The coindexed predicate will then be adjoined to CP to receive the focussed interpretation, yielding a derivation like (35):

- (34) *Sef gwreic a uynnawd gwreic ieuank*
 sef woman PRT want.PAST.3S woman young
 'That was the woman he wanted, a YOUNG woman.' (YBH 6)



moved to the Specifier of some higher phrase and then everything else could be moved leftward across *Nynhiaw a Pheibiaw*.

Extrapolation of the predicate complement is string-vacuous in these configurations. This in turn, gave rise to possible reanalyses and other types of *sef*-constructions. In Chapter 7, I present a detailed account of the entire process of grammaticalisation including the reanalyses and extensions leading to possible new forms of *sef*-constructions in which the focussed interpretation and the association with identificatory predicates was lost. These innovated forms of the *sef*-construction included headless relative subjects, medial copular forms and adjunct phrases.

6.3.3 Conclusion Case Study I: Focus-Background

To conclude, in this section I presented a case study related to the information-structural notion of Focus, in particular a special case of focussed predicates. I argued that Adger & Ramchand's (2003) predicate-raising analysis of Scottish Inverted Copular Clauses can be extended to both the two word order patterns found in matrix copular structures and the inverted order in subordinate clauses in Middle Welsh. It can also explain the difference between 'true copulas' and substantive constructions with predicate marker *yn*.

In addition to this, Adger's (2011) analysis of clefts could be used as a starting point for the analysis of Middle Welsh identificatory copular clauses with focussed predicate complements: the *sef*-constructions. Raising of the entire predicate phrase to SpecTP (and possibly higher up to SpecCP in the end) can account for all types of *sef*-constructions, two of which were discussed in this chapter.

6.4 Case Study II: Topic-Comment

As presented in Chapters 3 and 4, there are different types of 'topics' in Middle Welsh. This section is dedicated to the puzzling agreement data of the Abnormal and Mixed sentences shown in section 6.2.3. It focusses on the synchronic derivation of sentences with subject-verb agreement. These sentences are argued to contain a base-generated aboutness topic in the left-periphery of the clause. Agreement is established with the coindexed subject in the form of a minimal pronoun (similar to referential *pro*). The derivation of these subject-agreement sentences called Abnormal Sentence crucially differs from their 'Mixed' counterparts without agreement. The lack of agreement in Mixed Sentences is, however, expected if these sentences involve reduced clefts with relative clauses, since Welsh relatives never exhibit agreement. I discuss the synchronic derivation of the Abnormal and Mixed sentences here and turn to their diachronic origin in Chapter 7.

Section 6.4.1 first presents the relevant data and introduces the crucial concept of the Complementarity Principle in Brythonic languages. Section 6.4.2 then continues to work out the details of the syntactic derivation. Finally, in section 6.4.3 I develop a comprehensive account of both agreeing and non-agreeing positive declarative sentences in Middle Welsh.

6.4.1 Topics: the data

Welsh, just like Breton, exhibits the Complementarity Principle according to which full DPs (usually¹⁰) do not show trigger agreement morphology, where pronouns (either an overt pronominal form or *pro* as in (37b)) do. This distinction can be observed in the verbal domain, but also with inflected prepositions, as shown in (36). Many prepositions can be combined with seven different possible person-number (and gender in 3SG) endings.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>(36) a. <i>at Uatholwch</i>
to Matholwch
'to Matholwch' (PKM 32.7)</p> <p>b. <i>attat titheu</i>
to.2S you.CONJ
'to you' (BR 12.20)</p> <p>c. <i>y 'r llys</i>
to the court
'to the court' (PKM 11.13)</p> <p>d. <i>idaw</i>
to.3MS
'to him' (PKM 1.3)</p> | <p>e. <i>y Arthur</i>
to Arthur
'to Arthur' (BR 19.4)</p> <p>f. <i>wrthyf i</i>
to.1S me
'to me' (PKM 7.14)</p> <p>g. <i>wrth y wreic</i>
towards the woman
'towards the woman' (PKM 7.24)</p> |
| <p>(37) a. <i>Y th law di nu y rodaf i.</i>
in 2S hand your now PRT give.1S I
'I now place in your hand.' (Gereint 644)</p> <p>b. <i>ac y r neuad y kyrchyssant (pro).</i>
and to the hall PRT go.PAST.3P
'and they went to the hall' (PKM 59.22)</p> <p>c. <i>Y hela y moch yd aeth y kynnydyon yna oll.</i>
to hunt.INF the pig PRT go.PAST.3S the huntsmen there all
'All the huntsmen went there to hunt the pig.' (CO 731)</p> <p>d. <i>Yna y doeth y kennadeu.</i>
then PRT come.PAST.3S the messengers
'Then the messengers came.' (PKM 27.12)</p> | |

Middle Welsh had an elaborate pronominal system consisting of dependent and independent pronouns with different forms according to their function.¹¹ In contexts with agreement, as shown by the examples above, the dependent affixed form of the pronoun can optionally be spelled out as the 'echo' pronoun as in (36f). Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show the range of forms (based on Borsley et al. (2007)):¹²

¹⁰In some cases, collective DPs do trigger plural agreement.

¹¹Many of these forms trigger different types of consonant mutation, like soft, nasal or aspirate mutation.

¹²At first glance there seem to be many ambiguous forms consisting of a single letter, e.g. *e* for third-person Accusative & Genitive singular and plural. However, each of these trigger different kinds of initial consonant mutation of the verbs and nouns directly following them. I have left out these details in the present table, because the mutation effects complicate the representation and are not always found in Middle Welsh orthography anyway. For the present study of agreement in Abnormal and Mixed Sentence, the distinction is not relevant.

	Affixed conjunctive	Accusative	Genitive	Affixed (echo)
I	<i>inheu</i>	<i>'m</i>	<i>vy / 'm</i>	<i>(u)i</i>
you (sg.)	<i>ditheu</i>	<i>'th</i>	<i>dy / 'th</i>	<i>di/ti</i>
he	<i>ynteu</i>	<i>'e/s</i>	<i>y / 'e</i>	<i>ef</i>
she	<i>hitheu</i>	<i>'e/s</i>	<i>y / 'e</i>	<i>hi</i>
we	<i>ninheu</i>	<i>'n</i>	<i>yn / 'n</i>	<i>ni</i>
you (pl.)	<i>chwitheu</i>	<i>'ch</i>	<i>y ch / 'ch</i>	<i>chwi</i>
they	<i>wynteu</i>	<i>'e/s</i>	<i>eu / 'e</i>	<i>wy(nt)</i>

Table 6.1: Dependent pronouns: conjunctive, accusative, genitive and affixed

	Independent	Conjunctive	Reduplicated
I	<i>mi</i>	<i>minheu</i>	<i>miui</i>
you (sg.)	<i>ti</i>	<i>ditheu</i>	<i>tidi</i>
he	<i>ef</i>	<i>ynteu</i>	<i>efo</i>
she	<i>hi</i>	<i>hitheu</i>	<i>hihi</i>
we	<i>ni</i>	<i>ninheu</i>	<i>nini</i>
you (pl.)	<i>chwi</i>	<i>chwitheu</i>	<i>chwichwi</i>
they	<i>wy(nt)</i>	<i>wynteu</i>	<i>wyntwy</i>

Table 6.2: Independent pronouns: 'normal', conjunctive and reduplicated forms

Recall the aberrant plural inflection of the verb in the so-called Abnormal Sentences in Middle Welsh with preverbal full DP subjects. The Mixed Sentences, on the other hand, also feature preverbal subjects, but in these constructions even pronouns do not trigger agreement of the verb.

Abnormal Sentences:

- (38) a. *A 'r guyrda a doethant y gyt*
and the nobles PRT come.PAST.3P together
'And the nobles came together' (PKM 90.27)
- b. *Ac ef a welei lannerch yn y coet.*
and he PRT see.PAST.3S clearing in the forest
'And he saw a clearing in the forest.' (PKM 1.13-14)
- c. *Ac ni a gredwn iddo.*
and we PRT believe.1P in.3MS
'and we believe him' (b1588 - Mat. 27.42)
- d. *a mi a fyddaf eu Duw hwynt.*
and I PRT be.FUT.1S 3P God 3P
'And I will be their God.' (b1588 - 2 Cor. 6.16)

Mixed Sentences:

- (39) a. *Mi a 'e heirch.*
 I PRT 3FS seek.3S
 '(it is) I who seek her' (WM 479.24)
- b. *y guyr hynny a y godiwawd*
 the men those PRT 3FS overtake.PAST.3S
 'Those men overtook her.' (PKM 32.20-21)
- c. *Kimri a oruit*
 Welshmen PRT prevail.FUT.3S
 '(is shall be) the Welsh that shall conquer' (BBC 59.4)
- d. *os tydi yw Crist Mab Duw.*
 if you.REDUP be.PRES.3S Christ son God
 '...if you are Christ, son of God' (b1588 - Mat. 26.63)

The formal difference between the two can only be observed in sentences with preverbal plural DP or pronominal subjects. As pointed out in section 6.2.3 above, a 'purely' pragmatic distinction between the two as topicalisation with agreement vs. focalisation without agreement is difficult to maintain. There are examples with focussed reduplicated pronouns in agreement contexts, as shown in (40a), but there are also examples of preverbal plural DPs without focus or agreement, as in (40b) (see also, amongst others, Poppe (2009)).

- (40) a. *Miui hagen a uydaf gyfarwyd ywch*
 I.EMPH however PRT be.1S familiar to.2P
 'I, however, will be familiar to you.' (Culhwch 899)
- b. *Kennadeu a aeth at uranwen.*
 messengers PRT go.PAST-3S to Branwen
 'Messengers went to Branwen.' (PKM 40.1-2)

These examples give rise to a number of questions. What is the difference between the Abnormal and Mixed sentences rendering these superficial agreement patterns (and the lack thereof). Do topic or focus or any other information-structural features play a role if both options (with and without agreement) are grammatical? If so, how do they influence the respective syntactic derivations of these sentences?

