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THE SYNTAX OF INFLECTION IN MODERN IRISH¹

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One of the topics that has been most productive in stimulating syntactic research in recent years has been that clustering of apparently related differences among languages that has come to be known as 'the PRO-Drop Parameter' or 'the Null Subject Parameter' (Perlmutter 1969, Chomsky and Lasnik 1977, Rizzi 1982, Borer 1981, Jaeggli 1980, Chomsky 1981, and many others). Our purpose in this paper is to investigate one aspect of this phenomenon in Modern Irish. Our discussion will be somewhat deficient in that we will limit ourselves to just one of the elements that define the parameter -- namely, the syntactic properties associated with a certain class of inflections -- and to just one among several conceivable analyses of the phenomenon. We plan to rectify these defects in a longer and more detailed study in preparation.

Irish is a Null Subject Language by all the familiar criteria. It permits null subjects in tensed finite clauses in which the verb is marked inflectionally for person and number. This is illustrated in (1):

- (1) Dá gcuirfeá isteach ar an phost sin gheobhfá é.
(if put:COND:S2 in on the job that get:COND:S2 it)
'If you applied for that job, you would get it.'

Note that the second person subject in (1) is represented overtly by the verbal inflection (second person singular conditional, glossed COND:S2) alone. The immediate post-verbal position, normally occupied by a subject NP, is empty in the sense that no overt subject NP appears there (and must not, in this instance). It is to the occurrence of such non-overt arguments in conjunction with person-number inflection that we will limit our remarks in this paper.

We begin by establishing some basic facts about verbal inflection. Verbal paradigms in Irish consist of two kinds of forms, for which we will use the traditional terms 'analytic' and 'synthetic'. More exactly, each verbal paradigm contains an analytic form (neutral with respect to the person-number categories, used with independent pronominal subjects and with overt lexical NP subjects) and a set, possibly null, of synthetic forms. The synthetic form represents an inflectional type very familiar from other Indo-European languages -- in a single inflectional ending it encodes information about tense and mood, as well as the person and number of its subject. The analytic form, by contrast, is inflected for tense and mood only. Typically, though not universally, the synthetic and analytic forms are complementary within a given paradigm, as in the following Ulster dialect conditional paradigm of the verb cuir 'put':

(2)	S1	<u>chuirfinn</u>	P1	<u>chuirfimis</u>
	S2	<u>chuirfeá</u>	P2	<u>chuirfeadh sibh</u>
	MS3	<u>chuirfeadh sé</u>	P3	<u>chuirfeadh siad</u>
	FS3	<u>chuirfeadh sí</u>		

Here, the synthetic forms are those for S1, S2, and P1 -- 'I would put', 'you (sg.) would put', and 'we would put', respectively. The analytic form for this paradigm is chuirfeadh, used with the S3, P2, and P3 independent pronouns to 'fill out' the paradigm, there being no corresponding synthetic forms in the Ulster dialect.

The analytic form is used: (i) with independent pronominal subjects where the appropriate synthetic forms are not made available by the morphology, as in the paradigm set out above; (ii) with lexically headed NP subjects, as in

- (3)a Chuirfeadh Eoghan isteach ar an phost sin.
(put:COND Owen in on the job that)
'Owen would apply for that job.'
- b Chuirfeadh na léachtóirí uilig isteach ar an phost sin.
(put:COND the lecturers all in on the job that)
'All the lecturers would apply for that job.'

and (iii) with trace subjects, even in those cases where the antecedent of the trace is a pronoun with person-number features

for which the verb in question has a synthetic form. Consider the Cleft example in (4):

- (4) Mise a chuirfeadh t isteach ar an phost sin.
 (me:CONTRASTIVE COMP put:COND t in on the job that)
 'It's me that would apply for that job.'

The antecedent of the subject-trace in (4) is a S1 pronoun. Note, however, that even though there exists a synthetic form of cuir appropriate to the context in (4), one finds rather the analytic form chuirfeadh. This is an obligatory effect -- use of the S1 synthetic form chuirfinn here would be ungrammatical.

Use of a synthetic form in Irish is absolutely incompatible with independent expression of the subject by means of a phonologically constituted NP (e.g., an independent pronoun):

- (5)a *Chuirfinn mé isteach ar an phost sin.
 (put:COND:S1 I in on the job that)
 'I would apply for that job.'
- b *Chuirfimis muid isteach ar an phost sin.
 (put:COND:P1 we in on the job that)
 'We would apply for that job.'

