Aspects of the prosody of Irish synthetic and analytic forms
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Prosody Interest Group
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• Goals: lay out the problem presented by Irish verbal agreement and the
distribution of “synthetic” and “analytic” forms.
• Provide a prosodically motivated account of the distribution.

Data:

• Irish verbal agreement is roughly complementary with overt pronominal elements.
• Synthetic forms show agreement and a null pronominal subject.
• Analytic forms show no agreement and an overt pronominal subject.

1. Ní aithneoinn (*mé) go deo é.
neg recognize.cond.1sg 1sg to ever 3sg
“I’d never recognize him.”

2. Tabharfaimid (*muid) freagra ar do ghearán go tapa
Give.fut.1pl 1pl answer on 2sg complaint quickly
“We will answer your complaint quickly.”

3. Éist le fuaim na habhann agus gheobhaidh tú breac
listen to sound the river.gen and get.fut 2sg trout
“Listen to the sound of the river and you’ll catch a trout.”

4. Cad é a déarfadh siad, i do bharúil?
What C say.cond 3pl in 2sg opinion
“What would they say, in your opinion?”

• Synthetic forms are also restricted to pronominal subjects; analytic forms appear
with non-pronominal elements:

5. a. Déarfadh daoine áirithe liom go bhfuil mé soineanta
say.cond people certain to.me C be.pres 1sg naive
“Certain people would tell me I’m naive.”

b. *Déarfaidís daoine áirithe liom go bhfuil mé soineanta
say.cond.3pl people certain to.me C be.pres 1sg naive
“Certain people would tell me I’m naive.”

Agreement is also only with first conjuncts (which must be null and pronominal):
6. **Táim-se** agus Michael Everson ag obair ar na bogearraí sin i gcónaí.
   “Michael Everson and I are always working on that software.”

Agreement is also bled by A’ movement:

7. a. *is léir dom-sa gur muid-ne a bhain t_i an t-olltoghchán.
   “It’s clear to me that it’s us that took the general election.”

b. *is léir dom-sa gur muid-ne a bhaineamar t_i an t-olltoghchán.
   “It’s clear to me that it’s us that took the general election.”

- The distribution of agreement is odd, because agreement fails to appear in some strange places, i.e. second conjuncts, non-pronominal subjects, *wh*-words.
- Perhaps an explanation can be found in the prosody.

Prosody:

- Pronominal subjects in Irish are enclitic on the verb.
- Evidence from VP-peripheral adverbs:

8. a. Tá, ar ndóigh, an scéal níos deacra fós
   “The story is, of course, more difficult yet.”

b. Tá, ar ndóigh, an-bhrú ar aos óg na Gaeltachta ó mhórmheáin.
   “There is, of course, a lot of pressure on young people of the Gaeltacht from mass media.”

9. D'fhéadfadh siad, ar ndóigh, i bhfad níos mó Gaeilge a labhairt
   “They could, of course, speak far more Irish.”

- Note that the adverb placement in (8) does not correspond to the placement of the post-subject pause.
- Evidence from word-level L*+H intonational contour in Donegal Irish:
10. Éist le fuaim na habhann agus gheobhfaidh tú breac
“Listen to the sound of the river and you’ll catch a trout.”

11. Déarfadh sé caidé a bheadh le rá aige
“He would say what he had to say.”
• Emphatic subjects are similarly enclitic on the verb in most cases.

12. *Tá siadsan nios faide ar an taobh dheas ná Fianna Fáil.*
   “They are further to the right than Fianna Fáil.”

13. *Tá mise sásta go ndearna mé an rud ceart ag an am.*
   “I am satisfied that I did the right thing at the time.”

• If the prosodic word formed by this process of subject cliticization is the domain for agreement, then the environments excluded from agreement should be outside the prosodic word headed by the verb.
• A prosodic word boundary should appear between verbs and non-pronominal subjects:
14. *Chuir an seanduine failte rompu ina n-ainm fein*
   “The old man welcomed them in their own name.”

   ![Graph](from Ryan’s data)

   - Analytic forms should show cliticization of only the first conjunct onto the verb:

15. *Bhi muidne agus lucht an iarnroid ag teacht crosach ar a cheile*
   “We and the railroad workers were quarreling with one another.”