Some of the above questions are addressed in Chapter 7 when their diachronic syntax is taken into account. In this section, I focus on the question concerning the underlying syntax of the 'Abnormal' sentences with full DP subjects and verbs with third-person plural inflection (as in (38a)). How can these be derived in a language that usually adheres to the Complementarity Principle?

6.4.2 Topics: the analysis

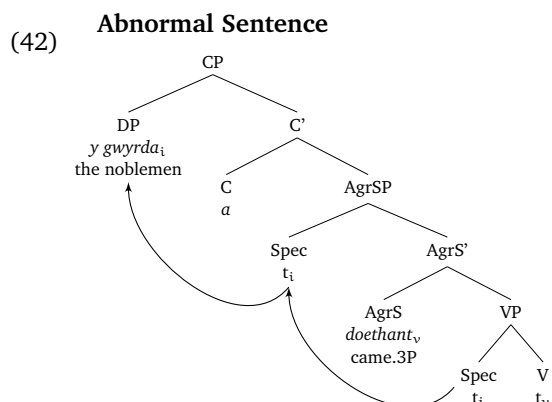
There are - to my knowledge - two relevant analyses of sentences with plural agreement as in (38b): Willis's (1998) A-movement approach and Tallerman's (1996) CP-adjunction approach. As pointed out in section 6.2.3 above, both of these meet with difficulties. In this section, I first discuss the details of each of their

analyses with their respective advantages and disadvantages. Then I proceed to propose an alternative way of deriving Abnormal Sentences like (41):

- (41) *A 'r gwyrda a doethant y gyt*
 and the nobles PRT come.PAST.3P together
 'And the nobles came together' (PKM 90.27)

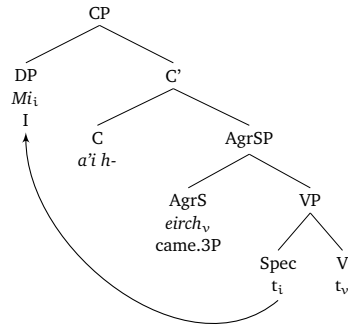
Willis's (1998) approach: A-movement through AgrSP

Willis (1998) proposes a movement analysis for both Mixed and Abnormal sentences. The crucial difference in agreement arises because in Abnormal sentences (with agreement), the subjects moves through SpecAgrSP where it triggers agreement inflection of the verb. Although this approach makes the right prediction for Abnormal sentences with pronominal subjects, it fails to account for the third-person plural agreement in sentences with A-moved full DP subjects, since full DP subjects normally do not trigger agreement (cf. the Complementarity Principle). Willis's (1998:93) derivation of the Abnormal Sentence is as follows:



If the operation Agree operates in the same way as it would if the subject were preverbal, plural inflection is still unexpected because full DPs never trigger agreement under the Complementarity Principle. The difference must then lie in the nature of the trace or copy of the full DP left in SpecAgrSP Willis (1998) has to assume (though this is not made explicit in his proposal) that this copy *can* somehow trigger plural inflection. If the copy of the full DP is 'reduced' (cf. the Reduced Copy Theory, van Koppen (2007)) or 'converted' (cf. Trace Conversion, Fox (2002)) to a pronoun, this could perhaps indeed account for the plural inflection on the verb.

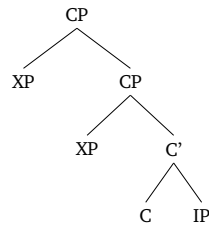
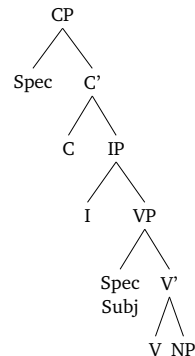
In Mixed Sentences without subject-verb agreement, Willis (1998:92) assumes the subject is fronted via A'-movement, skipping the A-position in AgrSP as shown in (43):

(43) **Mixed Sentence**

In addition to agreement with plural DPs in Abnormal Sentences, the lack of agreement in Mixed sentences has to be accounted for. Willis (1998) stipulates that Mixed sentences do not exhibit subject-verb agreement, because the subject does not move through SpecAgrSP. Fronting of the subject in Mixed sentences is then A' -movement, skipping the A-position in AgrSP. Some extra mechanism is thus required to prevent A' -movement through a position where it can trigger subject-verb agreement.

Tallerman's (1996) approach: adjunction to CP

Tallerman (1996:111), on the other hand, proposes a derivation for Abnormal Sentences where the topic occupies a position adjoined to CP:

(44) **Abnormal Sentence**(45) **Mixed Sentence**

This approach correctly predicts the impossibility of Abnormal Sentences in embedded clauses, because embedded clauses are s-selected by lexical heads (following the Adjunction Prohibition as formulated by McCloskey (1992:11)). Agreement in Abnormal Sentences is not with the topic adjoined to CP, but with the null pronominal subject *pro* (residing in SpecTP or SpecAgrP presumably, although this is not specified).

Mixed Sentences are clefts, according to Tallerman (1996:107) exactly parallel to that found in *wh*-questions and relative clauses. As such they involve *A'*-movement to the specifier of the lower CP (CP₂ in a recursive CP configuration) and do not exhibit agreement, because the empty NP in the canonical subject position is a *wh*-trace. This analysis is parallel to that proposed by Borsley and Stephens (1989b) for Breton topicalisation structures that also do not show subject-verb agreement. An example of the basic structure for Mixed Sentences is given in (45):

One major difficulty with deriving abnormal sentences via adjunction of the topic to CP is that it wrongly predicts multiple topicalisation for Middle Welsh. As Borsley et al. (2007) point out, this is in fact not what we find. Although it is possible to find sentences with multiple constituents preceding the inflected verb, only one of those can be an argument. All other preverbal elements must be non-argument adverbials (Borsley et al., 2007:293). The single (topical) argument determines the form of the preverbal particle: *a* for subjects or objects or *y* for adjuncts (prepositional phrases or adverbs). Subject and objects can never occur in preverbal position in the same sentence, unless one of them is clearly left-dislocated (in which case a resumptive can be found as well).

Further observations in the data

My proposal for this agreement puzzle is based on an additional observation in the Middle Welsh data concerning the pronominal system. In Modern Welsh there is a clear distinction both in form and distribution between so-called ‘strong’ (independent) and ‘weak’ (dependent) pronouns. The data presented in (46) is from Modern Welsh (Borsley et al., 2007:213-214) and it shows the clear difference in grammaticality. There is no reason to assume the distribution was any different in Middle Welsh, because the ungrammatical forms in (46) and (47) are never found (while there are plenty of examples of the grammatical ones, i.e. plenty of ‘missed opportunities’).

- (46) a. *Fi welodd y ceffyl.*
 I see.PAST.3S the horse
 ‘It was I that saw the horse.’
 b. **Gwelais fi ’r ceffyl.*
 see.PAST.1S. I the horse
 (‘I saw the horse.’)
- (47) a. *Gwelais i ’r ceffyl.*
 see.PAST.1S I the horse
 ‘I saw the horse.’
 b. **I welodd y ceffyl.*
 I see.PAST.3S the horse
 (‘It was I that saw the horse.’)

The weak or ‘echo’ pronoun *i* ‘I’ in (47) can only be found in the context of agreement inflection, like the first-person singular inflection of the verb. This is why they are characterised as ‘dependent’ affixes in table 6.1 above. These

echo pronouns (both conjunctive and affixed) are found in Middle Welsh in many agreement contexts (represented in bold in the following examples):

- (48) a. *genhyt ti*
with.2S you
'with you' (WM 121.20)
- b. *A phaham y gouynhy di, Arglwyd?*
and why PRT ask.2S you Lord
'And why do you ask, Lord?' (PKM 61.24)
- c. *amdanaf i*
about.1S me
'of me' (RM 87.27)
- d. *E dodeis inheu ar gynghor uy gwlat ...*
PRT put.PAST.1S I.conj on council 1S country
'I referred to the council of my country...' (PKM 36.4)

Crucially, however, these optional echo pronouns are never found in abnormal sentences with preverbal subjects (see also Willis (2007a)). In the following examples, we see the person-number inflection, but *not* the echo pronoun:

- (49) a. *Mi a af y ymwelet a 'r pryf.*
I.ind PRT go.1S to visit.INF with the worm
'I will go to encounter the Worm.' (WM 161.13)
- b. *Mi a gredwn ac a dywedwn y taw ti oed Bown.*
I PRT believe.1S and PRT say.1S PRT FOC you be.PAST.3S Bown
'I would believe and say that thou wert Bown' (YBH 24.1541)
- c. *Ti a welaist hyn*
you PRT see.PAST.2S that
'You saw that.' (b1588 - 1 Sam. 19.5)
- d. *Ti a e keffy yn llawen.*
you PRT 3FS get.2S PRED glad
'You will get it gladly' (BM 11.27)
- e. *A chwi a uydwch ar y ford yn hir*
and you PRT be.2P on the way PRED long
'And a long time will you be upon the road.' (PKM 45.2)

Although this remains an argument *ex silentio*, there is no reason to assume that these optional pronouns are *incidentally* always absent in abnormal sentences with preverbal subjects. If this indeed no coincidence, we can distinguish four different surface forms of ϕ -features in Middle Welsh:

1. ϕ -inflection on verbs and prepositions ("pro")
2. dependent 'weak' or 'echo' pronouns
3. independent 'strong' pronouns
4. full lexical DPs (carrying interpretable ϕ -features)

Strong pronouns and full lexical DPs exhibit similar distributional patterns according to the Complementarity Principle. They differ only in that strong pronouns never occur in immediate post-verbal position. Weak pronouns do occur in this dependent position, but only in the context of overt inflection on preceding verbs or prepositions (and even then the dependent pronouns are optional). The φ -inflection itself in turn looks like configurations with empty *pro* often found in null-subject languages (NSLs). Middle Welsh is also a null-subject language, but it does allow the optional spell-out of the echo pronoun in (dependent) agreement contexts. Examples of each of the above-mentioned instantiations of φ -features are given in (50):