These sentences would be grammatical with the pronouns (mé, muid) omitted. In this respect, Irish contrasts with most of the languages that have so far been studied with respect to these phenomena. More familiar is the situation in many Romance languages in which pronouns do not generally, but may, co-occur with person-number marking on the verb (often for emphasis or contrast, functions expressed by other means in Irish, as we shall see shortly).

In the general case, it is ungrammatical to use the analytic member of a paradigm with an overt NP subject if the appropriate synthetic form exists -- e.g., one says chuirfinn, not *chuirfeadh mé, for 'I would put'. The qualification 'in the general case' here does not mean that there are certain circumstances under which the analytic form just cited would be grammatical. Rather, it means that certain tenses show an analytic-synthetic alternation for particular person-number combinations. Thus, in certain Connacht dialects, for instance, the conditional P3 form can be expressed with an analytic form (chuirfeadh siad 'they would put') or, alternatively, with a synthetic form (chuirfidís) (De Bhaldraithe 1953, p.72). Such doublets seem, however, to represent the marked case rather than the general rule.

There is one last important point about verbal inflection to be made before we proceed to analyze the syntactic properties associated with it. The Conditional paradigm illustrated in (2) is atypically rich in synthetic forms. More typical, particularly in the Northern dialects, is the Present Indicative, for which

these dialects have only one synthetic form, the S1 form (e.g.. cuirim), the rest of the paradigm being filled out with the analytic form in combination with overt NP subjects (cuireann tú 'you put', cuireann sé 'he puts', and so on). There exists no paradigm in Modern Irish which is entirely synthetic.²

We turn now to a consideration of the grammatical properties of the 'inflectional subject', by which we mean the subject in sentences of the type represented by (1) above. Our discussion will incorporate as a basic assumption the position that in such examples as (1), which have a synthetic verb-form, there is in fact a syntactically 'real' subject -- a non-overt NP -- in the canonical subject position immediately following the verb. For the moment, this is an assumption of convenience, simply making the presentation of the data easier. But we will see shortly that there is in fact a rather strong accumulation of evidence which suggests that our position is in fact correct. It is to this non-overt NP, co-occurring with person-number inflection in the verb, that we apply the term 'inflectional subject'. The point we wish to make is that there is an impressive body of evidence that suggests that the inflectional subject behaves for syntactic purposes exactly as if there were an overt pronoun in the position which it occupies in the clause.

Our first bit of evidence comes from certain suffixal or enclitic elements in Irish which attach to the basic pronouns to form other kinds of pronouns:

- (6)a The element féin can attach to a pronoun to form a new element which, depending on a number of factors not relevant here, can have either a reflexive or an emphatic interpretation. E.g.: mé 'I, me', mé féin 'myself'; tú 'you', tú féin 'yourself'; sé 'he', sé féin 'himself (nominative)'; é 'him', é féin 'himself (accusative)'; and so on.
- b The demonstrative particles -- seo (proximate), sin (distal), and siúd (ultra-distal) -- attach to 3rd person pronouns to derive demonstrative pronouns. E.g., sé seo 'this (nominative)', é sin 'that (accusative)', siad sin 'those (nominative)', iad siúd 'yonder ones (accusative)'.³
- c Contrastive forms of pronouns are formed by means of a special set of suffixes: -san/-sean (for MS3, P3), -na/-ne (for P1), -sa/-se (otherwise). These attach as suffixes to the pronouns, shortening any pronoun-final vowel. E.g., mise 'I/me (contrastive)', tusa 'you (contrastive)', iadsan 'them (contrastive)', and so on. (The orthography reflects a regular process of assimilation, hence the orthographic alternations -sa/-se, etc.)