   ![Graph](from Ryan’s data)
16. **Beidh seisean agus Bairbre de Brún ag caint anocht**

“He and Bairbre de Brún will be speaking tonight.”

Beidh_seisean_agus

- Question: are the pauses after the first subject conjunct comparable to post-subject pauses with simplex subjects? I’m still looking at the data.

The upshot:

- A prosodic-word bounded model of synthetic forms correctly predicts that agreement will fail to apply in cases of second conjuncts, non-pronominal subjects, and wh-words.
- Agreement applies when a pronominal is within the prosodic word headed by the verb, and not otherwise (prosodic incorporation of pronominals)

- What is the mechanism for this?
- Particular candidates will stand in a correspondence relation to particular input allomorphs.
- Faithfulness violations are computed with respect to the candidate’s particular input allomorph.
- Essentially, allomorphy does not count against faithfulness.
- The allomorphs available in competitions involving Irish verbs consist of synthetic forms, bare analytic forms, and the words consisting of sequences of analytic forms and overt pronominals.
17. **Déanann+ mé – “I do”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>{déanann-mé, déanaim}</th>
<th>PARSE-INTO-ω</th>
<th>LEX-TO-ω</th>
<th>HEAD-LEX</th>
<th>NONREC</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[déanann mé]</td>
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<td>[déanaim]mé</td>
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- This derives both blocking of the analytic form by the synthetic form and complementarity, since the affixal synthetic form is more economical than either form with an enclitic subject pronoun.
- Input sets for sequences where no synthetic form is available do not contain a synthetic form.

18. **D’fhéadfadh+siad – “They could”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d’fhéadfadh-siad</th>
<th>PARSE-INTO-ω</th>
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<th>HEAD-LEX</th>
<th>NONREC</th>
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<td>[d’fhéadfadh]siad</td>
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- Verbs with non-pronominal subjects again do not have a synthetic allomorph, since there is no pronominal element in the relevant prosodic word. This is why they do not show agreement, even when there is a synthetic form available for the person-number combination expressed by the subject.

19. **déarfadh daoine, “people would say”**:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>[déarfaidis daoine]</td>
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- Potential parallel to French preposition-article portmanteaux (Pranka 1983, Zwicky 1987), Portuguese preposition-demonstrative portmanteaux, etc.

**Excursus:**

- What about possessor agreement?
• The possessor agreement morpheme, which shares the odd characteristics of the verbal agreement morphemes, is a proclitic on the possessed noun, but demonstrably moves from postnominal position, where it can strand suffixes:

20. Tá mo cheann -sa liath le bliain is ní le críonnacht be 1sg head-emph gray with years and not with wisdom “My head is gray with age and not with wisdom.”

• But the clitic in this case can jump over intervening adjectives, which are independent prosodic words:

21. Tá sé le sonrú agam ar mo iPod beag féin be 3sg with notice at.1sg on 1sg iPod little refl “I’ve noticed it on my own little iPod.”

• The possessor is apparently out of the relevant prosodic domain for agreement.
• Legendre (2000, 2003) on phrasal affixes:
• Constraint ALIGN L, [GEN] φ provides prosodically motivated placement of a phrasal clitic.

22. blog+mo “my blog”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>blog mo</th>
<th>ALIGN L, [GEN] φ</th>
<th>PARSE-INTO-ω</th>
<th>LEX-TO-ω</th>
<th>HEAD-LEX</th>
<th>NonRec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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• The constraint *φ prevents extra p-phrase boundaries from providing an edge to attach to (stamping out fires):

23. iPod+beag+mo “my little iPod”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>iPod+beag+mo</th>
<th>ALIGN L, [GEN] φ</th>
<th>PARSE-INTO-ω</th>
<th>LEX-TO-ω</th>
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* denotes a lower score or better alignment.
So when possessor agreement is considered, the phonological phrase, rather than the prosodic word, seems like the relevant domain.

This is much more like Ackema & Neeleman (2003)’s account. Does this mean maybe the phrase and not the word is the relevant environment in all cases? It’ll take more research to tell.

Bibliography:


Ito, Junko, and Armin Mester (in prep.) “The extended prosodic word.” ms. UC Santa Cruz.