- (50) a. *Kythreulyeit llawer a 'm kylchynasant.*
 demons many PRT me surround.PAST.3P
 'Many demons have surrounded me.' (‘pro’ - B x 54.9)
- b. *Eissoes negessawl wyf i y gan Arthur attat.*
 yet messenger be.1S I from Arthur to.2S
 'Yet I am a messenger to thee from Arthur.' (‘weak’ - WM 143.11)
- c. *A phoet euo a 'th danuono drachevyn*
 and be.SBJ.3S he.RED PRT you send.SBJ.3S back
 'and may it be he who shall send thee back.' (‘strong’ - SG 15.15-16)
- d. *Yna yd aeth kennadeu yn y erbyn.*
 then PRT go.PAST.3S messengers to 3MS against
 'Then messengers went to meet him' (full DP - PKM 85.2)

Assuming φ -features are the underlying cause for the observed agreement, let us now turn once more to the patterns usually found in Middle Welsh.¹³ For the explanatory purposes, I for now use the traditional denotation of Topic and Focus for pre-verbal subjects of Abnormal and Mixed sentences respectively:

Full φ -agreement between subject and verb:

- Nominal Topic - Verb + agreement
- Pronominal Topic - Verb + agreement
- XP - Verb + agreement - Weak subject pronoun

Default third-person singular agreement:

- XP - Verb 3sg - Full DP subject
- Nominal Focus - Verb 3sg
- Pronominal Focus - Verb 3sg

The question is now which of the four above-mentioned φ -feature patterns is involved in each of these observed agreement patterns. All other things being equal, the crucial variables for the sentences with Topic or Focus seem to be the type

¹³There are some ‘occasional’ exceptions to these observations. Many of these have to do with singular or plural nouns that can have a collective interpretation as well. I turn to some of those examples below. See also Nurmio and Willis (2016) for details about the problematic number category in Middle and Early Modern Welsh noun phrases.

of DP (pronoun or full DP) and the syntactic derivation of the sentence-initial subject (internal or external merge). If nouns and pronouns are probed in the same way, there are still four logical possibilities: both topic and focus are derived by internal merge, both by external merge, one by internal and the other by external merge or vice versa. If both the focussed and topicalised sentences are derived by internal merge, we have to assume (like Willis (1998)) the lack of agreement is due to the focussed constituent ‘skipping’ the position where it can agree with the verb (SpecAgrSP for Willis (1998)). In addition to that, we have to assume some form of Trace Conversion (cf. Fox (2002)) allowing us to treat the trace/copy of the moved full DP differently from the original DP somehow so that it *can* cause number agreement. As pointed out above, this might be possible, but the amount of extra assumptions in this approach make it worth exploring other options.

6.4.3 Topics: a comprehensive account

If we take the Complementarity Principle as a starting point, agreement with nominal topics (as in (51a)) and the lack of agreement with focussed pronouns (as in (51b)) is unexpected. In this section, I zoom in on two alternative approaches to this conundrum: derivation by external merge for both topics and foci and a combined approach of internal merge for foci and external merge for topics.

- (51) a. *A 'r guyrda a doethant y gyt*
 and the nobles PRT come.PAST.3P together
 ‘And the nobles came together’ (‘Topicalised’ - PKM 90.27)
- b. *Mi a 'e heirch.*
 I PRT 3FS seek.3S
 ‘(it is) I who seek her’ (‘Focalised’ - WM 479.24)

Following Willis (1998), I assume the dedicated pre-verbal position for both topical and focussed constituents is the specifier of C. From a cross-linguistic perspective, this is not an odd assumption. As pointed out in section 6.2.1 above, most topicalisation and focalisation structures involve constituents in the C-domain (in SpecCP or in the specifier of, for example, a topic or focus projection in a proliferated C-domain). Further evidence from Welsh comes from agreement with the complementiser or pre-verbal particle. The element in SpecCP can agree with the complementiser to yield its correct surface form: *a* following arguments, *y* following adjuncts. Assuming SpecCP as the dedicated pre-verbal position furthermore makes the correct prediction that multiple topics are impossible.¹⁴

If we want to avoid the complications of moving the subject through an agreeing position to SpecCP, we could assume these topical subjects are base-generated instead. If the topic is base-generated in the C-domain, however, agreement still needs to be explained. I propose agreement can be realised with a minimal pronoun that does not possess any φ -features (and therefore cannot be spelled out overtly, see below), but is co-indexed with the base-generated topic (via predication with a

¹⁴Unless the C-head projects multiple specifiers, which I assume not to be the case in Middle Welsh.

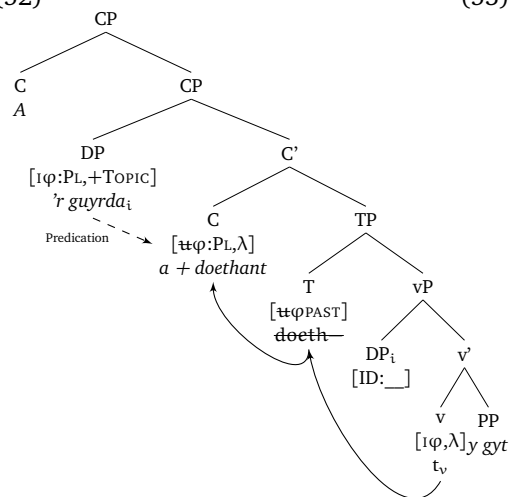
λ -feature as I will explain in detail in the next section). This minimal pronoun is the equivalent of the referential *pro* as postulated by Frascarelli (2007) for sentences with base-generated aboutness topics. This explains the subject-verb agreement, even if it is co-indexed with a full DP topic, which under the Complementarity Principle would not trigger subject-verb agreement moving through the T-domain. This type of analysis is in fact similar to the one advocated by Tallerman (1996) for topics in Abnormal Sentences. The main difference is that she suggested base-adjunction to CP resulting in the incorrect prediction that there could be multiple topics in Middle Welsh. If the topic is base-generated in SpecCP instead, this poses no problems, because multiple topics or focussed constituents are not predicted to coexist in SpecCP. A derivation of this kind is presented in (52) below.

Middle Welsh sentences with pre-verbal subjects *without* agreement (as in (53)), the so-called ‘focalised Mixed Sentences’, are then simply analysed in exactly the same way as relative clauses (from which they originate, see Chapter 7 for a diachronic analysis). Sentences like (51b) are reduced clefts with an externally headed relative. The lack of agreement is expected in the same way it is expected in relative clauses: empty operators can bind the variable in subject-position, but do not license agreement.

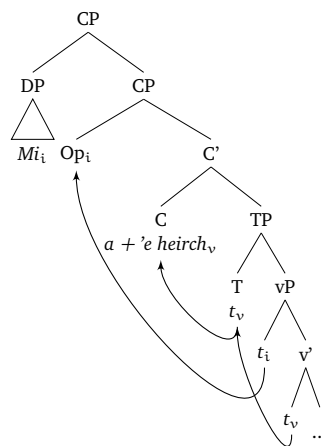
Abnormal Sentence

Mixed Sentence

(52)



(53)



Deriving the Abnormal Sentence with agreement

As noted above, on the basis of prosodic evidence from Aboutness Topics in Italian, Frascarelli (2007) advocates an analysis with a base-generated topic in the C-domain that is coindexed with a referential *pro* lower down in argument position in

the clause. For Middle Welsh, of course it is impossible to provide similar evidence based on differences in prosodical patterns for Aboutness and Familiar topics. From the context, however, these subjects in sentence-initial position do seem to (re)introduce the topic that the sentence is about. Furthermore, if the topic/subject stays the same, a silent or null topic (that could be analysed as *pro*) is found:

- (54) *Peredur_i a ordinawd y varch ac (pro_i) a 'e kyrchawd yn*
 Peredur PRT spur.PAST.3S 3MS horse and (pro_i) PRT 3MS attacked PRED
llityawcdrut (...) ac (pro_i) a 'e gwant dyrnawt gwenwyniclym ...
 angry (...) and (pro_i) PRT 3MS hit.PAST.3S blow incisive ...
 'Peredur spurred his horse and attacked him angrily (...) and struck him an
 incisive blow...' (Peredur 41.27-33)

Willis (1998) argues that the silent topic in Middle Welsh is not a *pro*, however, but an empty topic operator. Evidence for the operator analysis comes from coordinated sentences with null objects, rather than null subjects. Null objects in Welsh can only be found in the context of agreeing object clitics (cf. the first type of φ -features above that are only found in the context of inflected verbs or prepositions). Examples of null objects in the second conjunct are exceedingly rare, but they do exist, as Willis (1998:126) points out:

- (55) *Ac yna y kanhatwyt y Chyarlys bot yn Ager gawr_i Ffarracut y*
 and then PRT reported.IMPERS to Charles be.INF in Ager giant Fferracud his
enw o genedyl Goliath ac (pro_i) a dathoed o eithauoed Sirya
 name from race Goliath and (pro_i) PRT come.PLQPF.3S from extremes Syria
ac (pro_i) a anuonassei Amilald vrenhin Babilon (t_i) y ryuelu (...)
 and (pro_i) PRT send.PLQPF.3S Amilald king Babilon to make.war (...)
 'And then it was reported to Charles that there was in Ager a giant named
 Fferracud from the race of Goliath, and (he) had come from the ends of Syria
 and Amilald King of Babylon had sent (him) to make war (...)' (YCM
 25.12-15)

If the null object is a topic operator, rather than a *pro* (as indicated in the above example), it can bind a variable in object position. In this type of configuration with an empty operator, according to Willis (1998:127) there is no need for agreeing object clitics. Lack of agreement with operators is indeed expected from a cross-linguistic perspective. Problems arise, however, in sentences with silent topics that *do* exhibit agreement. From a theoretical perspective it would be inelegant to say the least to postulate an empty operator for a silent topical object alongside a referential *pro* for a silent topical subject. Postulating referential *pro* in null-subject languages is in fact undesirable from a Minimalist point of view as well. Most recent analyses of NSLs involve either deletion of the subject after it satisfies EPP (cf. Holmberg (2005), Sheehan (2007) and Roberts (2009)) or a hybrid approach in which either the verb or the subject can satisfy the EPP (after which the subject is deleted as well, see Sheehan (2015) or, in a somewhat different version, Biberauer and Richards (2006)). In both these types of analyses of NSLs, referential *pro* is

removed from the system. Postulating it here for Middle Welsh silent topics would thus be undesirable from this perspective as well.