Our interest in these elements derives from the fact that they appear not only following overt pronouns but also following what we have called the inflectional subject:

- (7)a Chuir mé féin isteach ar an phost sin.
(put:PAST I REFLEX in on the job that)
'I myself applied for that job.'
- b Chuirfinn féin isteach ar an phost sin.
(put:COND:S1 REFLEX in on the job that)
'I myself would apply for that job.'
- (8)a Cuirfidh siad seo isteach ar an phost sin.
(put:FUT they DEMON in on the job that)
'These ones will apply for that job.'
- b Chuireadar seo isteach ar an phost.
(put:PAST:P3 DEMON in on the job)
'These ones applied for the job.'
- (9)a Chuir mise isteach ar an phost.
(put:PAST I:CONTRAST in on the job)
'I applied for the job.'
- b Chuirfinn-se isteach ar an phost.
(put:COND:S1-CONTRAST in on the job)
'I would apply for the job.'

These facts suggest that at whatever level of representation the distribution of these suffixal and enclitic elements is determined, and for the purpose of whatever rule determines their distribution, there must be a pronominal element visible in the subject position of such clauses as are represented by (1). That is to say, these elements provide evidence for the existence of a syntactic subject in clauses whose verb is of the synthetic form.

A second sense in which the inflectional subject behaves like an overt resumptive pronoun with respect to the syntactic system that governs the formation of relative clauses and constituent questions (as detailed in McCloskey 1979 and discussed in much subsequent work -- e.g., Hale 1979; Zaenen, to appear; Harlow 1981; Sells 1982; Weisler 1982). We will limit our exemplification of this to relative clauses, since they adequately represent the relevant observations.

As is well known, Irish possesses two distinct forms of relative clause -- the direct relative (associated with the leniting complementizer, symbolized aL, and with a 'gap', presumably a trace t, in the position of the relativized NP), and the indirect relative (associated with the nasalizing or 'eclipsing' complementizer, symbolized aN, and a resumptive pronoun in the relativization site). Speaking very roughly, in the interests of space,

the direct relative is used when the relativized NP is subjacent to the head or to the lowest in a string of successively subjacent aL-complementizers leading up to the head (taking the nodes relevant to subjacency to be not only S and NP but also PP immediately dominating a relativized NP). Otherwise, i.e., where subjacency in the above sense does not hold, the indirect strategy must be used. The almost perfect complementarity of the two strategies is, however, upset by the fact that a subjacent object may be relativized either way, the direct strategy being by far the most favored -- the possibility of indirect relativization may be correlated with another property of object pronouns, namely, the fact that they are optionally shifted to the right of their sister constituents, perhaps into a position not accessible to direct relativization.

From the above it follows that a subjacent subject may never be represented by a resumptive pronoun. Thus, (10) below is ungrammatical:

- (10) *an fear aN raibh sé san otharlann
 (the man COMP was he in:the hospital)
 'the man that (he) was in the hospital'

In this respect, the inflectional subject behaves like an overt resumptive pronoun, as can be appreciated from the ungrammaticality of (11):

- (11) *na daoine aN mbíodís san otharlann
 (the people COMP be:PASTHABIT:P3 in:the hospital)
 'the people that (they) used to be in the hospital'

On the other hand, where a subject is not subjacent -- e.g., where it appears in an island (in the sense of Ross, 1967) -- it must be relativized by means of the indirect strategy and, therefore, appear as a resumptive pronoun. Hence, the following pattern of grammaticality is observed:

- (12)a *daoine nach mbíonn fhios agat an dtiocfaidh t in am
 (people NEG:COMP is knowledge at:S2 QCOMP come:FUT t in
 time)
 'people that you never know if t will come in time'
- b daoine nach mbíonn fhios agat an dtiocfaidh siad in am
 (people NEG:COMP is knowledge at:S2 QCOMP come:FUT they in
 time)
 'people that you never know if they will come in time'

Here again, the inflectional subject behaves like an overt pronoun in that when it is the position relativized, it freely violates island constraints. Thus, compare (12)b above with the equally grammatical (13):

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- (13) daoine nach raibh fhios againn an dtiocfaidís in am
 (people NEG:COMP was knowledge at:P1 QCOMP come:COND:P3
 in time)
 'people that we didn't know if they would come in time'

(The negative complementizer in (12)-(13) merges the distinction between the nasalizing and leniting complementizers. The direct-indirect contrast, however, is maintained.)

In summary, what all this suggests, once again, is that the inflectional subject is indistinguishable in its syntactic behavior from an overt pronoun. Before considering the various questions of theory and analysis raised by these observations, we would like to consider two other pieces of evidence.

In Irish, it is possible to conjoin the inflectional subject with a lexically overt NP. This possibility exists for both coordinating morphemes -- agus 'and' and nó 'or', as illustrated by the following examples:

- (14)a dá mbéinn-se agus tusa ann ...
 (if be:COND:S1-CONTRAST and you:CONTRAST there ...)
 'if you and I were there ...'
- b dá rachainn-se nó tusa an bealach ...
 (if go:COND:S1-CONTRAST or you:CONTRAST the way ...)
 'if you or I were to go that way ...'

The proposal that such examples, which incidentally are by no means uncommon, involve the direct coordination of an 'ordinary' NP (e.g., an overt independent pronoun, as in (14)) with the inflectional subject is perhaps a little unexpected. Grounds for doubt as to the plausibility of the proposal might be found in the fact that the pattern of person-number marking of the verb found in such examples is unusual. That is, the verb encodes the person-number characteristics only of the left conjunct (in our terms), rather than those of the whole coordinate subject.

An obvious alternative would be to treat examples such as those in (14) as deriving from the application of some radical ellipsis process which inserts the sequence agus NP as a parenthetical following the real subject of the leftmost clause. But when one examines this alternative a little more closely, it turns out to be questionable.

Firstly, the coordinate subjects of such examples as (14) do not have the usual phonological characteristics of parenthesis -- there is no 'comma intonation' separating off the second conjunct from its syntactic environment. Secondly, one finds this construction with 'group-level' predicates -- predicates which demand either a plural subject or a coordinate one:

- (15) dá mbéitheá féin agus Rachel ag gabháil i gcleamhnas ...
 (if be:COND:S2 REFLEX and Rachel PRT go:PROG in engage-
 ment ...)
 'if you and Rachel were getting engaged ...'

The expression 'get engaged' (lit. to 'go into engagement') is clearly a predicate which demands as subject a NP which denotes a pair of individuals. In such cases, a derivation from conjoined clauses with non-conjunct singular subjects is implausible on semantic grounds. Note too that the position of the second conjunct in these examples is fixed. It must immediately follow the inflectional subject:

- (16) *dá mbéitheá féin ag gabháil i gcleamhnas agus Rachel ...
 (if de:COND:S2 REFLEX PRT go:PROG in engagement and
 Rachel ...) (cf. (15))

This is quite expected given the direct conjunction analysis, quite unexpected given the analysis in terms of reduction and parenthesis, since parenthetical elements characteristically have great freedom of positioning.

Finally in this regard, it should be pointed out that the pattern of person-number marking on the verb that we must assume given the direct conjunction analysis -- one in which the verb reflects the person-number features of the left conjunct only -- is by no means unattested in natural language. It is an old observation that languages have a variety of ways of dealing with the problems created for subject-verb agreement by coordinate subjects. One available strategy is to have the verb agree with that element of the coordinate subject that is closest to it. This resolution is found at least in Classical Latin and in Czech (Corbett, to appear). Therefore, there is no particular reason to be suspicious of the data from person-number marking on the verb.

One last point that should be made with respect to this group of facts is that we have here another respect in which the inflectional subject behaves like an overt pronoun. Notice that in all the examples in (14)-(15), the inflectional subject is supported by one of the emphatic suffixes (reflexive or contrastive) that we discussed earlier. This is arguably a reflection of the fact that pronouns themselves must be supported by one of these elements if they are to be conjoined; thus, mise agus tusa 'me and you', mé féin agus tú féin 'myself and yourself', mise agus Eoghan 'me and Owen', etc., but not, say, *mé agus Eoghan, or the like.

Our final piece of evidence in support of the view that inflectional subjects are pronouns comes from the observation that they may appear as heads of relative clauses, a property exhibited by pronouns generally, provided (again) that they are supported by one of the suffixal or enclitic elements. Example (16) below

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exemplifies this for an independent pronoun, while (16)b-c exemplify it for inflectional subjects:

- (16)a iad sin aN raibh aithne agam orthu
 (them DEMON COMP was acquaintance at:me on:them)
 'those that I knew'
- b Chuadar sin aN raibh aithne agam orthu go Meiriceá.
 (go:PAST:P3 DEMON COMP was acquaintance at:me on:them
 to America)
 'Those that I knew went to America.'
- c Deirim-se nár fhág an baile ariamh ...
 (say:PRES:S1-CONTRASTIVE NEG:COMP left the home ever ...)
 'I who never left home say ...'