The type of empty element we need is a pronoun with a defective feature set. It should be able to be bound, coindexed or 'identified' in the derivation by the sentence-initial Aboutness topic, but it does not have a separate set of φ -features of its own. In a semantic account as propagated by Kratzer (2009), these kinds of bound variables are 'minimal pronouns'. According to Kratzer (2009:187), these include local fake indexicals, relative pronouns, reflexives and PRO. The features they are missing can be acquired in the course of the derivation from verbal functional heads that carry λ -operators to bind them in a 'predication' configuration.

This 'minimal pronoun' is very similar to the pronoun without φ -features but with Identity features that they mark as '[ID: _]'. Adger and Ramchand (2005) propose to explain the difference between structure with internal and external merge in Scots Gaelic (and beyond). The (non)identity effects on which their account is based are difficult to test in Middle Welsh, because Welsh no longer has case morphology and there is no definiteness agreement between prepositions and their complements. They furthermore predict (correctly for Scots Gaelic) that multiple *wh*-questions are impossible, because of the clefted nature of the copular and *wh*-constructions. Although Welsh questions look superficially similar to the Scots Gaelic clefts and are originally based on clefts, multiple *wh*-questions are possible in Modern Welsh¹⁵. In the same way, evidence from non-identity effects in parasitic gaps cannot be readily found in Middle Welsh or points towards the opposite direction (cf. Sproat (1985) for the possibility of parasitic gaps in Welsh). In short, despite their superficial similarities and their common background, Adger & Ramchand's (2005) analysis cannot be readily transposed to Middle Welsh (see also Willis (2011b) for an analysis of Modern Welsh relative structures that faces the same difficulty): Welsh and Scots Gaelic diverge too much.

This does not mean, however, that their basic intuition about the featural differences in 'minimal pronouns' and resumptives is wrong or that the analysis of those pronominal elements being bound by a λ -operator on a functional head cannot be implemented in Middle Welsh at all (they actually implement it in Modern Welsh relatives in the same paper). Their approach furthermore allows for cross-linguistic variation: there are different types of Merge (i.e. base-generation with co-indexation), but in addition Move (i.e. internal merge) is still an option (this is in fact the predicted strategy for languages like English with over relative pronouns). For now, I leave this as an option that is worth exploring in future work. I only take their notion of 'Identity' and the featural representation '[ID: _]' for bound variables that are 'minimal pronouns' in Kratzer's sense, because this is the exact type of variation in φ -features that *could* account for the variation in Welsh agreement patterns.

¹⁵Since these types of questions are rare in general, it is difficult to find examples in the medieval data. It is possible that they did exist in Middle Welsh, however, which would make a similar analysis of Scots Gaelic and Middle Welsh impossible.

The implementation of this type of empty category, the ‘minimal pronoun’ with the identity category, but without inherent φ -features, proceeds as follows. I first assume the verb can enter the derivation with interpretable φ -features. Recall from the above-mentioned discussion on the hybrid approach for the EPP on T, that postulating φ -features or, in other words a D-feature on V was already necessary to account for probing of the verb in null-subject languages (see, amongst others, Biberauer and Richards (2006) and Sheehan (2015)). The topic is a DP with a full set of φ -features, base-generated in SpecCP (as postulated above). The empty category it binds, however, enters the derivation without φ -features in SpecvP. Because it has no φ -features, it cannot be probed by T. It is, however, bound by the λ -operator on the verb to realise coindexation with the topic in SpecCP

The derivation then proceeds in the same way as described for passives or unaccusatives in null-subject languages (or any other configuration in which SpecvP is not occupied by a phrase bearing φ -features). The verb thus moves to T and is subsequently probed by C. Following Adger and Ramchand (2005) and Kratzer (2009), I assume C can carry a λ -operator. Under the principle of predication - as formulated by Kratzer (2009) - the φ -features of the DP in the specifier of CP are then united with those of the C-head.

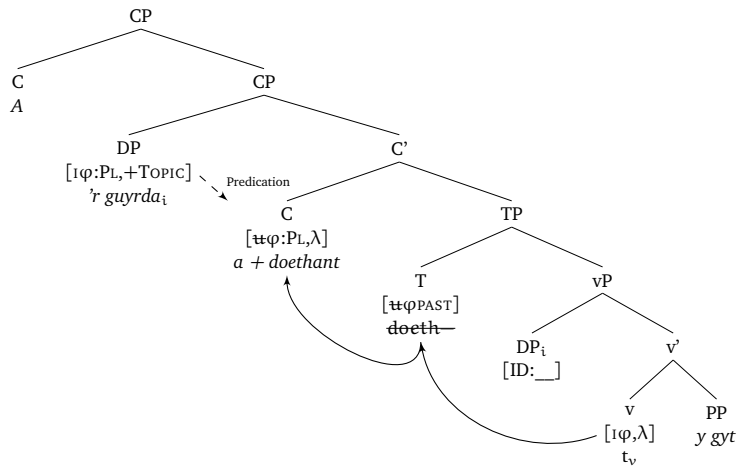
(56) PREDICATION (Specifier-Head Agreement under Binding)

When a DP occupies the specifier position of a head that carries a λ -operator,
their φ -feature sets unify. (Kratzer, 2009:196)

These features can now be spelled out as the inflection on the verb agreeing with those of the topic in SpecCP. This pronoun, like any regular referential pronoun, does enter the derivation with dedicated φ -features ‘[ID: φ]’. If it had entered the derivation in SpecvP as a true subject without a topic feature (as in the adjunct-initial examples above), its set of features would be the same. As we saw in the null-subject derivations above, these φ -features would be incorporated into the verb and be optionally spelled out as a weak or echo pronoun. Topical pronouns, however, look different because they are spelled out as ‘strong pronouns’. This is not due to a featural difference, however, but solely to their position preceding the complementiser *a* and the verb: they cannot be incorporated and spelled out as (weak) clitic pronouns. Since the difference between weak and strong pronouns is only related to their surface position, postulating the exact same feature set for both is an elegant solution allowing us to treat them uniformly, strictly in accordance with their exact same semantic properties (i.e. unlike their ‘minimal pronoun’ counterparts, they are referential). A sample derivation of this kind based on example (57) is again given in (58).

- (57) *A ’r guyrda a doethant y gyt*
and the nobles PRT come.PAST.3P together
‘And the nobles came together’ (‘Topicalised’ - PKM 90.27)

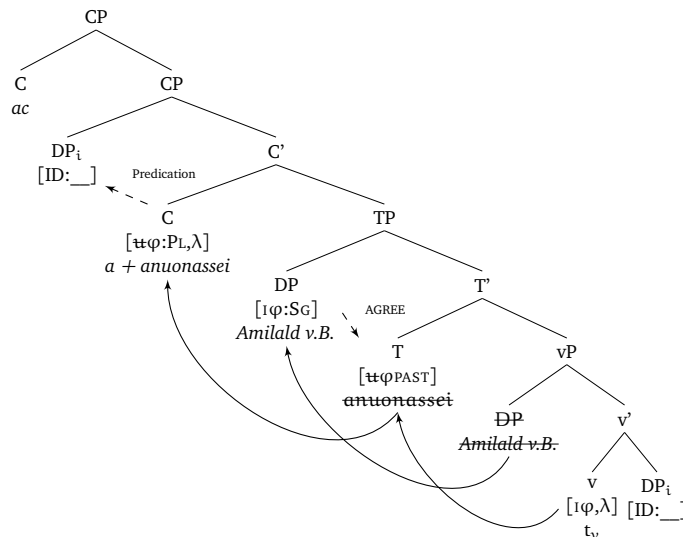
(58)



The lack of agreement clitics in the example with the null object in topic position can now also be straightforwardly explained. The ϕ -features in that configuration are also not there, because just like the minimal subject pronoun in the above example, the minimal object pronoun does not carry ϕ -features when it enters the derivation. It carries an Identity feature so that it can be bound by the topic via the λ -feature on the transitive verb: [ID: _]. The derivation of the last part of the long coordinated sentence presented above is now shown in (60):

(59) *ac (pro_i) a anuonassei Amilald vrenhin Babilon (t_i) y ryuelu*
 and (pro_i) PRT send.PLQPF.3S Amilald king Babilon to make.war
 'and Amilald King of B. had sent (him) to make war' (YCM 25.12-15)

(60)



6.4.4 Conclusion Case Study II: Topics

In this section I presented a base-generated approach to derive sentences with initial (aboutness) topics. These topics appear to trigger subject-verb agreement, yielding the ‘Abnormal Sentence’ in Middle Welsh. These sentences are not just ‘abnormal’ because of their verb-second word order, but mainly because sentence-initial full DP subjects often agree with the verb, which is unexpected in a language that is commonly assumed to abide by the Complementarity Principle. According to this principle, also observed in Breton, only pronouns cause agreement on verbs or inflected prepositions, while full DPs always co-occur with default third-person singular inflection or uninflected prepositions.