This concludes our presentation of evidence in relation to the entity we have called the 'inflectional subject'. What can we conclude about the properties of this entity at this point?

Clearly, it must be an NP,³ but it must have whatever features or properties set pronouns apart from non-pronominal NPs in the language. This is suggested by the behavior of the inflectional subject with respect to the distribution of the pronominal suffixes (particularly those of (6)c above), by its behavior as a resumptive pronoun (as exemplified by (10)-(13) above), in coordination (as in (14)-(15)), and finally as the head of a relative clause.

Moreover, it is phonologically null. That is to say, the inflectional subject is plausibly analyzed as a phonologically null NP with the features and behavior of a pronoun, the person-number markers on the verb being inflections which agree with the person-number categories of the phonologically null subject NP.

This list of properties amounts to a definition of the empty category pro which is introduced by Chomsky (1982) in the context of a general discussion of the typology of empty categories and which has been proposed as the occupier of the null subject position of tensed clauses in Null Subject Languages.

Notice too that our data suggest rather strongly that the inflectional subject -- or pro subject as we believe it to be -- must be present in syntactic structure, rather than, say, being supplied in the semantics or at a level of functional structure. It is hard, in particular, to see how the data on coordination is compatible with any other view, but almost all the facts we have discussed lead to the same conclusion, it seems to us. This is a position which has been largely taken for granted in recent work within the Government-Binding framework, and is part of a larger complex of assumptions concerning the immutability of thematic structure from one level of linguistic representation to another. It has, however, been more controversial in other frameworks. Be

this as it may, it seems that the analysis which identifies the inflectional subject with the empty element pro accounts for the data reasonably well. But before spelling out in a little more detail what such an account would have to look like, we must point out that the properties that we have isolated as being properties of the inflectional subject turn out also to be associated with other syntactic positions in Irish where person-number inflection is involved.

In Irish, as in the other Celtic languages, most prepositions inflect for person and number in a way that is analogous in important respects to verbal inflection. Unlike verbs, however, inflectable prepositions typically exhibit full paradigms, as exemplified for the preposition le 'with' in (17) below:

(17)	S1	<u>liom</u>	P1	<u>linn</u>
	S2	<u>leat</u>	P2	<u>libh</u>
	MS3	<u>leis</u>	P3	<u>leofa</u>
	FS3	<u>léithi</u>		

Such inflected forms cannot be derived by a simple cliticization rule combining an independent pronoun with the canonical form of the preposition (le in this instance). Despite the existence of certain sub-regularities, the inflected form of a given preposition for a given person-number combination cannot be predicted on the basis of the form of the preposition and the independent form of the pronoun. Each preposition gives rise to an independent paradigm that apparently must be learned separately from all others.

In association with these inflected forms, the prepositional object position has almost exactly the set of properties we have seen in association with the inflectional subject. As in the case of verbal inflection, so also here, there is an absolute incompatibility between the independent phonological expression of the prepositional object and the appearance of person-number marking on the preposition -- hence the ill-formedness of *leofa iad (with:P3 them) 'with them'. So in the system of prepositional inflection, a P3 form like leofa is analogous to what is traditionally called the 'synthetic' form of a verb. The 'canonical' form of the preposition (that used with a lexical NP, as in le Seán 'with John') is analogous to the 'analytic' form of a verb. The parallel extends also to the association of person-number inflections with the suffixes and enclitic elements of (6) above; like inflected verbs and independent pronouns, inflected prepositions may also be followed by these elements -- thus, for example: leofa féin (with:P3 REFLEX) 'with themselves', leofa seo (with:P3 DEMON) 'with these', and leofa-sa (with:P3-CONTRAST) 'with them'.

The prepositional object also behaves like a resumptive pronoun in relative clauses, the indirect strategy being necessary in this case, since the object of a preposition is not subjacent to

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the head. From this follows the grammaticality pattern observed in (18):

- (18)a an fear aN raibh tú ag caint leis
 (the man COMP were you PRT talk:PROG with:S3)
 'the man you were talking to'
- b *an fear aL bhí tú ag caint le t
 (the man COMP were you PRT talk:PROG with t)

The prepositional object may also function as head of a relative clause, just as the inflectional subject may:

- (19) Labhair mé leofa sin aN raibh aithne agam orthu.
 (spoke I with:P3 DEMON COMP acquaintance at:S1 on:P3)
 'I spoke with those that I knew.'