Given the Copy Theory of Movement, it is difficult to explain this subject-verb agreement with plural full DP subjects in sentence-initial topic position. Extra assumptions have to be made to convert the copy of the DP into a pronoun-like element that *can* trigger agreement when it moves through a canonical subject-position. In focussed constructions - which never show agreement, not even with pronouns - further assumptions are necessary to ‘prevent’ subject-verb agreement with pronominal subjects. Therefore, alternatives with base-generated topics and the coindexed ‘minimal pronoun’ were explored. Based on this data and the further observation that topicalised subjects never co-occur with the spell-out of ‘weak’ pronouns, I presented a four-way overview of the occurrence of φ -features in Middle Welsh:

1. agreement inflection only (on verbs or prepositions)
2. weak or echo pronouns (only in positions following agreement inflection)
3. strong pronouns (NOT following agreement inflection)
4. full DPs (NOT causing agreement on verbs or prepositions)

I argued that agreement in the first context is in fact just the spell-out of the φ -features of the verb. The verb enters the derivation with interpretable φ -features and λ -binders on functional heads in the derivation can establish the link with the bound variable. This bound variable is a minimal pronoun in the sense that it enters the derivation without φ -features. It only carries an identity feature [ID: ___] that allows it to be bound by a λ -operator on a functional head, e.g. the verb or the C-head. This allows us to not only explain the observed agreement patterns in topicalised sentences with full DPs, it also offers a solution to the lack of agreement clitics with topicalised objects. If the null object, just like the null subject, enters the derivation without φ -features, those features cannot appear as clitics on the verb. In these configurations, the verb agrees with the subject DP rendering the usual agreement pattern. Subject-verb agreement inflection on the verb with topicalised subjects is a reflection of the interpretable φ -features the C-head receives from the DP in its specifier via predication. Finally, this way of looking at the pronominal system solves the awkward distinction between strong and weak pronouns in Welsh. These pronouns can now be considered the same, both carrying φ -features, when they enter the derivation. They only differ in terms of their position at spell-out: weak pronouns are incorporated φ -features and strong pronouns are independent.

Mixed Sentences *without* subject-verb agreement were analysed involving an

operator just as in Welsh relative clauses. These operators always trigger default third-person singular agreement. In Chapter 7 I present a diachronic analysis of the Mixed Sentence arguing it originates in clefts with relative clauses.

An afterthought on examples with ‘messy agreement’

Although the above-sketched agreement patterns occur with such regularity, the Complementarity Principle is not a full-proof generalisation in Middle Welsh. There are exceptional cases of plural noun phrases triggering agreement even when they follow the verb.¹⁶ One of these exceptional cases is shown in (61):

- (61) *e uelly e dianghassant e gelynyon wedy caffael eu golwc*
 thus PRT escape.PAST.3P the enemies after get.INF 3P sight
 ‘thus the enemies escaped having received their sight’ (B ix 337.20-21)

Apart from the fact that these sentences involve subjects that could be considered collectives or that involve numeral phrases, I have no ready solution for these now. In Chapter 7 I discuss these cases again in the light of their diachronic background.

There are some other cases of abnormal sentences that show challenging agreement patterns. Examples of those can occasionally be found in coordinated structures. See (62) for coordinated DPs. The first-person inflection on (62) is not immediately expected under the currently-adopted base-generation approach:

- (62) *Miui a ’m bydin a ruthraf udunt hwy.*
 I.RED and 1S host PRT hurry.1S to.3P them
 ‘I and my host will attack them.’ (HGK 15)

In the base-generation analysis described above, for a sentence like (62) we would have to assume that it is the first-person singular φ -feature that transfers to the C-head under predication as soon as the coordinated topic phrase is merged in SpecCP. It is not so clear why these features would be preferred over those of the second conjunct (or those of the conjoined phrase combined). Welsh always exhibits first-conjunct agreement with conjoined noun phrases and this is usually analysed as such because in a VSO order, the first conjunct is the closest, but this is clearly not the case here.

Would a movement analysis of these constructions not be better? If there were movement, the trace/copy of the conjoined phrase would have to be converted to something that can cause φ -agreement, but, crucially, cannot be spelled out as the weak pronoun. After Agree takes place with the subject, the copy of the dislocated subject phrase thus has to be converted to the minimal pronoun, a DP with [ID:_] features, postulated above. This would not explain plural agreement in sentences with dislocated plural noun phrases, however, because if Agree takes place first, plural inflection is unexpected. For these sentences, we would first again have to

¹⁶To my knowledge, there are no examples in Middle Welsh of (plural) inflection on prepositions preceding full noun phrases, however.

assume the copy is converted to some empty category that behaves like third-person plural pronoun, but without the optional (and quite unexpected) spell-out of the echo pronoun. Then only after this conversion, the verb Agrees with this empty category. This order of events seems undesirable: movement (or re-merge) and Agree should go together on current minimalist assumptions.

The only way to ‘save’ this movement derivation would be to postulate a spell-out rule stating full DP noun phrases always agree with and thus transfer their φ -features to their probing functional heads, but plural agreement is simply not spelled out if the DP immediately follows the inflected verb (or preposition), yielding the Complementarity Principle. If we do not want to resort to such a spell-out rule, a movement analysis cannot readily explain the facts and thus the base-generated analysis should be adopted. In this case, agreement with the first conjunct is not a linear, but a structural requirement: only the φ -features of the first conjunct are transferred to C. Since the Welsh phrase *a'm bydin* does not necessarily mean ‘and my host’, but can also be a prepositional phrase ‘with my host’, this preference for the head noun is not unexpected.

A final category of difficult cases of agreement in Middle Welsh are presented by coordinated CPs¹⁷ as shown in (63) and (64). These are also discussed by Poppe (2009:257), but he does not provide any syntactic analysis. The default third-person singular inflection following the plural noun phrases is unexpected if these phrases are abnormal sentences in which agreement usually occurs. They could be analysed as collectives or simply as mixed sentences without agreement. But then the third-person plural agreement in the second conjunct following the dropped topic is unexpected again.

(63) *Y gwyr a wiscawd amdanunt ac a nessayssant attunt.*
 the men PRT dress.PAST.3S on.3P and PRT go.PAST.3P to.3P
 ‘The men armed themselves and went towards them.’ (PKM 29.22-23)

(64) *Y guyr hynny a 'y godiwawd ac a ouynyssant idaw*
 the men these PRT 3MS overtake.PAST.3S and PRT ask.PAST.3P to.3MS
 ‘These men overtook him and asked him...’ (PKM 32.20-21)

These sentences seem highly problematic for any approach that attempts to give a uniform analysis of agreement patterns. Equivalent sentences in English can (optionally¹⁸) be pronounced with an overt (unstressed) pronoun *they* in the equivalent: ‘The men armed themselves and (they) went towards them.’ The dropped topic in the second conjunct (the optional ‘they’ in English) has to carry plural φ -features. But if it gets those φ -features from the topic of the first conjunct, why is there no agreement in the first conjunct?

¹⁷The presence of the complementiser *a* provides evidence for a coordinated CP analysis. VP coordination is thus excluded.

¹⁸This is not necessarily a case of true optionality in the sense of Biberauer and Richards (2006). A British English informant tells me that adding the overt pronoun indeed has the same meaning, but it could make you wonder for a short while if it is perhaps *not* coreferenced with ‘the men’. True optionality would then only be found in contexts in which this is made explicit somehow.

Move and Agree are not tied together, as outlined above). We have to postulate a ‘topic operator’ that carries the same φ -features as the plural DP. But at the same time, we cannot readily assume this topic operator was ‘born’ with φ -features. If that were the case, we would first of all expect the possibility of spelling out the weak pronoun (which in theory is possible, but never seen in this configuration). Furthermore, for null objects, as explained above, we have to postulate a topic operator without φ -features, because we do not see agreement clitics on the verb. It seems undesirable to postulate two different kinds of topic operators: one for subjects with φ -features and one for objects without. Adopting a movement approach does not fare much better than the outlined base-generated approach.

Let us now get back to the earlier question about the lack of focus in the first conjunct (‘the men’ is actually an aboutness-shift topic in the context). From an information-structural perspective, the notions [+TOPIC] and [+FOCUS] seem to have been rendered meaningless here. They are only mentioned in the derivation as an indication for an agreeing and non-agreeing structure respectively. If we recall some examples with ‘unexpected’ agreement patterns from the introduction of this section, however, we see the same ‘pattern’ (or ‘lack of association between Topic/Focus and Agree/No Agree’):

- (66) a. *Miui hagen a uydaf gyfarwyd ywch*
 I.EMPH however PRT be.1S familiar to.2P
 ‘I, however, will be familiar to you.’ (Focus, but Agree - CO 899)
- b. *Kennadeu a aeth at uranwen.*
 messengers PRT go.PAST-3S to Branwen
 ‘Messengers went to Branwen.’ (Topic, but no Agree - PKM 40.1-2)

In a movement analysis, the above agreement pattern (Agree with pronoun and no Agree with plural DP) is exactly what we would expect. If the information-structural features were not strictly associated with a particular derivation anymore, could it be the case that the language we observe was actually representing a grammar in transition from a base-generated to a movement analysis of verb-second clauses? If we look at the other puzzling example from the introduction from two different manuscripts - the older White Book and the later Red Book - this might actually hint at this transition.

- (67) a. *Ti a 'y gwelho*
 you PRT 3FS see.SBJ-3S
 ‘You will see it’ (White Book CO 451)
- b. *Ti a 'y gwelhy*
 you PRT 3FS see.SBJ-2S
 ‘You will see it’ (Red Book equivalent)

In Chapter 7, I return to this issue putting these difficult agreement patterns in a diachronic context.

6.5 Case Study III: Givenness

The present corpus of Middle Welsh was annotated for Givenness with the Pentaset (Komen, 2013). Recall that according to this annotation scheme, constituents are first divided by whether they are somehow ‘linked’ or not. If they are not linked, a further distinction is made between constituents that are not active as possible antecedents in the following context (labeled *INERT*) and those that can be referred to (labeled *NEW*).

If a constituent is linked, the first question is whether it is linked to something that previously occurred in the text or not. If that is not the case, it can still be linked to something that is considered common knowledge by the speaker and listener (or writer and reader) in that particular situation. A divine figure like ‘God’ for example, is assumed to be commonly known even if ‘God’ was not introduced in the immediately preceding context. In the Pentaset, these constituents are labeled *ASSUMED*.

Constituents can be identical to an item or person still in the working memory of the listener, because it appeared in the preceding context. A clear example is a pronoun ‘he’ referring to a full DP ‘the man’ in the previous sentence. Since these constituents both refer to one and the same man, they receive the *IDENTITY* label. Finally, there are constituents that are not identical to something or someone previously mentioned, but they are related to them in another way, for example a set or part/whole relation. These constituents are labeled *INFERRED*. The Pentaset allows us to make meaningful distinctions on a scale of Givenness, rather than a black-and-white old vs. new distinction.

The Case Study related to Givenness I present in this section is concerned with the referential status of object. As pointed out in Chapter 4, direct objects are hardly ever found in sentence-initial position, but if they are, they either convey New information or information that is ‘newer’ on the scale than that of the sentence subject. In the exceptional cases their status is not new(er), they are always familiar topics (so different from the aboutness-shift topics presented above). In section 6.5.1 I first outline the data and in section 6.5.2 I present a syntactic analysis along the lines of the approach for topic sentences in the previous section.

6.5.1 Givenness: the data

Most sentence-initial objects convey New information, as shown in the examples in (68a) and (68b). The subjects in these sentences often convey Old information: their referential status is *IDENTITY*. These object-initial examples are thus marked according to the Principle of Natural Information flow, because New information precedes Old information instead of the more common ‘Old-before-New’ pattern.

Subject *IDENTITY* + Object *NEW*

- (68) a. *Ac val y deuth y mywn. gwydbwyll a welei yn y*
 and as PRT come.PAST.3S to in Gwyddbwyll PRT see.PAST.3S in the

neuad.

hall

'And as he came in he saw a *gwyddbwyll*¹⁹ in the hall.' (Peredur 66.23-24)

b. *Kymmeu a welei, (a diffwys, a cherric uchel ...)*

valleys PRT see.PAST.3S and steep place and rock high a ...

'And he saw valleys (and a steep place and a high rock ...).' (BM 2.19-20)

In some sentences, the sentence-initial direct objects contain constituents that are not literally mentioned before, but they are somehow linked to the preceding context. These objects are *INFERRED*. In these cases, the sentence is still marked, because Newer information precedes Old information. The direct objects in these sentences are often focussed as well: they pick out one or a part of a possible set of alternatives.

Subject *IDENTITY* + Object *INFERRED*

Finally, there are object-initial sentences in which the referential status of the subject and the object is both *IDENTITY*: they both convey 'old' information. These objects are very closely linked to the preceding context. They mostly repeat either the exact same constituent that was mentioned last or they refer to the same context with a demonstrative pronoun. As such, they are annotated as 'Familiar topics'. In section 6.6 about textual cohesion I discuss these further.

So Peredur took half of the meat and of the liquor himself,

(69) *a r llall a adawd yghyfeir y vorwyn.*

and the other PRT leave.PAST.3S for the maiden

'and the rest he left for the maiden.'

(Peredur 10.28)

If there are gifts for the husband via the wife, it belongs to the husband until the end of seven years; and if she gets to the third night of the seventh year,

(70) *haner y da oll a geiff y wreic pan yscaront.*

half the goods all PRT get.3S the wife when divorce.SBJ.3P

'the wife gets half of all the goods when they divorce.'

(Laws 520)

Subject *IDENTITY* + Object *IDENTITY*

And without further parlance, they encountered one another, and immediately Peredur overthrew the knight, and he besought mercy of Peredur.

(71) *Nawd a gehy gan gymryt y wreic hon yn briawt.*

mercy PRT get.2S by take.INF the woman that.FS in marriage

"Mercy shalt thou have by taking this woman in marriage"

(Peredur 22.5)

¹⁹Some kind of chessboard.

And on the chair sat a lovely auburn-haired maiden, with a golden frontlet on her forehead, and sparkling stones in the frontlet, and with a large gold ring on her hand. (...) "My mother," said he, "told me, wheresoever I saw a fair jewel, to take it." "Do so, my soul," said she.

(72) *Y vodrwy a gymerth Peredur.*
 the ring PRT take.PAST.3S Peredur
 'Peredur took the ring.' (Peredur 11.4)

"When first I met the mother of this maiden, nine bushels of flax were sown therein, and none has yet sprung up, neither white nor black; and I have the measure by me still."

(73) *Hwnnw a vynnaf inheu y gaffel yn y tir newyd draw*
 that PRT want.1S I 3MS get.INF in the land new over.there
 'I require to have the flax in the new land under.' (CO 606-607)

The main question for this section is: how are these object-initial sentences derived syntactically? In the following section, I propose an analysis in line with the base-generated approach for topics and foci outlined above.

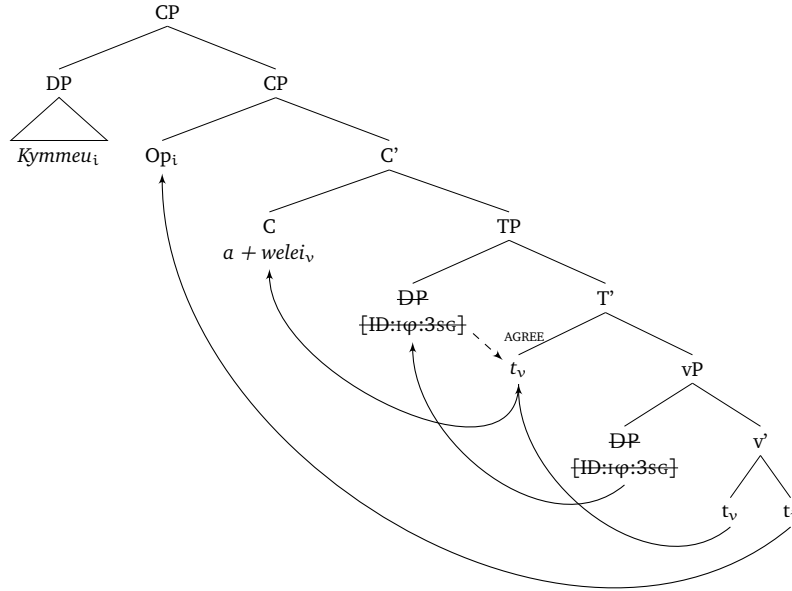
6.5.2 Givenness: the analysis

In object-initial sentences, the tricky agreement problem discussed in the second Case Study is not observed. Sentence-initial objects can furthermore only be full DPs in Welsh, since pronominal objects are always cliticised to the verb, so the Complementarity Principle cannot be observed either. The subject is always post-verbal when the object is in sentence-initial position and in these contexts we find agreement according to the Complementarity Principle as expected. So how are object-initial sentences derived?

If sentence-initial objects contain New information (and are thus marked in terms of the Principle of Natural Information Flow), they could be analysed as sentences containing New Information Focus. If New Information Focus structures are derived in the same way as contrastively focussed structures, we expect the focussed constituent to be base-generated and co-indexed with an Operator in the specifier of CP. The derivation of (68b) repeated here as (74) would then look like (75).

(74) *Kymmeu a welei*
 valleys PRT see.PAST.3S
 'And he saw valleys' (BM 2.19-20)

(75)

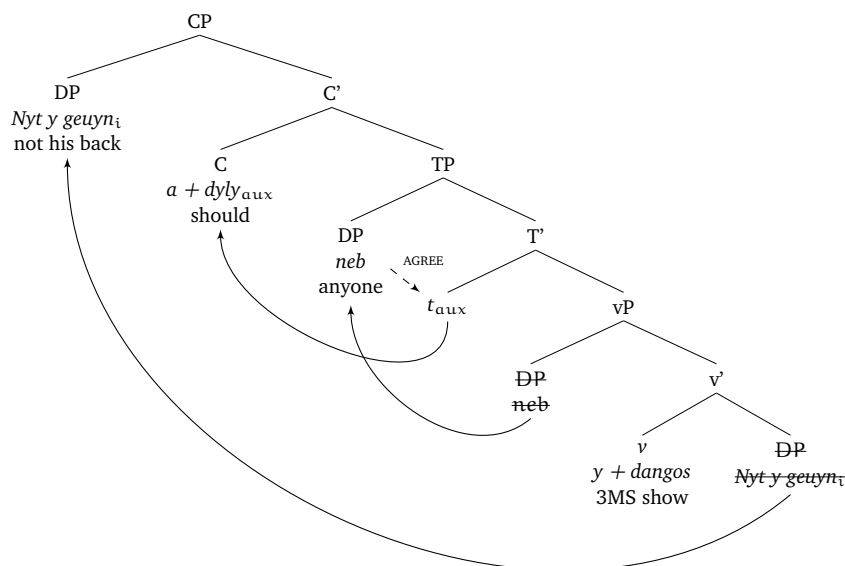


An analysis involving movement of the object would yield the same result. There is no agreement with full DPs, so we do not expect agreement clitics on the verb, which is exactly what we find. A uniform analysis of all focus structures, both for initial subjects as well as objects, would be preferred, so adopting a movement approach for these object-initial sentences needs to be well motivated. One reason for adopting a movement analysis could come from structures involving (local) Binding. An example is given by Borsley et al. (2007:293):

- (76) *Nyt y geuyn a dyly neb y dangos y*
 NEG 3MS.GEN back PRT should.PRES.3S anyone 3SM.GEN show.INF to.3MS.GEN
elynnyn.
 enemies
 'It is not his back that anyone should show to his enemies' (i.e. 'No one should show his back to his enemies.')

We expect the possessive pronoun *y* in the sentence-initial object constituent *geuyn* 'his back' to be bound by the quantifier *neb* 'anyone' in its base position where it can be c-commanded by the quantifier. The derivation (of the first part of the sentence) with the moved direct object would then look like (77):

(77)



There are, however, very few examples that can provide such evidence for a preferred movement approach. In addition to that, similar problems with local binding are observed in relative clauses. Recall that relative clauses are also claimed to involve a null-operator (by, amongst others, Borsley et al. (2007) and Willis (2011b)). As Willis (2011b) points out, an example like (78) from Modern Welsh needs ‘some mechanism’ to “ensure that the operator is in some sense linked to anaphor *ei hun* ‘himself’ in the antecedent of the relative clause” (Willis, 2011b:213 n.16).