Like the inflectional subject, the prepositional object must be 'supported' by a suffix or enclitic when it appears as the head of a relative clause (as in (19), where the demonstrative element sin fulfills this function.

The only way in which the parallel breaks down is that the corresponding conjunction pattern is strongly disfavored:

- (20) ?*Labhair sé liom-sa agus mo mháthair.
 (spoke he with:S1-CONTRAST and my mother)
 'He spoke to me and my mother.'

A possible explanation for this is that the conjunction pattern P NP Conj NP (i.e., with a coordinate NP structure as prepositional object) is in general disfavored by many speakers, who show a clear preference for a variant P NP Conj P NP, presumably consisting of conjoined PPs instead. Whatever ultimately is the correct thing to say about such examples as (20), it is clear that the parallels between verbal and prepositional inflection are strong enough that we will want the same analysis to hold in both cases. The evidence for an empty pronominal NP (i.e., pro) in such prepositional structures is as strong and is of the same character as the evidence adduced for this view in the case of subjects of inflected verbs. We feel justified, therefore, in proposing that the structure of a prepositional phrase like leofa 'with them' has the syntactic form P NP, with NP a phonologically empty pro element with which the prepositional inflection (P3 in this instance) agrees in person and number.

If this is correct, then the distribution of pro in Irish must be seen to extend beyond the subject position, so familiar in the Romance languages, for example. In fact, we will want to extend it to the NP category as well, in order to accommodate the full range of possessive, or genitive, constructions.

Irish is a language which obeys strongly and regularly the rule that the head is initial in its phrase or clause. Thus, within NP, dependent genitives follow the head noun, as in teach Eoghain (house Owen:GEN) 'Owen's house'. However, if the possessor is represented by a pronoun, no overt NP appears following the head noun. Instead, a proclitic particle appears -- thus: mo theach 'my house', do theach 'your house', a theach 'his house', a teach 'her house', ár dteach 'our house', bhur dteach 'your (P2) house', and a dteach 'their house'. One of the respects in which the so-called 'Verbal Noun' behaves like a noun in Irish is in relation to the genitive construction found in the Progressive aspect. The direct object of this non-finite form of the verb behaves much like the possessor in an NP. A lexical NP object is marked with the genitive case and follows the Verbal Noun, while a pronominal direct object appears in the form of a possessive pronominal proclitic attached to the Verbal Noun:

- (21)a Bhí muid ag quartú tí.
 (were we PRT seek:PROG house:GEN)
 'We were looking for a house.'
- b Bhí siad do mo chuartú.
 (were they PRT my seek:PROG)
 'They were looking for me.'

Thus, whatever analysis is proposed for the 'true nominals' should be extendable to these non-finite deverbal noun forms as well.

The analysis we suggest is this: the position of pronominal and non-pronominal (or lexical) possessors is the same -- it is the post-head position that one expects given the general typological character of the language. Occupying this position in the case of pronominal genitives is the phonologically null pronominal element pro whose existence we have attempted to establish for two other syntactic positions, to wit, the object of an inflected preposition and the subject of a synthetic verb form. In the latter two cases, the person-number features of the phonologically null argument are encoded in the suffixal inflection of the head (i.e., of the P or V). In the case of the genitive construction, the person-number features of the empty NP are expressed as the proclitic particles, sometimes called 'possessive pronouns'. In our view, these elements are not pronouns at all, but rather have the same syntactic status as person-number inflection on a verb or preposition -- i.e., they represent a system of person-number agreement.

The by-now-familiar syntactic properties of phonologically empty NP arguments apply equally well to the possessive construction. Thus, use of a possessor-agreement proclitic is incompatible with overt expression of the possessor in post-nominal position (hence *mo theach mé, *do theach tú, and so on, but see below for an interesting exception to this). And, as expected, a noun bearing a

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possessor-agreement proclitic may be followed by a reflexive, demonstrative, or contrastive enclitic (cf. (6) above) -- thus, for example: mo theach féin 'my own house', a theach sin 'that one's house', and a dteach-san 'their house'. Notice further that these elements follow post-nominal adjectives (e.g., mo leanbh bocht-sa 'my poor child'). This is exactly as we would expect if they are suffixed to an empty NP in the normal position for genitive NP possessors (cf. leanbh bocht Eoghain 'Owen's poor child').