(78) *Dyma ’r llun o ’i hun mae Ifan yn ei leicio fwyaf.*
 this-is the picture of 3MS REFL be.PRES.3S Ifan PROG 3FS like.INF most
 ‘This is the picture of himself that Ifan likes most.’(Willis, 2011b:213)

Again, such examples are not frequently found in the limited historical corpus. It is therefore difficult to assess first of all whether they existed in Middle Welsh. Secondly, it is not clear that whatever this ‘mechanism’ entails, would also ‘solve’ the quantifier-binding example presented above. Adopting a movement analysis for these relative clauses as well, however, is not self-evident for various reasons (e.g. lack of agreement with subjects). For now, I assume the base-generated approach for any focussed constituents, to give a uniform account of the data as it was in one particular stage of Middle Welsh. As in the previous section, I do not exclude the movement approach as an option to derive these sentences. Again, perhaps this option became available in the course of the Middle Welsh period and example (77) represents that option.

6.5.3 Conclusion Case Study III: Givenness

In this section one particularly interesting Case Study related to the information-structural concept of Givenness was presented: object-initial word orders that are marked because they present New information before Old information in the sentence (by subjects with the referential label *IDENTITY*). These object-initial sentences can be derived in many different ways. If they are considered to be focus structures equivalent to the ‘mixed’ sentences with contrastive focus presented in section 6.4 above, we can postulate the exact same derivation with an operator in SpecCP.

Some sentences with initial objects, however, seem to fare better with a movement approach to ensure the fronted object can be locally bound by, for example, a quantifier. If these sentences contain a null-operator, just like relative clauses, some mechanism is needed to ensure binding is possible with the object in a base-generated sentence-initial position. To conclude, object-initial sentences seem to provide some evidence for a movement-based analysis (in the form of one example with quantifier binding). As pointed out in the previous section, however, a movement analysis presents some serious difficulties for sentence-initial subjects. The only way to solve this puzzle is to assume both analyses were possible, perhaps because the grammar of Middle Welsh was in transition. This option will be explored further in Chapter 7.

6.6 Case Study IV: Text Cohesion

As pointed out in detail in Chapter 3, apart from topic, focus and givenness, there is a fourth information-structural notion that plays an important role in Middle Welsh syntax: text cohesion. This notion is concerned with how sentences are linked together within a paragraph or text as a whole. In Middle Welsh, as in many other languages, a frequently-found strategy to achieve textual cohesion is by means of sentence-initial ‘Points-of-Departure’. These Points of Departure can set the scene (like scene setting topics) and introduce a new section. Very often, however, they are linked to the situation in the previous sentence by a prepositional or adverbial phrase referring to a specific time or place. These constructions with sentence-initial adjuncts are the most frequently found word order patterns in the Middle Welsh corpus. Some adverbial or prepositional phrases in initial position appear to occur before the topic or the focussed constituent, yielding superficial V3 patterns.

In addition to that, there are other ways to achieve a high degree of cohesion within a paragraph. In passages with direct speech, for example, a familiar topic in the form of a sentence-initial object is often used to provide a close link to the immediately-following narrative. The syntactic analysis of both these options will be discussed in section 6.6.2. In section 6.6.1, I first present the data.

6.6.1 Text Cohesion: the data

Some points of departure occur before subject or objects in topic/focus position. They usually consist of a prepositional or adverbial phrase, but can also be complete subordinate clauses setting the scene for the matrix clause. In some sentences, exclamation like *nachaf* 'lo, behold' or temporal adverbs like *yna* 'then' are used to introduce the matrix clause following the subordinate clause that sets the scene:

- (79) *Yr awr y kymerth hi y bara yn y gyluin. hi a syrthawd o*
 the hour PRT take.PAST.3S she the bread in 3FS beak she PRT fall.PAST.3S from
r pren yn varw y r llawr.
 the branch PRED dead to the ground
 'The moment she took the bread in her beak, she fell from the branch dead to
 the ground.'
 (Dewi 12.12)
- (80) *A chynn y dyuot y r gynulleittua honno. nachaf y gwelynt*
 and before 3P come.INF to the assembly that.3F lo PRT see.PAST.3P
yn dyuot yn y herbyn gwreic wedw gwedy marw y hun mab.
 PROGR come.INF yn 3P back woman widow after die.INF 3FS own son
 'And before coming to that assembly, lo, they saw a widow coming towards
 them whose own son died.'
 (Dewi 16.1)
- (81) *A gwedy eu diflannu hyt nas gwelei. yna y kyfaruu ac*
 and after 3P disappear.INF until NEG-3P see.PAST.3S then PRT meet.PAST.3S with
ef. yn eisted ar ben cruc. y wreic teccaf o r a
 him PROGR sit.INF on top mound the woman most.beautiful of those PRT
welsei eiroet.
 see.PLQPF.3S ever
 'And after they disappeared so he couldn't see them, then met with him sitting
 on the mound the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.'
 (Peredur 47.9-11)

Most adverbial or prepositional phrases in sentence-initial position, however, are directly followed by the preverbal particle *y* and the inflected verb. As such, they occupy the preverbal position in which argument topics and foci can also reside.

Temporal adverbials

- (82) a. *A thranoeth y kyfodes y maccwyeid racdunt.*
 and next.day PRT rise.PAST.3S the youths towards.3P
 'And the next day the youths rose towards them.'
 (Peredur 18.29)
- b. *Ac yna gyntaf y dywetpwynt y geir hwnnw.*
 and then first PRT say.IMPERS the word that.3MS
 'And then first that word was said.'
 (PKM 41.1-2)
- c. *A r nos honno y buant yno yn diwall ... ganthunt.*
 and the night that.3FS PRT be.PAST.3P there PRED safe ... with.3P
 'And that night they safely ... stayed there.'
 (PKM 46.25-26)

Temporal prepositional phrases

- (83) a. *Ac erbyn hanner dyd drannoeth. yd oed yn y uedyant y*
 and by half day next.day PRT be.PAST.3S in 3MS possession the
dwy dyrnas.
 two kingdom
 'By noon next day the 2 kingdoms were his.' (PKM 6.13-14)
- b. *Ac yn yr amser hwnnw yd oed yn arglwyd ar Wynt Ys Coet*
 and in the time that.3MS PRT be.PAST.3S PRED lord on Gwynt Is Coed
Teirnon Twryf Uliant.
 Teirnon Twryf Uliant
 'Now at that time Teirnyon T. V. was Lord of Gwent Is Coed' (PKM 22.1-2)

Spatial adverbial and prepositional phrases

- (84) a. *Ac yno y bum seith mlyned yn penydaw.*
 and there PRT be.PAST.1S seven years PROGR do.penance.INF
 'And there I was seven years in penance.' (BR 5.15)
- b. *Ac y r neuad y gyrchwys y diarchenu.*
 and to the hall PRT go.PAST.3S to undress.INF
 'And he went to the hall to take off his boots' (PKM 4.7-8)
- c. *Ac yn y ty yd oed cassec.*
 and in the house PRT be.PAST.3S mare
 'And in the house was a mare.' (PKM 22.3)

Familiar topics form another category of elements that can realise textual cohesion. Examples of these often contain the exact same lexical items or demonstrative pronouns that refer back to a situation or a thing/person just described in direct speech or the immediately-preceding narrative context.

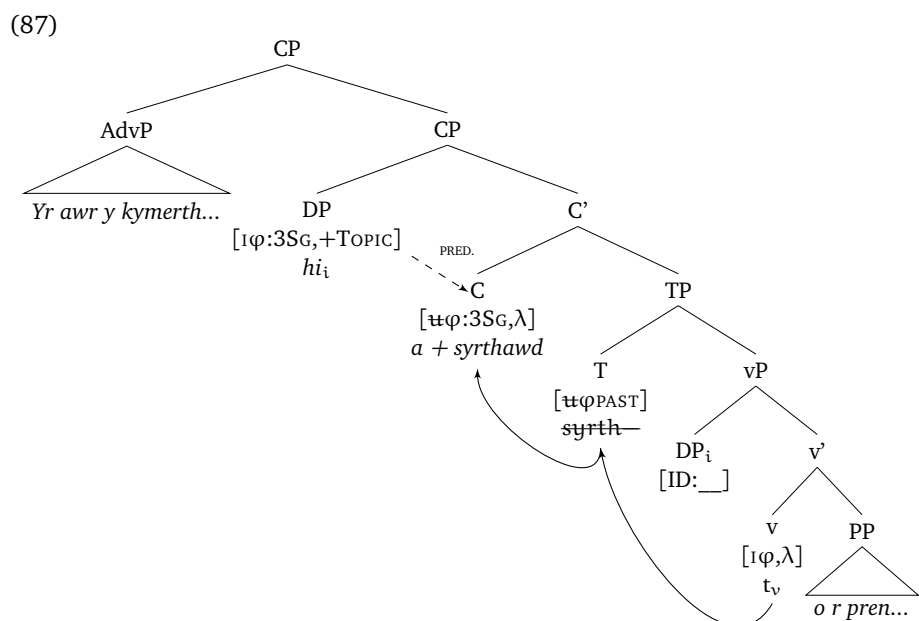
- (85) a. *A hynny a gawssant ual y notteynt.*
 and these PRT get.PAST.3P as PRT note.PAST.3P
 'Those they got as they named it.' (BM 8.7)
- b. *Y rei hynny a rithassei ef o r madalch.*
 the those those PRT form.PAST.3S he from the fungus
 'Now these he had formed of fungus.' (PKM 70.22-23)

How are these adjunct-initial sentences derived? Are the object-initial examples with familiar topics the same as the objects conveying New information we saw in the previous section? In the next section I outline the syntactic derivations for these sentences with constituents in initial position for reasons of textual cohesion.