It will not be surprising, certainly, to observe that a possessor can function as a resumptive pronoun:

- (22) an fear aN bhfuil a mhac san otharlann
 (the man COMP is his son in:the hospital)
 'the man whose son is in the hospital'

With respect to the data on conjunction and with respect to the heading of relative clauses, the most natural examples involve non-finite forms of the verb:

- (23)a Bhí an grádh á scaradh féin agus Ghaoileáin ón tsaoghal mhór.
 (was the love PRT:her separate:PROG REFLEX and Gaoilean:GEN from:the world great)
 'Love was separating herself and Gaoilean from the outside world.'
- b Bhí mé á mbualadh sin aL bhí ag teacht aníos an dréimire.
 (was I PRT:their hit:PROG DEMON COMP were PRT come:PROG up the ladder)
 'I was hitting those who were coming up the ladder.'

We conclude, therefore, that the possessive construction, like the other two constructions we have examined, involves a phonologically null pronominal NP in immediate post-head position.

In bringing this essay to a close, it will be useful to separate our primary syntactic conclusion from another important issue -- namely, the mechanics of an analysis such as the one we propose. We feel that the former will remain valid whatever eventually comes to be regarded as the proper account of the inflectional morphology itself and of the pattern of mutual exclusion which generally holds between the morphological and the overt syntactic expression of arguments. Concerning the latter, unfortunately, we have at this time only the most elementary proposals to offer.

To repeat briefly, our basic syntactic conclusion concerning these phenomena is that a verb, preposition, or noun, inflected to indicate the person-number features of an argument (i.e., respectively, subject, prepositional object, or possessor), is followed in syntactic representation by a phonologically null NP. We have

attempted to demonstrate that these null arguments are indeed pronominal, and we have assembled a body of data relevant to deciding, in a preliminary way, at least, what sort of empty category is involved. Since this NP category can evidently appear in governed positions, it is unlikely to be PRO (though this has been proposed; cf. Jaeggli 1980, and Chomsky 1981). Although it is at least remotely possible that this empty NP is the trace of some sort of movement (cf. Rizzi 1982; and see below), it cannot be a variable, for, as we have seen, agreement morphology in Irish is incompatible with traces of the sort held to be operator-bound (cf. (4) above). As we have suggested already, the collection of properties exhibited by the empty category at issue here is entirely consistent with the conclusion that it is the entity pro, i.e., the null pronominal typically associated with governed argument positions (Chomsky 1982).

We turn now to a very brief consideration of the morpho-syntactic mechanisms which might be involved in realizing the surface structure representations of Modern Irish sentences in which person-number inflection appears.

Our inclination is toward what might appropriately be termed the 'Agreement Analysis', which, it seems to us, is most obviously consistent with recent proposals concerning the position of inflectional morphology in the grammars of natural languages (e.g., Lieber 1980, Lapointe 1980, Mohanan 1982, Kiparsky 1982) according to which the inflected forms of lexical categories are inserted fully-formed at lexical nodes in phrase structure. Given this conception of the matter, synthetic forms of the verb, like the Conditional S1 form chuirfinn ('I would put'), will be inserted fully-formed under V, and it seems reasonable to propose the same for the inflected preposition, inserting, for instance, the ready-made S1 form liom ('with me') under P. The analysis might also naturally extend to the proclitic possessive particles, so that a form like mo theach ('my house') would likewise be formed in the lexicon and inserted under N in phrase structure, there being no real evidence contradicting the suggestion that the possessive proclitic particles are prefixes attached in the morphology (and hence, in the lexicon, according to recent proposals).

Since pro co-occurs with inflected heads, we may assume that its distribution conforms to the following simple condition:

- (24) *pro, unless governed by some X°
[α F]

where α F is an abbreviation for some combination of person-number features.

That is to say, rule an occurrence of pro ungrammatical unless governed as indicated in (24). This is one way to interpret the condition on 'identifiability' of pro -- it must occur only in positions where its essential semantic content (person and number) can be supplied by a governor.