6.6.2 Text Cohesion: the analysis

Sentences with adverbial or prepositional phrases preceding a topical element can be analysed as containing scene-setting topics. These scene-setting topics are always in the highest projection of a proliferated left-periphery, in a ForcePhrase or a dedicated ‘Frame’ or ‘Scene-setting’ Phrase just below that. Since in Middle Welsh topic and focus never co-occur in sentence-initial position, I have so far limited the C-domain to one Specifier-position of CP. As pointed out in section 6.4 above, hanging topics and left-dislocated topics were also possible in Middle Welsh. Again, in a ‘rich’ left-periphery, these each receive their own ‘Hanging Topic’ and ‘Left Dislocated’ phrase. Whatever the name of the phrase, it is clear that there should be an extra position to the left of the CP for any of these elements. For now, I remain agnostic about the name of this position and use an extra CP layer for all of these elements. The derivation of a sentence like (86) is shown in (87).

- (86) *Yr awr y kymerth hi y bara yn y gylin. hi a syrthawd o r pren yn varwy r llwr.*
 the hour PRT take.PAST.3S she the bread in 3FS beak she PRT fall.PAST.3S from
 the branch PRED dead to the ground
 ‘The moment she took the bread in her beak, she fell from the branch dead to the ground.’
 (Dewi 12.12)

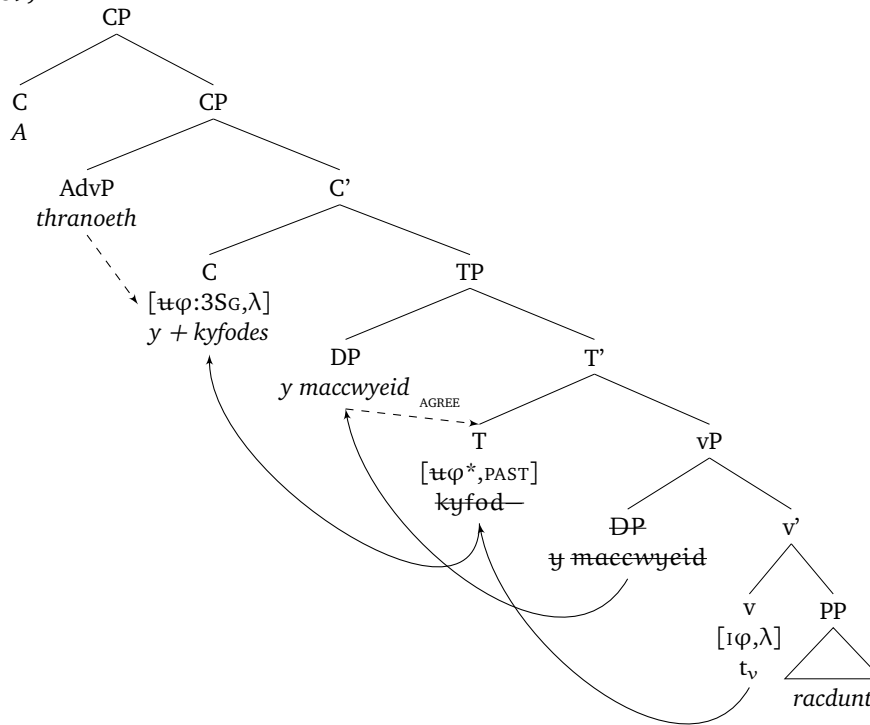


Whenever there is no argumental topic or focus in SpecCP, the adverbial or prepositional phrase can be base-generated in that position and control the form of the

complementiser in the C-head (*y* rather than *a* following subjects or objects). The derivation of (88) is presented in (89):

- (88) *A thranoeth y kyfodes y maccwyeid racdunt.*
 and next.day PRT rise.PAST.3S the youths towards.3P
 'And the next day the youths rose towards them.' (Peredur 18.29)

(89)



For an adverb like *tranoeth* 'the next day' it is no problem to be base-generated in SpecCP. Are there any prepositional arguments of verbs in this position as well? Examples with an argumental PP dependent on the verb as in (90) are more likely derived via movement, however.

- (90) *Ac ar y kynghor hwnnw y trigyssant.*
 and on the advice that PRT settle.PAST.3P
 'And on that advice they settled.' (PKM 25.5)

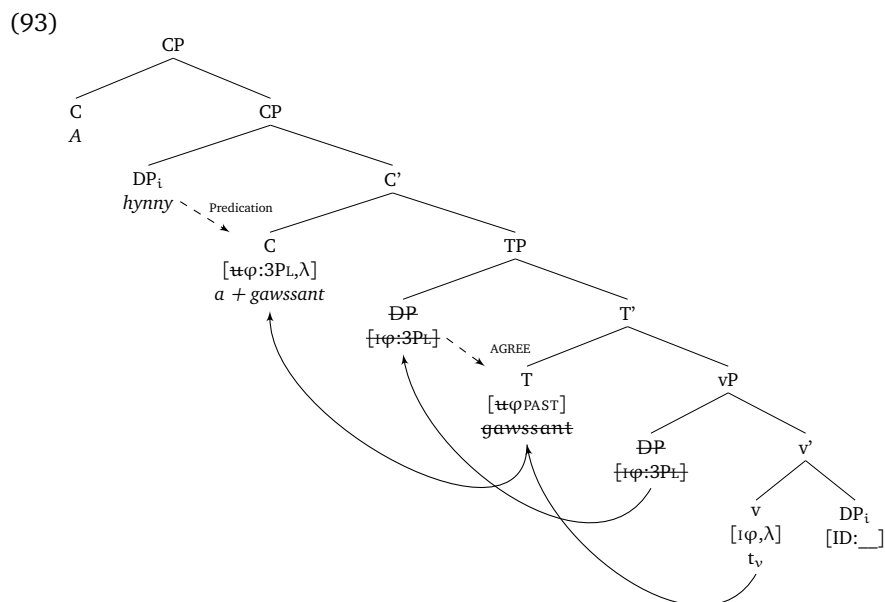
If argumental PPs are derived via movement, however, there is no reason to assume non-argumental PPs and adverbial phrases should be base-generated in SpecCP. They could all be derived via movement at this stage, although to prove this, we would need more examples with possible Principle C-effects.

Finally, let us consider the ‘Familiar topics’ in sentences like (92). Just like in the case of the objects conveying New information in the previous section, it is very difficult to decide whether these involve a movement or a base-generated strategy. As for their landing site, Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) propose a hierarchy of phrases in the left periphery, as shown in (91).

- (91) [_{ForceP} [_{ShiftP} [_{GroundP} [_{ContrP} [_{FocP} [_{FamP} [_{FinP}]]]]]]]]]

Familiar topics occupy a position much lower in the clause, directly above Fin, whereas aboutness/shift topics occupy the highest projection. For Welsh, however, it seems better to assume one dedicated position in the C-domain, since the constituent in the specifier of the CP determines the form of the complementiser. If we were to postulate various phrases in the left periphery, we would have to assume the heads of these phrases can all contain that same complementiser. Alternatively, we would have to find a mechanism via which a phrase in the specifier of a higher position in the CP can still agree with / determine the form of the complementiser in the C-head. This requires extra assumptions and is thus a less desirable solution. I therefore keep analysing the preverbal phrases in the specifier of CP, assuming this CP can host foci and both aboutness as well as familiar topics. A possible derivation of the main clause in (92) with base-generation is presented in (93).

- (92) *A hynny a gawssant ual y notteynt.*
 and these PRT get.PAST.3P as PRT note.PAST.3P
 ‘Those they got as they named it.’ (BM 8.7)



6.6.3 Conclusion Case Study IV: Text Cohesion

In this section I presented different ways of achieving textual cohesion with constituents that are linked to the preceding context in the initial position of the sentence. This can result in V3 word orders with, for example, frame or scene setters or hanging topics (or even V4 sentences if extra adverbials are added to the C-domain).

If there are no topicalised subjects or objects, however, adverbials and prepositional phrases denoting a dedicated time or location (or any other type of Point of Departure discussed in Chapter 3) appear in SpecCP modifying the form of the complementiser (yielding *y* rather than *a*). In principle, these structures could be derived through the base-generation approach outlined for abnormal and mixed sentences above. If the initial prepositional phrase is an obligatory argument of the verb, however, a movement strategy seems better suited.

Sentence-initial objects that are ‘Familiar topics’ can be analysed as aboutness topics. They do determine the form of the complementiser in C (yielding *a*), but they do not transfer their φ -features to C. The C-head’s uninterpretable φ -features are already matched by those of the verb moving (with inflection and thus interpretable φ -features) to incorporate into the C-head. A movement analysis for these familiar topics is possible if they are objects; for subjects, a base-generation approach is still preferred for reasons of agreement discussed in section 6.4 above.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed four different case studies related to the most important information-structural features in Middle Welsh. The aim of this chapter was to provide a syntactic analysis for those information-structural phenomena and to see how notions like topic, focus and givenness are implemented in the syntax of the language. As generally assumed in current minimalist approaches, many of these IS features are ultimately postulated to reside in the left periphery of the clause. Although in many recent approaches, this left periphery is argued to consist of various phrases with dedicated heads for all kinds of topics and foci, it is difficult to prove this is also a necessary assumption for Middle Welsh.

Middle Welsh allowed only one topic position. Although V3 and even V4 structures are attested, those can only involve either hanging topics or scene setters or other adverbial elements preceding or following the topic.

Two different types of analyses were presented and discussed in greater detail: a base-generation approach for topical and, with a null-operator, for focussed constituents and a movement approach. A movement approach creates problems for sentence-initial subjects, because Middle Welsh seems to adhere to the Complementarity Principle in general, but Abnormal Sentences do exhibit agreement with plural full DP subjects. At the same time, focalised pronouns do not exhibit agreement. Both of these facts are unexpected and difficult to account for under a movement analysis.

Under a base-generation approach, these different agreement patterns can be explained. There are, however, also examples that present a greater challenge for a base-generation analysis, such as sentence-initial constituents that must be (locally) bound by a quantifier (see section 6.5) and argumental PPs (see section 6.6).

Finally, there are some very challenging examples with coordinated clause exhibiting mixed agreement patterns. All in all, we seem to be forced to conclude both a base-generation approach and a movement approach are necessary to account for all the Middle Welsh data. In the next Chapter, I will sketch a diachronic analysis in which both of these options play an important role in the development of Middle Welsh grammar.