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Under the proposal just considered we are left without an account of the mutual incompatibility of person-number inflection and the expression of a corresponding argument as an overt NP in syntax. It is possible that a surface filter will be needed to block co-occurrence here, and just such a device has in fact been suggested for a similar situation in Chamorro (Chung 1982). There is, however, an alternative approach which suggests itself and should be seriously considered. This might be termed the 'Incorporation Analysis' (cf. Armstrong 1977, for an analysis of Early Modern Irish; and Anderson 1982, for an analysis of Breton), according to which a pronominal NP is integrated with the phrasal head into a single inflected word. Thus, the inflection is, in effect, identified with the pronoun -- it is the pronoun in an intuitively clear sense and is, therefore, naturally missing from the canonical post-head syntactic position. Of course, this analysis amounts to 'word-formation in the syntax' and is, on the face of it, at least, in contravention of the lexicalist principles alluded to above (though a version of this analysis, preserving the essential lexicalist principles, is being elaborated currently by Pranka, 1982). In any event, under this proposal, the empty category we are concerned with here is the position left vacant by the 'movement' involved in the process of incorporation -- i.e., it is a 'trace' of sorts.

Although our fundamental syntactic analysis of the Irish facts presented here is, we contend, unaffected by the choice between these alternative accounts of the morphology, it is nonetheless important, as a matter of concern to lexical theory, to determine whether there is in fact an empirical difference between them and, if so, whether there is evidence bearing on the issue.

We cannot really answer this question, except to make the following observation, which we feel may be relevant. Recall that the basic tenet of our syntactic proposal is that the post-head position is occupied by a pronoun, at some level(s) of syntactic analysis, at least. The weight of evidence might tip slightly in favor of the Agreement Analysis if there existed in the language circumstances under which an overt pronominal NP were found to co-occur with inflection -- this would be agreement, pure and simple. Such a circumstance would not be easily reconciled with the Incorporation Analysis, it seems to us, at least not with a version of that theory according to which the pronoun is actually removed from its post-head NP position and integrated into the head word.

Is there such a circumstance? Possibly. In the Irish of Cois Fhairrge, as described by De Bhaldraithe (1953), there has been a partial merger of the plural possessive proclitics to the form of the third singular proclitics, obliterating the person distinctions in the plural. All these proclitics are now orthographic a (phonetic schwa), only the original initial-mutation effects being preserved (permitting audible discrimination of plural from singular and,

among singulars, masculine from feminine). In conjunction with these, contrastive (and inexplicably nominative) forms of the corresponding pronouns may appear in the post-nominal position. Thus, examples like the following are found (De Bhaldraithe 1953, p. 236):

- (25)a a muirín sise 'her family'
(FS3 family she:CONTRAST)
- b a chuid seisean 'his portion'
(MS3 portion he:CONTRAST)
- c a nglór muide 'our voice'
(P1 voice we:CONTRAST)

Assuming we are correct in assimilating the possessive proclitics into the same general phenomenon as that represented by verbal and prepositional person-number inflection, we have here a circumstance in which agreement morphology (somewhat impoverished and, therefore, under-determining) actually co-occurs with a corresponding overt pronominal in post-head position.⁴

FOOTNOTES

¹Most of the work reported here was done while McCloskey was a Visiting Scientist at the Center for Cognitive Science at MIT. Much of the material was discussed in the course of a seminar on the syntax of Irish held at MIT in the Fall of 1982, and we would like to thank those who attended the seminar for their comments and help. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to John Armstrong.

²Dialects differ considerably in the richness of their systems of verbal inflection. In general, Southern dialects have richer systems in that paradigms in those dialects have more synthetic forms and make correspondingly more sparing use of the analytic form. The distributional pattern we have been describing, however, is invariant from dialect to dialect.

³This is suggested most strongly perhaps by the fact that it may conjoin with an overt NP (as in (14)-(15)) and by the fact that it may function as the head of a relative clause (as in (16)), capabilities characteristic of NPs.

⁴Another case of agreement with an overt argument might arguably exist in the synchronic form of the so-called 'identificational' copular construction (cf. Stenson 1981, Ch. 3). If, as seems reasonable, the 'subpredicate' third person pronoun (directly following the copula, with which it forms an inseparable unit) is to be analyzed synchronically as an agreement element, it must be allowed to co-occur with an overt NP argument in syntax, with which argument it agrees in person and number (and gender).

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